Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

January 15, 1998 Volume III : Number 1

Lhasa: Tibet's urban decline

Prior to Chinese occupation in 1949, Tibet's capital was more like a town than a city. Covering just three square km, Lhasa (meaning literally "god place") was the most sacred religious site for all Tibetans and was filled with pilgrims and traders. Today Lhasa's Chinese-initiated urban growth has resulted in 51 square km crowded with Chinese karaoke bars, brothels, casinos and shopping complexes, its streets lined with beggars, prostitutes and the unemployed. Information recently received from Tibet describes the rapid moral and social degeneration of the Tibetan people.

One Tibetan, who asked not to be named, spoke of children not being able to attend schools; young Tibetans being without jobs; an escalation of the transfer of Chinese into Tibet and an increase in the number of Karoke bars and brothels.

"Our worst fear is coming true: Tibetans in Tibet are totally outnumbered. About 70 per cent are Chinese settlers and the land is becoming almost unrecognisable with many new buildings replacing the old.

"The new area built in 1995 below the Potala Palace (the Dalai Lama's palace in Lhasa) is generally used for special meetings and ceremonies organised by the authorities of the "Tibet Autonomous Region". On other occasions it is used as an open market place. These stalls are taxed heavily: about 10 yuan per day. Tibetans quietly refer to it as the Kalachakra ground for they believe that when His Holiness the Dalai Lama returns to Tibet he will hold the first Kalachakra initiation there.

"Fear mounts in every Tibetan's heart. One cannot even be comfortable listening to the radio news broadcast for fear that, if a Chinese official should come to know, he will be labelled part of the "Dalai clique". Speaking freely is carefully monitored in the restaurants around the *lingkor* (Barkhor's circumambulation path) and people who successfully spy are very generously rewarded.

"Sending children to school is a problem because the fees are very high and, even if a child gains very good marks, she or he has almost no chance of further studies. The system of bribes and connections is highly prevalent and therefore children from poor families, despite good achievements, have a very grim future. While it's true that there are many schools being built, the Tibetan children are not given access to these. In addition to the actual school fees charged, Tibetan students are charged for broken window panes, for chairs and class furniture and even for the question and answer sheets for examinations.

"China champions the "importance of children in Tibet attending schools" and says that children should be sent to school instead of monasteries. This requires that Tibetan children should have equal access to education but this does not happen. It is evident that China is simply using this as a means of crushing Tibetans' religious sentiments.

"Very often Chinese authorities select people to say positive things on television broadcasts about Chinese rule in Tibet. These subjects will be chosen a day before the shoot by the television crew.

"These days beggars and paupers are not to be seen in and around the Barkhor (Lhasa's central market area). There are about 3000 beggars but they have been sent to other places where they will not be seen by tourists. Some have even been locked up behind bars. During the religious month of Saka Dawa, when Tibetans traditionally give alms to the poor, the entire Barkhor will be filled with beggars. That is the time when one can clearly see the "truth" of China's claim of economic prosperity in Tibet.

"When an important delegation visits, all the beggars are cleared away much ahead of time to make it appear as though all is well in Tibet. Monasteries will be informed beforehand to prepare an atmosphere of serenity and peace and even in prisons the conditions are ostensibly improved with the provision of more food and blankets.

"Tibetan people are poor because there are no means of employment. To build a factory, workers are specifically transported from China. These people are called *pagungtue* in Chinese - which means labourer - and after the project is completed they slowly settle. A new factory for beer has been constructed on the road to Sera Monastery, north of Lhasa. Beer is now far more abundant and many young Tibetans are lured by the easy and cheap availability, leaving them with little ambitions in life. Food is abundant but prices are extremely high.

"Many prostitutes from China are brought into Tibet. It is believed that these girls are trained and that their salary is paid by the Chinese government. These girls are also said to be well-trained in martial arts and provided with fire arms so that they can control protests that break out.

"There is a popular saying in Tibet that the English polluted and weakened the minds of the Chinese people with opium and that now in Tibet the Chinese are repeating history but this time with the weapons of alcohol and prostitution. Of course no one dares to say such a thing in open.

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"Freedom of religion is a mere lip service. No one is allowed to recite the long life prayer for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Tibetans working as government officials are strictly prohibited from possessing pictures of the Dalai Lama. Although pictures are banned, many people secretly keep such pictures in their home but they live in constant fear of sudden raids by Chinese officials.

"In the Potala Palace, hidden recorders and cameras are placed everywhere. They were installed with the proclaimed intention of detecting theft but the real reason is obvious. We have heard that the Jokhang - Lhasa's main temple - and the important monasteries will soon be installed with the same cameras and microphones.

"The Potala is empty of even a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is the same as visiting a historical palace where there is no sign of the identity or history of its owner. The Potala, once the most sacred historical palace, is today a mere tourist attraction. Visitors, including Tibetans, pay an entrance fee and the "Potala Management Committee" has a yearly quota which must be submitted to the Chinese government. The quota is currently 950,000 yuan (US$ 120,000) but this is increased every year and thus the entrance fee must also be raised.

"Even the Norbulinka - the Dalai Lama's Summer palace - which used to remain closed except for special occasions, is now opened every day so that more entrance fees (12 yuan per person) can be collected. Earlier no vehicle was allowed into the palace grounds, but now any private vehicle can enter upon paying a parking charge of five yuan.

"There are many military bases being built and these surround the outer circle of the *lingkor*. Another huge camp, Wu Ji Tsundu, was built behind the Chokpori (a hill in Lhasa); the soldiers there are extremely well-trained to suppress any political disturbances. There are believed to be about 300 to 400 soldiers in this camp but this may not be truly representative due to restrictions on information."

Another recent arrival from the Lhasa area reported on taxes imposed on having a space in the Barkhor open market. Traders must pay 65 yuan per month to the *Chadrel* (taxation office), 20 yuan to the *Dhotam Chue* (Management Committee), 15 yuan for sweeping expenses, 20 yuan for the space itself (whether or not you actually open a stall), bringing the total to 120 yuan.

"In Lhasa people have no real profession except keeping stalls which now means paying unbelievable taxes. Living has become very difficult for Tibetan people and they are suffering an unemployment crisis. Many people remain idle and the young people, especially men, have become lazy because they have nothing to do," said the source.

"They have no choice but to while away their time drinking, stealing and going to casinos. Such petty thieves are always released soon after they are arrested; it often seems as though they are being encouraged to live such a life. There are no reformation centres for these young people.

"New buildings have replaced the old houses. The owners of the old houses are driven out and when flats are built over them, the previous owners must buy them for huge sums or stay on a rental basis. Nothing is owned by Tibetans whereas the Chinese immigrants have shops and work in offices.

"Even the labouring work is now done by Chinese. Tibetan craftsmen have no work and the carpenters, for instance, have been replaced. There is no employment for Tibetans in any field and even Tibetans working in Chinese offices are also being dismissed and told "your thoughts and spirit are with the Dalai Lama and your stomach depends on the Chinese."

Prison, expulsions & suicide for Gangen Choekor monks

A 20-member Chinese "Re-education" work-team arrived at Gangen Choekor Monastery in Namling township, Namling County, on 29 June, 1996. This was, according to former monk Lhundup Jinpa, "the beginning of chaos in the monastery," and has led to prison sentences, expulsions and even a suicide in the monastery.

"When the work-team arrived at our monastery to conduct the Patriotic Re-education campaign, they said they were going to "clean-up" the monastery", said 26 year-old Lhundup Jinpa, who joined Gangen Choekor in 1986. The monastery had been renovated for damage sustained during the Cultural Revolution the previous year and at that time there were about 95 monks in the monastery.

"From that point on peace and tranquility lost all meaning," Lhundup recalled. "First the rooms of all monks were searched for photographs of the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama recognised by the Dalai Lama. Then the monks below the age of 15 were subjected to endless interogations and threats to disclose details of any "splittist" activities in the monastery."

In the course of the interogations it was discovered that a long life prayer to the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama had been carried out in early January 1996 and that printed copies of the prayer had also been made. The *umtse* (chant leader) of the monastery was 31 year-old Lhundup Palden who came from a small village called Chawa in Namling County. He was held responsible for these events.

"Lhundup Palden was made to pay dearly," said Lhundup Jinpa. "For one full week he was heavily interrogated. He was then taken to Namling County Prison for one month where he was subjected to further intensive interrogations. He was next tranferred to Nyari Detention Centre in Shigatse where he was detained for another two months. Finally, he was tried in Shigatse and was sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment."

In the course of intensive interrogations, Lhundup Palden was forced to reveal the names of other monks to whom he had distributed the prayers. "He was left no cloice", explained Lhundup Jinpa. "One of the names he gave was that of 66 year-old monk Lhundup Tendar. Lhundup Tendar was unable to bear the severe interrogations that followed and he committed suicide by jumping into the nearby Namling Tsangpo (Namling river). The workteams claimed afterwards that he jumped because he was stupid."

Lhundup Jinpa reported an incident where posters reading Free Tibet appeared outside the room of Choejor, a 15 year old monk. Choejor subsequently faced a series of interrogations and finally, exhausted, he "accepted" the alleged crime. Due to his young age he was not imprisoned but was expelled from the monastery.

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PROFILE

A Cry of Anguish from Son of a Northern Herdsmen

In previous Human Rights Updates we have profiled some of the hundreds of Tibetan current political prisoners on this page. This year we will be profiling Tibetans who have sacrificed their life for Tibet; detained as political prisoners, these individuals have died from torture, sickness or prolonged detention.

Geshe Lobsang Wangchuk, a renowned scholar, wrote various treatises on Tibetan history and even quoted from the work of Mao Zedung to prove Tibet's independence. He also wrote poems, including one devoted to the Dalai Lama entitled "A Cry of Anguish from the Son of a Northern Herdsmen". One of Tibet's most well known prisoners of conscience, Geshe Lobsang died in Drapchi prison at the age of 73 for advocating Tibet's freedom.

Geshe Lobsang Wangchuk was born on November 2, 1914, at Amdo Shogchung in Nagchu Province. From the earliest age he showed a great enthusiasm to learn and in 1924, aged 10, he entered Sangdue Dakar Monastery where he received teachings of various schools of Tibetan Buddhism from many learned scholars.

In 1954 he became a chant leader of Sangdue Dakar Monastery. At the age of 39 he gave a recitation of Kargyur (Buddhist canon) and thereafter he was popularly known as a Kagyur Lama or Rinpoche. He was also well known for his skillful handwriting and many revered Lamas requested him to write their scriptures.

In 1959, when a Chinese political indoctrination school was opened in Tibet's northern region, Geshe Lobsang was arrested along with 50 officials without any given reason. On January 21, 1960, he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and in 1963 he was transferred to Drapchi Prison, Lhasa.

In 1970, although he had completed his prison term, he continued to be held under severe restrictions. He was forced to labour and while cutting rock he lost a finger. In 1979, he was sent to Lhasa's Nyethang Brick Manufacturing Plant, a Chinese "Re-education-Through-Labour" camp.

While in Nyethang, Geshe Lobsang helped make protest posters condemning Chinese rewriting of Tibetan language, medicine and astrology. At a request from young Tibetans, he wrote a treatise on Tibet's status as a separate nation.

Before the treatise could be printed, Chinese authorities came to know about it. Geshe Lobsang's house was raided and the manuscript confiscated. Nevertheless, in 1981 a copy of the manuscript together with Geshe Lobsang's name was stuck in Lhasa's market place. Although leading a quiet life in Drepung Monastery at the time, Geshe Lobsang was re-arrested on December 3, 1981 and sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment.

While in prison, Geshe Lobsang taught other inmates about the history of Tibet, China's forcible aggression in Tibet and the looting and murders carried out in Tibet after 1950, and the Tibet-Chinese border based on earlier treaties and border demarkation. He also produced 16 points proving Tibet's independent status. As a result of these activities, Geshe Lobsang had his hands and legs manacled while in detention.

Geshe Lobsang was reported to have submitted appeal letters to both Upper and Lower People's Court of "Tibet Autonomous Region" and four other offices.

On January 17, 1984, Geshe Lobsang was tried for allegedly attempting to separate Tibet from China. He initially faced a death sentence but this was later reduced to an 18 year sentence due to intervention from the Dalai Lama and other international bodies.

Geshe Lobsang was reportedly repeatedly interrogated in order to "confess" that his views of history regarding Tibet's independence were mistaken. When Geshe Lobsang failed to "confess" and spoke out about this treatment, he was severely punished by Chinese authorities He was tortured and kept in solitary confinement for long periods. In February 1987, reports were received that he had been beaten by prison guards with a rifle butt for not pleading ready, breaking his ribs and severely damaging his collar bone.

In 1983, during the visit of the second Tibetan delegation from India to Beijing, the Dalai Lama requested China to release Geshe Lobsang. The official reply denied the existence of such a prisoner. The whereabouts and release of Geshe Lobsang was requested, via the Indian Embassy, for the second time.

This time the official answer stated that he was imprisoned for a crime and that it was impossible to release him. Pressure from the United Nations, other international organisations and the US continued to be exerted on China.



Geshe Lobsang Wangchuk

In July 1983, Geshe Lobsang was told that he would be released provided he spent the rest of his life away from political activities and instead assisted in the renovation of Nagchu Monastery. Geshe Lobsang responded that he could not gaurantee such a thing. He stated that Tibet had always been a separate nation from China and that nothing could change that. He added that only when the officials stated in writing that Tibet was independent would he willingly leave prison.

Geshe Lobsang died in Drapchi Prison on November 7, 1987, at the age of 73.

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"Choejor's parents sent him back to the monastery to tell the work-team the name of the monk who had pasted the poster outside his room. Tenzin Tsundue, aged 18, was subsequently arrested and taken to the county prison on September 10, 1996, where he was kept for 15 days. He was then transferred to Nyari Prison where he was held for one month.

"Upon his release Tenzin Tsundue was not allowed to rejoin the monastery. His repeated pleas to the work-teams were never considered. Unable to cope any more with the situation, he eventually went mad.

"A county official was appointed the head administrator of our monastery. All the sacred objects were noted down and we were told that we were just there to take care of them. Nine monks below the age of 15 were expelled and the number of monks in the monastery finally dropped to 76. Appeals for some leniency towards the number of monks allowed to remain in the monastery were simply rejected.

"Just before they left, the work-teams laid down certain strict prohibitions including: listening to the Voice of America or Radio Free Asia radio broadcasts, offering long life prayers for either the Dalai Lama or Panchen Lama, and possessing pictures of the Panchen Lama or speeches or pictures of the Dalai Lama. They told us that the violation of any of these rules would result in the closure of the monastery."

China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights

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

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TCHRD has launched its new website at: ***http://www.tibet.org/eng/ngo/tchrd/index.stm.*** *The site contains information about the Centre as well as TCHRD human Rights Updates.*

TCHRD also has a new discussion forum. The ***"Barkhor"*** *(replacing TCHRD-L) is a place to exchange ideas on Tibetan human rights issues. Write to* ***majordomo@cyborganic.net*** *and include in your message: "Subscribe Barkhor". Subscribers automatically receive Human Rights Updates and TCHRD News Releases.*

Human Rights UPDATE

January 31, 1998 Volume III : Number 2

Tibetan political prisoners die

Since 1986 when the People's Republic of China signed the United Nations Convention Against Torture, 52 Tibetan political prisoners are now known to have died as a result of torture by police or prison officials. The actual figure could be far more as visits to Tibet's prisons, if permitted, are carefully directed, and information of prisoners is smuggled out of Tibet at great risk. The deaths of Pasang, a monk of just 21 years, and a 61-year-old man called Rinzin, are the most recent cases received.

Pasang was a monk from Dechen Sangnak Monastery in Dechen township, Taktse county, under Lhasa City. From October to December, 1994, monks from Dechen Sangnak Monastery staged a series of independence demonstrations earning it the label of a "problematic monastery". Eleven known arrests were made and prison sentences of up to six years were imposed.

On 8 December 1994, Pasang had held a short solo demonstration in Lhasa's Barkhor market. This peaceful demonstration condemned the Chinese regime in Tibet and called for Tibet's freedom. Pasang was immediately arrested and was later sentenced to five years imprisonment.

Soon after being taken to Drapchi Prison, Pasang required medical treatment due to beatings sustained. His condition was so serious that Pasang was permitted to leave the prison complex during the day to visit a hospital but was required to return to the prison every evening. Prevented from receiving continuous treatment, Pasang's health deteriorated and on December 17, 1997 at around 5:30 in the afternoon, Pasang died in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" Chide (Public Welfare) Hospital.

In February 1997, a 61-year-old Tibetan political prisoner died from unknown reasons in his home, one month after he was released from prison. The report was provided by a source whose identity must be protected.

Rinzin, a 61-year-old man from Mugrum Trehte township in Lhabrang county in Ngari Region was imprisoned in August/September 1996. "He had kept a photograph of the Dalai Lama on his altar long after the Chinese authorities had announced the ban on such pictures," said the source. "Many people managed to hide these away from the eyes of Chinese officials, but Rinzin dared to keep it openly on the altar. When confronted by three Chinese officials who saw the photo, he responded, "if we cannot see the person in real life then what is there in a photograph?"

"Where the Chinese officials found pictures, the residents of the house were fined. However, since Rinzin had answered back to them, the Chinese said he was "bad news to the country" and he was detained for one month in the town prison. He was refused all visitors within that month and when relatives went to the prison with food for Rinzin, they were stopped at the gate from entering and were told that the food "would be delivered to him"."

Rinzin was sentenced to three years imprisonment, but the source reported that there was no formal trial in a court room. He was then taken away to Ngari Region.

He was reported to look very weak and malnutritioned at that time. Prior to his arrest Rinzin had minor health problems but after his arrest he suffered from tuberculosis. "No one knows what he went through in prison," said the source. "He was kept in the prison hospital for one month after which he was released because his condition had become serious. Upon his release, he lived only one month at home. He was so sick that he could barely speak and was completely bedridden. He passed away on February 11 or 12, 1997, in his bed."

Despite China's international obligations as a State Party to the Convention Against Torture to "take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction", cases of intentionally inflicted cruel and humiliating torture practices are regularly reported by Tibetan political prisoners. By failing to incorporate a definition of torture consistent with international standards, by restricting the circumstances under which cases of torture may be investigated, and by allowing the use of evidence gathered via torture methods, China's Criminal Procedure Law ensures that torture will continue to be carried out in Chinese prisons and detention centres in Tibet and that deaths from torture will continue to occur.

Torture and ill-treatment of Tibetan political prisoners in Chinese prisons in Tibet is commonplace. Victims who have escaped into exile recall being beaten with rifle butts, sticks and metal rods, kicked with heavy boots, shocked all over the body and in various orifices with electric batons and being savaged by trained dogs.

While it is known that Pasang died on December 17, 1997, and that he had been

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everely beaten in detention, the extent of his injuries and the suffering of his last lays before succumbing to death can only e imagined. Rinzin's death is a similar ase, it is unknown exactly what caused is death or how much he suffered in the ast days of his life.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy calls on China to actively prohibit the use of torture during interrogation and detention and to conform to the legally binding provisions of the UN Convention Against Torture. We request Chinese authorities to allow prisoners prompt and adequate access to medical careand to investigate immediately any deaths in custody or as a result of torture or ill-treatment in detention. In particular, we request Chinese authorities to investigate the deaths of Pasang and Rinzin and to ensure that the responsible officials are held accountable.

101 known arrests in 1997

The latest reports have revealed a further five arrests in 1997, bringing the total number of known arrests in the year to 101. As with the majority of the arrests recorded for 1997, these five new cases involve monks who have shown support for the Dalai Lama or Tibetan independence.

On the night of August 18, 1997, two monks from Sog Tsendhen Monastery in Nagchu Sog County, Nagchu Region, were secretly taken away by some officials from Lhasa. They were **Namgyal Soepa** (24) and **Ngawang Gyaser** (20).

Three days later, on August 21, two policemen came to the monastery and called **Choeying Jampel** (23) for interrogation at the county office. It was around 3 or 4 p.m. He was not been seen nor heard of since then.

On the night of August 23, **Serpa Soechoe** (80) was arrested. The door to his room was broken down and his monastic robes taken off.

These events made the monks of Tsendhen Monastery highly curious and a few of them went to the county officials. They were told that the Intelligence Bureau was taking care of the four monks.

Their disappearance remained a mystery until Ngawang Gyaser was released after five weeks of secrecy. However Ngawang spoke little of his arrest for fear of repercussions and he knew nothing about the rest of the monks as they were all taken in separately.

It was later understood that the monks must have been arrested on suspicion of being involved in a bomb explosion in Sog Tsendhen county. They were also linked to the series of wall posters that had appeared around the county. Another source reported that they had been found in possession of speeches of the Dalai Lama.

Nothing is known of their present whereabouts nor their prison term.

Another 1997 arrest recently reported was that of **Penpa**, a 35 year-old monk from Lhaden temple in Lhasa City who is also a former political prisoner.

Penpa was arrested for the second time on May 14, 1997 by the "TAR" Intelligence Bureau. The reason given for his arrest was that he was connected with the hoisting of the Tibetan national flag in front of Lhasa's main temple. He was alleged to be the prime suspect regarding this incident.

Penpa was detained by the Intelligence Bureau and since then he has not been allowed any visitors. Recent reports indicate that Penpa is being detained in Outridu Prison No.4, however nothing is known as to whether a sentence has been passed on him.

Penpa is from Tsangshalu in Lhasa. He was first arrested, together with seven other monks, on March 8, 1989 for participation in a three-day demonstration in which many other Tibetans were also involved. Penpa and the seven other monks were held in Outridu Prison No. 5 in Lhasa. Between March 5 and 7 more than 400 other Tibetans were arrested and detained for the same demonstration.

It was reported that Penpa and the other monks protested against meagre food rations by throwing their mugs out of the prison window. They said that if the prison authorities were not capable of feeding them then they might as well be released. Penpa was held responsible for having spearheaded the protest and as a result he was severely beaten.

After Penpa had been in Outridu Prison No. 5 for two weeks, he was transferred to Outridu prison No. 2 for special interrogations. He underwent worse beatings when he was alleged to have exhibited strong resentment during such sessions. His hands were handcuffed tightly behind his back throughout the sessions causing his shoulder blade to be injured.

Penpa was released after one year of detention. After his release, he was not permitted to rejoin the monastery and for some time he made his living by using his car as a taxi before he was again arrested.

Torture of nun prisoner

Reports are continuously received of Tibetan nuns being particularly targeted for degrading treatment and inhumane torture methods in Chinese prisons in Tibet. Many of these women, pushed beyond their limits, suffer permanent mental or physical damage or even die. Kunchok Tsomo, a 25 year-old nun from the town of Meldro Gyama, under Lhasa City, was detained in Drapchi Prison for three years. For that entire period she was denied proper treatment for a broken arm and it is feared that she may be permanently disabled.



Kunchok Tsomo

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PROFILE

His fight to preserve culture....

Gonpo Sonam, aged 61, passed away on the morning of December 23, 1987, soon after his release from Drapchi Prison. He was best known for his strong-willed determination to preserve and promote Tibetan culture. His conviction was impenetrable even while in detention which won him admiration from the the Tibetan people and antagonism from Chinese authorities. However, undeterred, Gonpo continued with his vocation.

Gonpo Sonam was born in Gyaltse Rabgang in Shigatse region, south-west of Lhasa. He married Dechen Dolkar and had four children. Gonpo was known as a keen scholar of Tibetan language and culture.

In 1959 Gonpo volunteered to serve in the Tibetan army headquarters to fight against the Chinese. In 1960, Chinese authorities launched a campaign known as "Review Campaign" under which Gonpo Sonam was arrested and imprisoned for two years.

In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution, Gonpo was again arrested and this time he was sentenced to ten years. He remained in detention until 1977.

From 1977 Gonpo served in the carpentry division of "Reform-Through-Labour Unit" No. 5 which was attached to Sangyip Prison, Lhasa.

Realising the importance of educating the younger generation of Tibetans, Gonpo Sonam found time to teach Tibetan language, literature and history to the younger inmates while serving in the work unit. His immense knowledge and strong personality won him the admiration of many people.

In 1982, after he was released, Gonpo was appointed as a teacher at the school for the staff members of the Public Security Bureau. This was known as the School of Political Law. This allowed him to boost research on Tibetan cultural heritage and advance its restoration and preservation.

Gonpo was arrested for a third time in 1983, along with many of his friends, in association with a Chinese political campaign called "Punishment for the Guilty". As with Gonpo's prior two campaign-related arrests, the charge against him was unknown.

He was arrested at his home on the night of 30 September, 1983 and was immediately taken to Lhasa Tasun Khang Prison from where he was transferred to Drapchi Prison Unit 1.

Gonpo suffered badly from stress while in detention and was struck by epilepsy in 1985 while still in Drapchi. When prison officials saw that his chance of recovery was very slim, he was released from the prison on medical parole and sent home.

Despite treatment, Gonpo's condition did not improve. His health deteriorated steadily until finally, on December 23, 1987, he passed away.

Gonpo Sonam's death is a great loss to the people of Tibet and he holds an important place in the history of the Tibetan struggle to preserve their culture.



Gonpo Sonam

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Kunchok Tsomo was arrested in May 1993 for taking part in a peaceful demonstration in the Barkhor market area in Lhasa. While being arrested, she was hit with a rifle butt and the bone of her upper right arm was broken. Kunchok complained of the pain, but was not given medical attention or taken to the hospital.

While in prison, Kunchok constantly had to keep her arm tied in a sling and was forced to clean and separate wool — work that all of the nuns detained in Drapchi Prison are forced to do.

Only once, as she was complaining of severe pain, was she given a pain-killer but she still did not receive any treatment for her broken arm. Kunchok lived with this pain and inconvenience for the entire three years.

As soon as she was released in June 1996, Kunchok's relatives took her for treatment in a hospital. They were informed by the doctor that, due to the long period of time without any treatment, Kunchok's flesh had grown around and inside the broken bone. Her relatives fear that it is now too late to have her bone put back together. Kunchok's current condition is reported to be poor and she is still under medication.

This information was given to the TCHRD by Kunchok's elder brother who is a former political prisoner. Kunchok's younger brother, Bhagdro, 22 years old, is currently in Trisam Prison serving a two year sentence.

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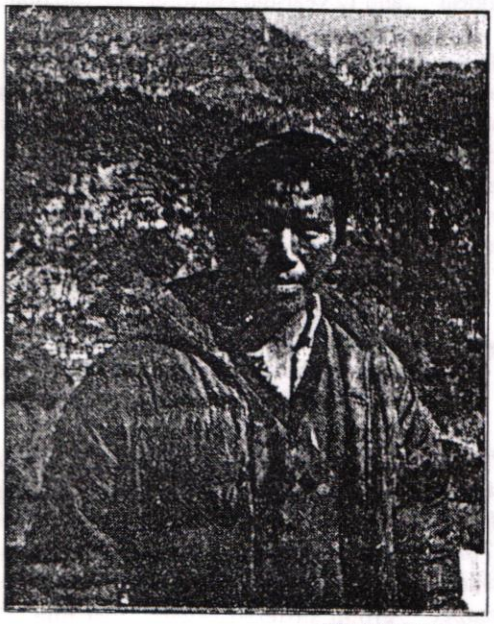
Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

February 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 3

Five years in Drapchi Prison

Phuntsok Gonpo, a 25 year-old former Drepung monk, spent five years in Drapchi Prison. He is one of the many Tibetans who have been arbitrarily detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Phuntsok describes some of the miseries suffered by political prisoners in Drapchi: specially designed troture techniques; forced prison "exercise"; restricted visits; and stifling conditions in prison "warm houses".



Phuntsok Gonpo

Phuntsok Gonpo is from the town of Tsudue, Phenpo Lhundrup county. He is from a poor farming family of eight members. The schools in the village were extremely basic and Phuntsok Gonpo joined Drepung Monastery, Lhasa, in 1988 when he was 16 years old.

On September 14, 1991 at around 12 noon, five monks from Drepung Monastery held a short peaceful demonstration in front of the *Tsuglhakhang* (Lhasa's central temple). So as not to attract suspicion, the monks dressed in ordinary clothes. For about 15 minutes they shouted slogans of "Free Tibet" and "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama".

There were many plain clothes policemen as well as other security officials in the area. The monks were arrested by a *Fang Bao Due* team (Chinese for "violent restraining force"). They were Ngawang Tensang (21) from Toelung, Phuntsok Jangsem (19) from Medro Gongkar, Phuntsok Thutop (19) from Phenpo, Ngawang Choechok (16) from Toelung and Phuntsok Gonpo (19) from Phenpo.

The arrested monks were taken away in two vehicles to the *Fang Bao Due* office. "As soon as we arrived, the officials began to beat us everywhere on the body; kicking and boxing us," said Phuntsok. "This went on without stop for more than one hour."

There were about six or seven men who took turns to beat the detained monks and then, for a very long time, they were kept standing with their face to the wall and their hands up in the air. Phuntsok remembers: "Ngawang Tensang's forehead was banged hard against the wall several times and when they finally came out of the office there was a huge bulge on his forehead. He also had a slight cut below his eyes. We were all dirty with blood smeared on our clothes; blood coming from noses, mouths and hands."

The monks were told to wash and clean up and were then transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre. At Gutsa, their names were registered and another round of beatings took place. "By that time we had been beaten so much that we were only half-conscious of our existence! My body was numb. Ngawang Tensang suffered the worst, probably because he was the eldest of us. Phuntsok Jhangsem was beaten savagely on his sides resulting in a severe injury to his kidney. They did not use any tools to beat him but their methods were just as effective and when they finished with him and we were finally permitted to go to our cells, he could barely keep his foot down to walk."

Phuntsok says that while in Gutsa they were frequently called to separate rooms for interrogation sessions; "They started using tools and methods of acquiring information. They used one technique on some prisoners whereby their thumb would be pressed extremely hard by a special small metal device. Phuntsok Gonpo was poked everywhere on the head with a needle that is normally used for stitching quilt. He complained of a throbbing head and blisters for several days following this torture technique."

They were kept in Gutsa for eight months. "The first few days were hell because the so-called 'interrogation' sessions were a substitute for beatings. Every time they called us, it would send chills through my spine," says Phuntsok. "It was torturous to have to answer the same thing again and again. It was such a pressure that eventually Ngawang Tensang accepted that he was the leader of the group who spearheaded the protest." Another series of interrogations followed Ngawang's "confession".

The Public Procurator was called to

look at the monks' case and finally a court room trial was held on February 18, 1992. The sentence was not passed that time and the Public Procurator called for heavy punishment as he did not believe them that they were the only people involved in the demonstration.

After 10 or 11 days, the trial verdict was read out in Chinese to the five monks in prison. Ngawang Tensang was sentenced to 10 years; Phuntsok Jangsem to eight years; Phuntsok Thutop and Phuntsok Gonpo to five years; and Ngawang Choechok to three years. Ngawang Tensang received the highest sentence as he was allegedly the leader of the group.

The monks were detained in Gutsa for another one to two months and then transferred to Drapchi Prison. Their names were entered in the register as well as their physical appearance at that time and any significant body marks.

As soon as they arrived in the prison, a police officer scolded them harshly and made sarcastic remarks about granting Tibet "Freedom". The monks were first required to study the prison regulations and were then assigned to work. Ngawang Tensang was sent to work in the prison vegetable garden and for a few days the other four ploughed fields. Phuntsok was sent to herd the pigs.

"The worst part of prison time was the labour work. Having to work in the plastic-covered vegetable garden without ventilation and fresh air was so difficult," says Phuntsok. "Many prisoners who had spent all their days inside the *dhroes khang* (literally, Tibetan for 'warm house'; Ch: *weinsi*) suffered kidney damage. Since 1995-96, the labour work has been changed to 'exercises' which is even worse than labour.

Sometimes military men were called in to make us do particularly difficult exercises. We were not allowed to go out at all since the exercise routine started. Within the *ruka* (unit) we had to march continuously with our knees high. The prison officials claim that it is to help our fitness but this is just fabrication. Instead it completely tires out our body.

In summer we are made to stand at attention in the sun for hours. In winter we are made to stand in the shadow. If we make small movements we are punished. Many faint while standing in the hot sun but we are not allowed to go and help them. Men who move are singled out and one young Lhasa boy was beaten severely for doing this. In the beginning, we would be kept standing for at least 40 minutes. Then the prison officials increased this to an hour saying they were not at all satisfied with our 'exercise'.

Female political prisoners were assigned to make yarn out of wool and they are given a quota of one to two gyama (one gyama is equal to 500 grams) which they must meet each day.

There is a great difference between criminal and political prisoners. For political prisoners the visiting time is less and we can receive visitors only once a month whereas criminal prisoners can have visitors with few restrictions.

If we were not feeling well, the ordeal of procuring sick leave was painfully difficult. At the most, for a severe case, three days leave would be permitted."

"When I initially joined Drapchi Prison in 1991 there were only about 90 political prisoners."

Just before Phuntsok was released from the prison in September 1996, the prison Unit 5 - where the political prisoners were normally held - was divided into two sub-units. "In one sub-unit there were 137 political prisoners and in the other sub-unit there were 107 political prisoners", he added.

Five children die fleeing Tibet

Every year hundreds of Tibetan refugees attempt the hazardous journey across the Himalayan mountains to escape from Chinese-occupied Tibet. In October 1997, five more Tibetan children died attempting to escape. Their bodies had to be left in the snow with their heads facing toward their ultimate goal: India and the Dalai Lama.

Lobsang Nyandak, 22 years old, arrived in Kathmandu in October 1997. Lobsang, from Dargyal Monastery, Deiyada village, Karze county in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", was part of a group which included the five children. He fled Tibet together with approximately 20 people from various regions in Tibet.

They began their difficult journey on 30 October 1997 in Lhasa from where they travelled by truck for two days up to Lhatse. From there they proceeded for eight days by foot until they reached a place called Sha-Go-la.

"We took 10 days to reach Sha-Go-La," remembers Lobsang. "When we reached the foot of the Sha-Go-La pass, near to Namo Che and the Tibet-Nepal border, the snowstorm began." As it was already dusk the group stopped for the night at Sha-Go-La and continued the next morning.

"There were seven children in the group; the oldest one a 16 year-old boy and the youngest just three years old. During the first night we lost all of our food in the snowstorm; everyone's food was buried in the snow. We were walking through snow that covered us up to the chest," says Lobsang who is about 5.7 feet tall. "After walking for two days the children began to faint and were struggling hard to walk without food."

"Three of the youngest children - 13 year-old Shelo Dolma; 10 year-old Karlo and 12 year-old Phurdon - died 30 minutes apart on the morning of the third day. We had to leave their small dead bodies on the snow. Their heads were facing towards India, towards His Holiness the Dalai Lama." Shelo and Karlo were both from Lhasa and Phurdon was from Phenpo.

Lobsang says, "During the heavy snow storm the weather was so cold that my moustache was completely frozen with ice. We slept at night beneath rock to try and escape from the wild wind and snow. The ground was covered with layers of snow and although we tried clearing it, it was impossible with the icy winds."

"The following night, at 1 a.m., 11 year-old Dolma Chotso died of cold and hunger. Her dead body had to be left on the snow like the other three. She was from Tre-hor."

Most of the survivors in Lobsang's group suffered severe frost bite. "The Chinese authorities have further impeded the flight of Tibetan refugees by increasing border surveillance which forces escapees through higher, more dangerous terrain," says Lobsang. "This inevitably results in more deaths and injuries during the perilous flight."

"We had no food for five days when our guide told us that we would have to travel for another eight days. It took three days to cover a distance that would normally take only one hour. Later we reached the house of a nomad and that was the first day since we had left that we had seen a fire. We could then warm up a little but many of our group were already crippled by frost bite, including our guide."

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Too young to Die

Gyaltsen Kelsang was the tenth political prisoner after 1987 to have died shortly after being released on medical parole. Gyaltsen reportedly suffered severe beatings in Gutsa Detention Centre and then in Drapchi Prison where she was transferred soon after her two year prison term was passed. She was consequently bed-ridden for more than 20 days in prison but received little attention during that time. After serving only three-quarters of her prison term, Gyaltsen Kelsang passed away at the age of 24.

Gyaltsen Kelsang, whose lay name is Kelsang Dolma, was from a village in Nyandren township in the north-eastern outskirts of Lhasa. Her father's name was Jampa Tsetan and her late mother was called Chung Chung Lhamo. Gyaltsen had three older sisters, two older brothers and one younger brother and sister.

In 1987 Gyaltsen joined Garu Nunnery. On June 14, 1993, when she was 22, she participated in a peaceful pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa's Barkhor area. Eleven other Garu nuns also took part.

As soon as they had begun, the nuns were arrested by officials of the Lhasa City Public Security Bureau and taken to Gutsa Detention Centre. A trial was later held and Gyaltsen was sentenced to two years imprisonment and transferred to Drapchi Prison.

A source reported that Gyaltsen was badly beaten and forced to do hard labour during that time and that she became very weak. Her health worsened and she was confined to bed for more than 20 days in prison but, the source reported, "the prison guards just did not care."

By the time Gyaltsen was transferred to Drapchi Prison she was suffering from severe diahorrea and complained of sharp pain in her abdomen and sides. Some time later her kidney became infected. Regardless of frequent complaints of kidney pain, Gyaltsen was not provided with necessary treatment. Gradually she began to walk with a limp as it was too painful and difficult for her put her foot down properly.

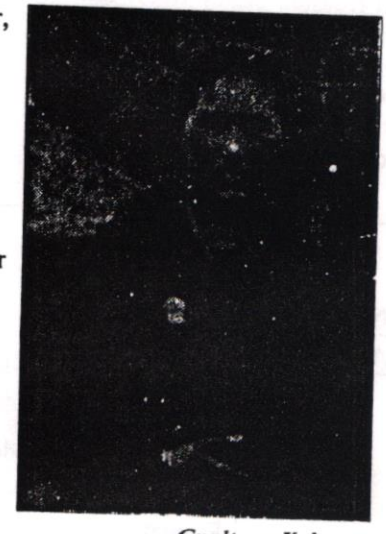
In October 1994, European diplomats visiting Lhasa raised the case of Gyaltsen Kelsang and the 11 other Garu nuns with Yang Chuantang, the Vice-Chairman of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" who old the diplomats that the nuns had been convicted of "sepratist activities". The diplomets appealed for clemency and sought further information about the nuns' condition, but without success.

In late November 1994, Gyaltsen was taken from Drapchi Prison to be hospitalised. Once admitted in the hospital, she was given an injection of medication. After that, instead of getting better, her health deteriorated to such an extent that she lost movement in both her lower limbs and her speech was impaired. Often she would pant and gasp for breath.

When one of her old friends went to the hospital to visit her, she was appalled by Gyaltsen's condition. Gyaltsen told her friend: "Initially I fell sick with diahorrea, followed by pain in my kidney. I was not given satisfactory medication and as a result my sickness became worse. After being admitted in the Public Hospital, I was given an injection and since then I can't make my legs walk. I think I will never get better."

A month passed by without any improvement in Gyaltsen's health. She was sent home to her parents' house on medical parole who were obliged to report once a week to the prison authorities on her state of health.

Gyaltsen's parents immediately arranged for her to see a traditional doctors who diagnosed a chronic problem and placed her in a Tibetan hospital for nine weeks. Although her health improved slightly, a complete recovery was hopeless. Upon Gyaltsen's wish she returned home to stay.



Gyaltsen Kelsang

Gyaltsen was said to have maintained her good nature despite her pain. Both her feet were cold and numb and she was given a bottle filled with hot water to use as a heater. Even when her feet were covered with blisters Gyaltsen did not complain of any burning sensation.

After so many months of pain and prison negligence, Gyaltsen Kalsang passed away just after mid-day on February 20, 1995.

cont. from p. 2

"It took eight days to reach Namoche. Namoche Gyasa Reception Centre is close to the Namoche airport in Nepal. We were only one day's walk from Gyasa Reception Centre when 16 year-old Sonam Tashi died. His nerves had become stiff and hard due to the severe cold and he was terribly weak from lack of food. Sonam was from Gyaltse Theku."

"I helped carry some of the children on my back since I was the only one who was still reasonably healthy. I had put *tsampa* (roasted barley flour) into my shoes; this had protected my feet from the cold and I had taken it out in small bits to eat."

"At Namoche we met two westerners who carried the two girls with them. I begged the westerners for money and they were able to give 2,700 Nepalese rupees. We went together to the Reception Centre and on the way I had to lead the group by clearing away the snow. From there our guide left us on our own."

Of the 16 people in our group who survived the crossing, five had to have their feet amputated and 13 suffered severe frost bite. One of those suffering from frost bite was a woman. The refugees who had to have feet amputated are now undergoing treatment in a hospital in Nepal while the others are being treated in the Reception Centre in Kathmandu. Only three of us were not affected at all: the three year-old child, a girl and myself."

China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights

The TCHRD 1997 Annual Report of Human Rights Violations in Tibet is now available. The 110 page report includes an updated list of the 1,216 Tibetan political prisoners as well as lists of monasteries and nunneries covered by China's "re-education" campaign and related arrests and expulsions.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

February 28, 1998 Volume III: Number 4

The unbearable life after prison

Jampel Monlam, also known as Dradul, is 30 years old. Jampel's desire to be part of Tibet's freedom struggle was strong and he became involved in a political group in Drepung monastery, resulting in a five year imprisonment. Yet Jampel says it was not the years behind bars that were the worst but the life after release. Release did not mean freedom. Jampel was expelled from his monastery, his movements were restricted and he and his family were monitored and harassed. He tells the story of the end of his regular life.

"I was born in Tsel Gung Thang, Lhasa Trengkan Chu (the Tibetan quarter around the Jokhang temple). My father, Yeshi Gelek, was a farmer. I joined Drepung Monastery when I was 18 years old.

On September 27, 1987, I was first arrested by Chinese officials for participating together with 20 other Drepung monks in a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa calling for Tibet's independence. I was released after four months detention after repeated appeals by the 10th Panchen Lama and pressure by the Tibetan people.

"I was later appointed accountant of the monastery by the Democratic Management Committee. I was also part of the "Organisation of Ten", a political group formed in the monastery in 1989 which was involved in printing various documents and leaflets calling for Tibet's independence.

"In January 1989 a ceremony was held in Shigatse to commemorate the erection of a memorial tomb for the late Panchen Lama. During the ceremony Jampel Losel, another monk from Drepung, and I distributed some of the political leaflets that we had prepared. We were arrested in Yangchu by Shigatse police officials who held us in Shigatse Nyari Prison. They had no evidence against us but nevertheless we were detained for more than one month.

"During our detention we received severe beatings from our interrogators. I was thrown from the first floor and fell on the ground on my face. I was unconscious for some time and when I regained my senses I was hit on the chin with a rifle butt. This injured my jaw and it was so painful to chew that it was extremely difficult for me to consume food. Our belongings were searched and the place where we had been staying was investigated. When they failed to find any evidence to prove our guilt, we were released and ordered to leave Shigatse at once.

"When we reached Lhasa the situation was notably tense and there were People's Armed Police (PAP) officials swarming everywhere. Martial law had been imposed on March 7, 1989 at 4 p.m. and everybody was looked upon with suspicion. "Counter-revolutionary cleansing" was taking place and one could be arrested for no reason and interrogated. Sometimes people would go missing for days without anyone knowing anything of their whereabouts. Restrictions were imposed on movement and everybody had to possess a travel permit.

"Six members from our group were arrested in mid 1989. Three others and I lived in constant fear for more than a month until we too were arrested. We were immediately taken to Sangyip Prison where our trial was held on November 6, 1989 at the Lhasa People's Intermediate Court. I was sentenced to five years imprisonment and two years deprivation of political rights.

"After one month, we were transferred to Drapchi Prison. At that time Unit 5 in Drapchi had been newly formed and held only political prisoners. The most difficult part of prison life was the "labour" that we were forced to do. It was actually the worst torture. Sometimes, if the prison officials did not like you they would punish you for breaking minor prison rules. Punishments would vary; sometimes we would be made to run barefoot at high speed on gravel road and sometimes we would be handcuffed for several days. I was put together with the other political prisoners in Unit 5 for four years and then detained for a fifth year with older political prisoners.



Jampel Monlam

"On 17 July 1994 I was released, yet for all political prisoners it is the life afterwards that is more unbearable. I was expelled from my monastery and my ration card was transferred to my hometown. Despite being out of prison I continued to be harassed by the PAP men. I was targeted for strict observance and PAP men frequently came to question me.

The judiciary department had sent a letter to the local police concerning my case and had given strict instructions to observe me constantly. They said that I had a "polluted mind", that I wasn't reformed completely and that they should hold me in contempt and

suspicion. This gave the PSB all the more reason to scrutinise me. I had to report every day about what I had done the entire day.

"I met a Lhasa girl who I married and I began to do some petty business. However, my problems continued to escalate because now my wife was also victim to constant harassment from Chinese officials. She was looked upon with suspicion even in her work place. This was a source of serious irritation and unhappiness in our married life.

"In 1996 I was called by the PSB and accused of still working under cover, waiting for an opportunity to initiate political activities. I was restricted from travelling outside Lhasa and I was ordered to report every ten days to the PSB but gradually I stopped obeying. Whenever there was political activity in Lhasa I would be called and questioned and detained for a day or two. My family members were also taken for questioning. It was tormenting.

"In January 1997 my house was again raided by TAR police officers. They threatened my family and asked me strange questions about my activities, my business, who I met with and so on. This incident frightened my family so much that they were really pushed to the edge. I had found no peace or solace even though three years had passed since my release. At times I wished I was still behind bars. I could never again have a regular life."

27 monks expelled

Twenty-seven more monks have been reported expelled from their monasteries. Their expulsions, which took place in June 1997, bring the total figure of known expulsions in connection with China's religious strike down launched in April 1996 to 3,993.

According to the information, received from a reliable source, Chinese work-teams arrived at Sakya Monastery in Lhoka county in "Tibet Autonomous Region" in June 1997 and conducted "re-education" sessions.

Many of the monks refused to accept the five principles laid down by the work-team and the following 27 monks were subsequently expelled: Phurbu Tsering, Dorjee Choegyal, Achung, Adawa, Ngawang Gyaltsen, Ngawang Choejor, Shilok, Kyikyak, Ngawang Thupten, Migmar, Jamyang, Thupten Tsering, Ogen, Sonam Dorjee, Dhonden, Jampa, Lodoe, Bhu-Nyima, Sonam Tenpa, Thupten Chogley, Thupten Thutop, Thupten Gyatso.

Thupten Monla, Ngawang Norbu, Tashi and Tashi Choesang and Thupten Geylek, who were among the expelled monks, are reported to have died but no information is known of their deaths.

Work-team in Pangsa Monastery

Earlier there were 35 monks residing in Pangsa Monastery but it is reported that some have been imprisoned for political reasons and some have fled to exile to escape the "re-education" work-team's repressive policies, leaving 16 monks currently in the monastery.

On 2 September 1997, a six-member work-team arrived in Pangsa Monastery, a retreat founded by Togden Jampel Gyatso and situated in Tashi Gang township in Meldro Gongkar near Lhasa.

When the monks refused to comply with the "re-education" principles the number of members was later increased to ten and it is reported that since the beginning of November 1997 the work-team members have resorted to beating the monks.

Other orders issued by the work-team included the closing of a small shop in Tashi Gang which belonged to the monastery. An 18 year-old caretaker monk called Thupten was strictly forbidden from attending regular prayers and ordered to prevent "common people" from visiting the monastery. When Thupten laughed off the order he was reported to have been severely kicked and had to be hospitalised.

All of the monks were prohibited from leaving the monastery; the doors were locked and the windows were blocked and it is reported that some are still being held under these conditions. The monks were regularly called by the work-team members and interrogated and beaten if they were not behaving "satisfactorily".

The parents of the monks were also constantly called in to advise their children to obey the work-team. One young monk in particular refused to oppose the Dalai Lama. His father requested the work team not to punish the boy, explaining that his son must have had some influence from other monks in the monastery.

The boy became furious with his father for attempting to explain away his support for the Dalai Lama, enraging the work-team so much that the young monk was brutally beaten. Many monks and parents who saw this wept.

The source reports that all of the monasteries in the Meldro area have been strictly instructed not to hold any religious ceremonies.

Arrested on return from India

Tsultrim was arrested by the Public Security Bureau in November 1997 in the town of Dram on the Nepal-Tibet border on his return from India. He had left for India in 1996 to seek blessing from the Dalai Lama and to make a pilgrimage. Tsultrim was known to have been imprisoned in Dram for two months but his present whereabouts are not known.

Tsultrim Lektsok, aged 23, is from Ragya Monastery in Machen county, Golok "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", (Tib: Amdo province).

Rooms of other monks in Ragya Monastery were ransacked by Chinese officials and pictures of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Rinpoche were confiscated, although strong opposition from the monks reportedly made it difficult to carry out a total raid.

In conjunction with China's "Re-education" campaign being carried out in Tibet's religious institutions, a work-team of about members came to the monastery and expelled about 100 monks below the age of 18 from the monastery. Those monks who had visited India in recent years were targeted for stricter monitoring.

PROFILE

Young patriot beaten to death

Lhakpa Tsering was born in Lhasa in 1970. Just 20 years later, on December 13, 1990, he died in Drapchi Prison from sicknesses and injuries resulting from prolonged torture in detention. Despite repeated appeals from his fellow inmates regarding Lhakpa's critical condition, prison doctors were still refusing him medical attention in the last days before his death.

As a boy, Lhakpa Tsering, from Lhasa Kyire (a town falling within Lhasa municipality), attended Lhasa Sharchok school. He was said to be a diligent student who always worked hard and was a favourite among his teachers because of his good behaviour. Lhakpa's mother passed away when he was small and his father raised him as a single parent. They lived together with Lhakpa's grandmother and his three younger brothers.

At 2 a.m on November 4, 1989 Lhakpa was arrested by Chinese PSB officials. He was 19 years old and in his final stage of graduation. He was charged for being a member of a "counter-revolutionary" group called the "Snow Lion Youth Organisation" (which advocated for Tibet's freedom and political rights) and for helping to paste independence wall posters and make copies of the forbidden Tibetan national flag.

Lhakpa Tsering was subsequently sentenced to two years imprisonment and one year deprivation of political rights. He was initially detained in Gutsa Detention Centre where he was reportedly severely beaten with iron chains, shocked with electric cattle prods, and tortured to such an extent that he was totally unidentifiable to his friends.

Lhakpa was then transferred to Drapchi Prison, Lhasa. He was known in prison for his great courage and nationalistic feelings and it is believed that he was singled out for harsh beatings for angering detention officials with his defiance.

Lhakpa became extremely sick from the beatings and his health deteriorated. It was reported that he was refused medical attention on at least three occasions in the days preceding his death.

In December 1990, in anticipation of a visit to Drapchi Prison by a foreign delegation, the prisoners were strictly instructed to tell the visitors that Tibet had never been independent and had always been a part of China. Lhakpa Tsering boldly retaliated, refusing to accept these statements, and was subsequently subjected to intensive interrogation sessions during which he was badly beaten. Prison inmates in the adjoining room heard him cry out, "Mother please save me. They are killing me".

After Lhakpa Tsering's death, 93 prisoners in the male section of Drapchi staged a silent protest in the prison. Pieces of Lhakpa's prison quilt were distributed to all prisoners to be made into flags for the protest and the quilt cover was used as a banner when the prisoners were led out to perform labour. The protest resulted in several unprecedented moves by authorities: People's Liberation Army troops were brought into the prison on December 16 and remained until the next morning and visitors on December 20 were offered tea and food in order to dissuade them from reporting that almost all the prisoners had swollen faces and many had head bruises.

Lhakpa Tsering's body was reportedly handed over to his family on December 16 and they demanded an inquest into the cause of death. A post-mortem was conducted by a doctor from the Tibetan Medical Institute and a local government official during which they found a variety of bruise marks on the body, blood clots under the skin and dried blood from the nose. The finger nails had also turned blue.

An unofficial statement made by the doctors and officials who conducted the autopsy implied that Lhakpa Tsering had died as a result of internal infection due to the failure to treat intestinal lacerations caused by beatings. Other accounts by people close to Lhakpa indicate that he was suffering from dysentery and was in extreme pain and unable to eat while in detention.

No detailed official report was ever made, nor was a full-scale inquiry ever conducted. Suspicion over prison complicity was fuelled by the unusual offer by prison authorities to Lhakpa Tsering's family to help with funeral expenses and to give food, butter and 300 yuan, equivalent to two months salary.



Lhakpa Tsering

An urgent action appeal was submitted by Amnesty International for a full-scale inquiry into the post-mortem results and demanding that the report be made public immediately. Asia Watch, another international human rights monitoring organisation, sent a cable on January 10, 1990, to Li Peng, the Chinese Premier at the time, demanding "a full and impartial investigation to determine the cause of death of Lhakpa Tsering, and if allegations of torture prove accurate, to prosecute all responsible persons."

On April 6, 1991 Xinhua, China's official news agency, quoted a speech by Gyaltsen Norbu, the chairman of the Tibet Autonomous Region, to then U.S. Ambassador James Lilley, in which he stated that Lhakpa Tsering became ill in November 1990 and died of appendicitis and peritonitis. It was never explained why Lhakpa Tsering was never hospitalised.

Taken in the night for sterilisation

In Shabrang village, Thonring sub-county, Rebkong county, Qinghai province (Tib: Amdo province), nine women between the ages of 18 to 45 were taken away in October 1997 to be sterilised.

A vehicle came in the night and took the women to the Rebkong government hospital. County officials had made an announcement several days prior to the arrival of the birth control team that 100 per cent co-operation was expected and any refusals would lead to heavy fines. The women were told that their medication for a one week period after sterilisation would be taken care of.

The nine women returned two days after they were taken away and eight of them fell severely ill. They did not receive the promised medication and they had to bear all of their medical expenses.

Four women from Gomar village in Thonring were also taken by the birth control team. Two of them had never had any children. It was reported that the four suffered critical post-sterilisation health problems and that one of them is in danger of dying.

Chinese authorities announced three children were allowed for farmers and two for government officials. A fine of 1000 yuan (US$125) would be imposed for a third child born after the announcement, with progressively higher fines for each successive child. A fine of 50 yuan applied for a fourth child born before the announcement.

China in Tibet: Striking Hard Against Human Rights

The TCHRD 1997 Annual Report of Human Rights Violations in Tibet is now available. The 110 page report includes an updated list of the 1,216 Tibetan political prisoners as well as lists of monasteries and nunneries covered by China's "re-education" campaign and related arrests and expulsions.

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NEW WEB SITE AND E-MAIL FORUM

*TCHRD has launched its new website at: **http://www.tibet.org/eng/ngo/tchrd/index.stm.** The site contains information about the Centre as well as TCHRD human Rights Updates.*

*TCHRD also has a new discussion forum. The **"Barkhor"** (replacing TCHRD-L) is a place to exchange ideas on Tibetan human rights-issues. Write to **majordomo@cyborganic.net** and include in your message: "Subscribe Barkhor". Subscribers automatically receive Human Rights Updates and TCHRD News Releases.*

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

March 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 5

"Democratic rights" in Tibet

In a white paper published by the central Chinese government on February 24, 1998, entitled "New progress in human rights in the Tibet Autonomous Region", China has exerted considerable effort in proving the claim that Chinese 'Democratic Reforms' have led to vast improvements in almost all areas of Tibetan society. The dominant theme of the white paper is the "liberation" of the Tibetan people from their previously "backward" society as a result of Chinese development.

One of the "progress" areas referred to in the paper is "Ethnic regional autonomy system and the people's political rights". In this section China stresses the so-called "autonomy" enjoyed by Tibetans in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" and "Tibetan autonomous prefectures", including voting rights and participation in decision and policy making. Yet the picture of the Tibetan people's democratic rights that emerges from speaking with newly arrived Tibetans is completely different and reveals that Tibetans' ability to participate in the running of their country is heavily circumscribed by China's Central Communist Party (CCP).

China places great emphasis in the paper on the fact that the chairman of the Standing Committee of the "TAR" People's Congress and the chairman of the "TAR" government have always been Tibetans and quotes impressive numbers of Tibetan deputies represented in various "TAR" government levels. Yet the dominant members of the "TAR" Congress and government are, and have always been, the Party members and it is the Party which retains the prerogative of conferring positions on non-Party members.

Most significantly, the white paper fails completely to refer to the position of party secretary, the single most powerful figure in the "TAR" region. The party secretary is directly appointed by the CCP and the post has never been held by a Tibetan.

According to the white paper, "*All citizens in Tibet who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election ... they elect their own deputies and exercise the power to administer state and local affairs through the people's congresses elected by them.*" Yet when 25 recently arrived Tibetan refugees were interviewed in Dharamsala, India, in the first week of March, most described Tibetans' "democratic rights" as a joke, saying that all candidates were pre-determined by Chinese authorities.

Pema from Lhoka Region says that "elections" were held in Tibet merely to enable China to assert the existence of "democratic rights". "Many from our village treat it as a joke because we know that eventually the leaders will be someone of their [China's] choice," says Lobsang Choedon from Shigatse. Almost all of the inerviewed refugees said that the names of the candidates were announced just a few hours before the election.

Jampel Monlam, a former political prisoner, says that the "TAR People's Government" applies in name alone and that "the people have no interest in whom they are voting for because 95 per cent of candidates are party members and all are pro-Chinese." "The people do not have the power to put forward their own candidates; they are always chosen by the deputies in the level above based on their political background and their experience working in a Chinese office," Jampel added.

"We vote because we are instructed to do so and because we do not want to face the negative repercussions if we refuse," says Sonam Palmo from Kham. Thupten, a 41 year old monk from Golok, "we know that the leaders are pre-decided by China and that the voting is a mere lip-service."

"The people are very discontent when an election is held and complain amongst themselves, but they fear the repercussions if they speak out openly against the process," explained 30-year-old Jamyang Sengpo of Kyegudo.

Contrary to the claim in the white paper that "all citizens" in Tibet have voting rights, Norbu Sangpo, a 29 year-old Lithang monk, says that monks generally do not have the right to vote. An exception is made only for high lamas or those of high caste and only a minimal number of monks are granted a "voting pass" by the head.

The 1997 US State Department, reporting on human rights in China, found that "citizens lack the means to change their government legally and cannot freely choose or change the laws and officials that govern them." The report says that "village elections - as currently practiced - are under tight political controls and do not threaten to undermine the implementation of unpopular central policies or endanger the leading role of the Communist Party", concluding "the election and agenda of people's congresses at all levels remain under the firm control of the Communist Party" and the CCP "retains a tight rein on political decision making and forbids the creation of new political parties."

Monks and nuns arrested

More reports of arrests and expulsions of monks and nuns in Tibet have been received in connection to the "Strike Hard" Campaign.

In October 1996, six monks of Taktsang Lhamo Monastery in Kannan prefecture, in Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture were arrested by local PSB officials. The six monks were alleged to have instigated a crowd to revolt against Chinese oppression and to have hoisted a Tibetan national flag in a prominent place in Kannan prefecture. It was said that this was the first time such political activity had taken place in Kannan prefecture and the PSB therefore took it very seriously and vowed to punish the culprits.

The monks were arrested separately from their monastic quarters in the early evening and four of them were detained in Kannan prefecture prison. The other two were held in Lochi county prison, also in Kannan prefecture.

* * *

Another similar incident was reported from the same monastery. Anti-Chinese wall posters were pasted calling attention to Chinese occupation of Tibet and demanding that China quit Tibet.

When the PSB came to know of the poster it was removed and ripped apart. An investigation is reportedly being conducted but thus far no one has been arrested in connection to this incident.

* * *

In November 1997, several monks from Sabgag Ghar Monastery in Taktse county in "TAR" staged an anti-China demonstration in Lhasa and pasted posters on the main gate of Taktse county government office. Seven of the monks were arrested for participating in the demonstration and five were arrested for pasting wall posters. Their sentences ranged from 2 to 5 years.

A "re-education" work-team arrived at Sabgag Ghar Monastery in September 1996 at which time the monastery had 70 monks. Many of the monks refused to comply with the work-team demands and many monks left the monastery because they could not accept the requirement that they oppose the Dalai Lama. The monastery is reported to now have just 30 monks.

* * *

Four nuns of Nyemo Nunnery were arrested from their residential quarters in the nunnery in October 1997 by Chinese authorities. The four nuns, Sangay Chodon, Tsering Choezom, Dekyi Yangzom and Thinley Dolkar, were initially held in Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa and later, after their sentences were passed, they were transferred to Lhasa's Drapchi Prison.

Sangay Chodon was charged as the "leader" of the group and was sentenced to six years imprisonment while the others were each sentenced to four years. Other nuns of Nyemo nunnery who visited the four nuns in prison to ake them food described their condition as pathetic.

While the reason for the nuns' arrest is unconfirmed, it is believed that it may have followed from an incident that occurred while a Chinese "re-education" work-team was in the monastery. A seven-member work-team entered Nyemo nunnery in March 1997 and reportedly stayed for six months. Six nuns were expelled from the nunnery during the work-team session.

Charged for visiting India

Tibetans returning to Tibet from India after making a pilgrimage and seeking a blessing from the Dalai Lama risk arrest, detention and heavy fines.

According to an informant from Ngaba county (Ch: Apa county) in Karze "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" (Ch: Sichuan province).

The source reported that the PSB suspected such Tibetans of having come back to "instigate the masses into carrying out anti-Chinese activities as instructed by the government-in-exile".

Many Tibetans returning from India have been subjected to around two months detention and fined 5000 yuan before their release. Those unable to pay the fine face extended detention terms and some have been held for up to two years.

A poem from Tibet

This was poem was received from a Tibetan from Tibet who shares with us his feelings about the current situation of Tibet.

The heavenly Tibetan plateau surrounded by white snow mountains
Has been made a living hell by the barbarious Chinese.
For thirty years, with each day seeming longer than a year,
We have missed Tenzin Gyatso, the Compassionate Saviour and precious gem of our hearts.
However, upon hearing that His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Has won the global accolade as the champion of world peace,
We were overwhelmed by uncontrollable bliss.
Although we are pressed down under the mountainous weight of enemy might,
We threw tsampa in the air, making the whole place white as if under snow.
This auspicious event assuaged our tormented hearts.
Many are imprisoned, many suffer unbelievable torture.
But we have no regrets, for our suffering is for Buddhism and sentient beings;
It is for world peace, it does the Tibetan people proud.
Our hearts are put at rest and made proud to realize
That just government does exist,
The government that evokes no fear of oppression and browbeating,
The government which distinguishes evil and good, truth and lie.
To the countries, organizations, and intellectuals,
Who shoulder the huge responsibility of peace,
We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.
To the lambs who have fallen prey to hyenas and wolves
To the defenseless Tibetans in Tibet, he looks upon with compassion
And cherishes us more than his own life,
Please help us to meet him, our unparalleled saviour, Tenzin Gyatso.
And we will remember your help as if it is engraved in rocks.
We will certainly pay you back for your contribution to peace.
With this diamond-like song of six million Tibetans,
We pay our homage to the whole world.

PROFILE

Child nun died from beatings

Sherab Ngawang is thought to be the youngest Tibetan prisoner to have died from Chinese persecution. She was thought to be just 15 years old when she died in April 1995, two months after she was released from Trisam Prison on health grounds. She was reported to have been beaten with electric batons and plastic tubing filled with sand while in prison and sources report that her kidneys and lungs were severely damaged due to immense beatings.

Sherab Ngawang (layname Namdrol) is from the village of Drok Tashi Khang in Thangya town, Medrogongkar county. Sherab joined Michungri Nunnery, in the eastern outskirts of Lhasa, in 1987.

On August 14, 1989, Sherab participated in a small, brief demonstration in Barkhor - Lhasa's central market place - together with three other Michungri nuns and four monks from Sera Monastery. One monk and one nun were arrested but Sherab escaped.

At 11 a.m. on February 3, 1992 Sherab was arrested along with four other Michungri nuns and a monk from Sera Monastery. They had again staged a peaceful demonstration in the Barkhor against Chinese occupation. Lobsang Choedrag (18), the monk, was sentenced to a five-year prison term and two years deprivation of political rights. Lobsang Drolma (22) from Toelung was identified as the "principal culprit" and she received a seven-year prison term while Phuntsok Yangkyi (19) and Trinley Choezom (18) were treated as minor offenders and were each sentenced to five years.

These four were all transferred to Drapchi Prison while Lobsang Choedron (17) and Sherab Ngawang, both categorised as juveniles, were detained in Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa. They remained in Gutsa until September 25, 1993 when they were both tried and sentenced to three years. They were then transferred to Trisam Prison in Toelung iunder Lhasa municipality.

On the night of August 10, 1994, Sherab reportedly joined in with other nuns singing freedom songs in the prison. The nuns were subsequently beaten and tortured with electric cattle prods, tied with rope and their hands were cuffed.

After three days of solitary confinement Sherab developed severe backpain and kidney problems. She also started to experience loss of memory and difficulty in eating. She had to be taken to the hospital on two occasions after inmates pressured prison authorities.

On February 2, 1995, Sherab completed her term and returned to her hometown. Very soon afterwards she started to complain of various health complications. As her condition worsened she had to be admitted in the county hospital where, on April 17, 1995, Sherab passed away. She was only 17 years old.

Friends who were in prison with Sherab Ngawang and and are now in exile say that she was actually only 12 years old when she was arrested in 1992. They say Sherab told police that she was three years older in order to be put in the same prison as the other nuns with whom she was arrested. This was unsuccessful as Sherab was nonetheless sent to Trisam while the others were held in Drapchi.



Sherab Ngawang

"When she was released she was so ill as a result of torture and ill-treatment in prison that she was sent to different hospitals in Lhasa," reported an unofficial source in Lhasa who said that doctors had diagnosed malfunctioning in both kidneys as well as some damage to the lungs.

The Tibetan who performed Sherab's skyburial (traditional practice whereby the body is cut up and fed to vultures) reported that the kidneys were severely damaged and that the lungs were infected. "He said he had never seen the body of a young person in such a state," said one source. It was thought that the symptoms could have been connected to severe beatings or to a chronic infection that had not been treated in time.

Another unofficial source reported that Sherab was severely assaulted by prison guards using electric batons and other torture instruments. "They beat her until she was so covered with bruises that you could hardly recognise her."

In a report published by Xinhua on February 26, 1995, China's State Council called reports that Sherab's death was related to prison beatings "a sheer distortion of facts", saying "she was diagnosed as suffering from cerebral tuberculosis." Amnesty International rejected China's explanation.

Correction

We would like to apologise for a slight change in information reported in our December 15, 1997, Update (Volume II Number 23).

Ngawang Phelgay's actual name is Ngawang Beyjey and he is 35 years old and not 26 as incorrectly reported.

Additional information received since then is that he is from Toelung Namba under Lhasa City.

Reported to have brought down the Chinese National Flag hoisted on the Drepung Monastery and stamped on it. He was subsequently arrested and interrogated for his actions.

Fearless Voices

Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners

A 100 page report, fearless voices is an effort to tell the stories of former political prisoners who have risked the hazardous Himalayan mountain crossing to make their way to freedom in exile.

The collection of testimonials describe the chilling prison conditions, monstrous range of torture methods and the endless "reform through labours."

New E-mail Address

Technology has finally managed to get through all the rain storms of Dharamsala, up the slopes of the Himalayas to reach our power point. We are now happy to announce that we have been connected to the Internet! So with the set-up of Internet facility in Dharamsala, our old e-mail address

tchrd@dsala.tibet.net

is being replaced by

tchrd@tcrclinux.tibdsala.org.in

Please note the change and excuse us for the inconvenience caused.

Thank You.

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NEW E-mail: tchrd@tcrclinux.tibdsala.org.in

(We apologise for the many changes in our e-mail address but with the arrival of internet in Dharamsala, this should be the last time!)

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

March 31, 1998 Volume III: Number 5

Organised delegation visits in Tibet

Organised visits to Chinese prisons in Tibet over the last few years has had mixed results for Tibetan prisoners. On the one hand such visits are desirable in that they will hopefully increase awareness of the poor prison conditions, arbitrary detention and the use of torture routinely reported by Tibetan former political prisoners. On the other side it is extremely likely that prison visits will be heavily regulated by Chinese authorities and that prisons will be "tidied up" and prisoners "briefed" beforehand on what to tell the visitors so as to paint a happy picture of life in prison.

There is also the chance that prisoners will disregard warnings by Chinese authorities and attempt to tell visitors the truth about the prisons or stage protests during the visit, with the associated risk that they will be severely punished afterwards with heavy sentence extensions and torture. "Prior to any such visits things are kept under control as they are government organised" added a source from Tibet.

On March 31, 1991, Tenpa Wangdrak and Lobsang Tenzin attempted to hand a letter to the then U.S. Ambassador James Lilley during his visit to Drapchi prison. The letter which appealed to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to consider the plight of the political prisoners was snatched from Lilley's hands by the official interpreter. Following this incident the two were severely beaten and moved to an unlit isolation cells. A protest broke out in Drapchi by other prisoners against their continued isolation which was violently suppressed. Reportedly each protestor was tied with a rope and beaten unconscious by four or five prison guards.

On December 6, 1991, Tanak Jigme Sangpo, a 64 year-old former teacher at Lhasa Primary School no.1 had his sentence increased by an additional nine years making a total of 28 years for shouting pro-independence slogans during a prison visit of a Swiss delegation. The delegates were quickly led away by their Chinese hosts who said that the prisoners were mad.

Minutes later, Tanak and the other three who joined in the slogans were dragged from their cells, beaten and placed in isolation. Fellow inmates smuggled out a letter for the delegation informing them that the man who had shouted slogans was not mad but a political prisoner. Reports continued to be received that Tanak was being targetted for beatings, torture and isolation. A new torture method known as the "cold cell torture" in which the prisoner is surrounded by cold metal sheets was first used on Tanak Jigme Sangpo in 1991 after the second extension of his 1983 sentence.

In October 1993, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, John Shattuck met with Yulo Dawa Tsering under "severely controlled circumstances with the prison authorities in attendance" and in Shattuck's own words, "We were unable to have any conversation with him more than to obtain.... a statement about his view of the circumstances that led to his arrest".

The visit by the independent experts from the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention organised by the Chinese authorities last year in October sparked off similar tumult in the prison. Prisoners involved in the protest calling for support for the Dalai Lama were said to have been subjected to severe beatings and solitary confinement.

The group's report, expected to be presented to the UN Commission for Human Rights, makes no mention of the the incident and it has been reported that no enquiries have yet been made regarding the welfare of the prisoners. Kabil Sibal, Chairman of the Working Group, refused to make any comments on their visit. When asked about the protest, he said, "Our trip had a legal mandate. If on the basis of our visit we find that something is required to be done on behalf of a particular person, we will make inquiries".

The Chinese authorities reportedly gave assurances that no punitive actions would be carried out against the prisoners however unconfirmed reports state that many of the inmates were subjected to beatings by prison officials following the working group's visit.

In a three-week tour by three U.S. clerics in February this year to examine the state of religious freedom in China, little attention was given to the widespread persecution of Tibetan Buddhists. Since 1988, Monlam Chemo, the Great Prayer Festival (the biggest religious festival for Tibetan Buddhists) has been banned. The "Patriotic Re-education" campaign, mentioned only fleetingly in the US report, has been carried out in 1,780 of Tibet's 1,787 monasteries and temples (according to Chinese officials themselves) and requires monks and nuns to denounce their spiritual and temporal leader the Dalai Lama as well as Tibet's second highest spiritual leader - the Panchen Lama recognised by the Dalai Lama. No comments on these aspects of the campaign have been mentioned in the

report.

The current whereabouts of the Panchen Lama also remains obscure. While Yang Chuang Tang told the Austrian group that the boy, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, was living in Tibet, in the village of Lhari in Nagchu Prefecture, 250 km from Lhasa. The group of US clerics had been told that the boy was in Beijing, as previous reports have indicated.

Neither delegation mentioned the information about the location of the young Panchen Lama in their official reports published two weeks ago.

Another official visit by European Union is expected in May this year. This corresponds to the recent decison by EU not to support any UN resolution against China concerning human rights record.

Approximately ten Western delegations made official visits to Tibet in 1997, including representatives from the Swiss government, the German Federal Assembly, the Canadian, French and Israeli ambassadors to China. Few of them even made prison visits to Drapchi. Dr. Antje Vollmer from the German parliament issued a statement on September 3, 1997 objecting to Xinhua's report about her visit to the prison. She said that she had the impression that her visit was 'manipulated'.

A member of the three American religious delegation told to TIN (Tibet Information Network) that the Chinese authorities appeared to give incorrect names for two political prisoners interviewed by the group in Drapchi prison. Reverend Richard Cizik who was a staff member on the trip said,"When we asked to meet some political prisoners, the Chinese authorities brought forward two nuns. One of the nuns was in her forties and twenties. When we asked for their names later, the officials seemed to mispell them purposely". "I will never forget the face of the younger nun who had been picked from a line-up of prisoners-it was a look first of hesitation, then of fear. It was a real impression of what a system dos to people imprisoned for a religious reason", he added.

While it is believed that such visits is a modest step by the Chinese government towards allowing greater observation of human rights conditions and a rare chance to engage the Chinese leaders, there is a serious concern that they may be used more effectively as propaganda tools by China.

"Strike Hard" and arrests continue

Ngodup, a 27 year-old was a former former Sera monk who recently fled into exile. He reports on few arrests that took place in connection to the "Strike Hard" campaign.

In the beginning of July 1997, work-teams arrived in Rakor Nunnery in Nang township in Toelung Dechen County. The nuns blatantly resisted the presence of the work-teams and their "re-education sessions". Therefore, on October 31, 1997 the Chinese authorities called eight trucks full of armed police to suppress the opposition from the nuns. As a result, in the beginning of November 1997, two managing staff of the nunnery named Kelsang and Palden were arbitrarily arrested and detained.

By November 20, 1997, out of the 81 nuns, three voluntarily left the nunnery and 53 were expelled. There are currently 25 nuns in the Rakor nunnery who have been strictly instructed to be "patriotic" and 'loyal' to the Chinese government or else there is just 'one final' way.

*****

Lobsang Samten, a 25 year old Sera monk was from Sok County of Nagchu Region. He comes from a big family. One of his older brother, Lobsang Thapkey also spent three years in prison in 1988.

In 1996, when work-teams arrived at his monastery to conduct the "patriotic re-education" campaign, he was reported to have infuriated the work-team members by back answering them. He claimed of Tibet's independence based on the currency and the government that existed in Tibet during the 13th Dalai Lama. He was charged for 'speaking to the foreigners' as he is known to speak a little English and hence detained for the same. A trial was held and he was sentenced to 3 years in prison. He is currently in Trisam prison in Toelung County in Lhasa city

*****

Kelsang Tenzin is a 27 year-old Sera monk, originally from Nyemo county. He worked as the scripture printer in the monastery. In 1996, he was charged for making wooden block prints that read "Rangzen Tsogpa" (Freedom Organisation). It was reported that during the time of interrogation, he was forced to kneel down on the chair and was kept in the same position for five days in a stretch. At the end of the fifth day, his knee was badly bruised resulting in the opening of his knee. He was sentenced to 3 years in Trisam prison.

*****

Norbu is a 27 year-old from Sera monk from Yamdrok, Lhoka district. In 1996, he was arrested on suspicion of pasting a pro-independence poster near the door of the Chinese work-teams staying in the Sera monastery.

Later, when the work-teams searched his room, they found scrolled documents relating to the 'cultural revolution' describing about the torture and death of Tibetans during that period. He was sentenced to 3 years in Trisam prison.

*****

Lobsang Phelgay a former monk at the Dongtse monastery in Gyal Tse county reported on the arrival of work-team members into his monastery.

"We were made to pledge allegiance to Communist China condemning the principles of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and opposing his views and calling him 'splittist'. Besides banning his pictures and reciting his prayers, if the monks were found with any scriptures pertaining to the prayers of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the concerned monk will be fined 1 yuan for each letter inscribed in the scripture.

Monks who dared to violate any of their instructions are detained and beaten and charged as 'political suspect of splittists'.

In 1996, Lobsang Thokmey (22) layname Bhutuk and Lobsang Tenphel (22) layname Pasang Ngodup pasted posters on the entrance gate of Chinese shops and Dongtse prefecture hospitals. The letters on the poster read: "Tibet is free. China is forcibly depriving Tibetans of their basic human rights. The Chinese are selling worthless and inferior goods in Tibet at exhorbitant rates. Chinese are cheating the poor Tibetan farmers by compelling to sell their hard-earned grains and other products at minimal rate".

"They were subsequently arrested and tried in Gyaltse county public court. Charged with 'propagating splittists actions', they were sentenced respectively. Lobsang Thokmey was sentenced to 4 years and Lobsang Tenphel for 2 and half years. They are currently held in Drapchi Prison.

More than the physical pain the mental agony is more severe. I ask everyone, "Does this justify the so-called freedom of religion in Tibet by the Chinese"?

PROFILE

He dared to speak; he lost his life

Tashi Tsering's profile is significant as his is one of those rare cases whereby as an official working under Chinese Party dared to speak the truth of injustice and call a bull a bull. This cost him his life but he will be remembered for it.

Tashi Tsering was a prominent public figure and former member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from Area no. 3 in Shigatse.

Whilst in detention, he severed inhumane torture and beatings at the hands of the prison officials. Tashi Tsering was released on medical grounds after serving 5 years in prison out of his 7-year prison term. However, due to prolonged illness and medical neglect, he passed away in May 1995 at the age of 59 in Drapchi Prison.

Tashi Tsering was formerly a monk at Drongtse Monastery in Yagmo township in Shigatse region. He was arrested in the morning of November 28, 1989 for distributing pro-independence literature in Yangmo township, Shigatse. The written letters called in total support for Tibetan independence which were pasted at the local branch bank, investigation bureau, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the municipal headquarters etc. of Shigatse Prefecture. He was subsequently arrested and sentenced to seven years in prison for counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement" (FBIS, December 1, 1989). Following his arrest on November 28, 1989, his case was described in detail in a Radio Lhasa report (November 29, 1989). "For a long time Tashi Tsering has been slack in remolding his ideology, showing great discontent against the party and about the reality. He wrote a total of 73 slogans and leaflets supporting independence for Tibet this year and put them in complaint letter boxes at the central airport of the prefecture, Shigatse, the general office of the CPPCC Prefectural Committee and the head office of the Shigatse City Party Committee. These slogans and leaflets, venomously slandering the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system, reflected his very reactionary thinking. They have had extremely bad influence among the public and have seriously undermined political stability and unity..."

He was released in September 1994 on medical grounds as his health was deteriorating due to years of torture in prison. His health was precarious at the time of his release. One source reported that due to prolonged torture and ill treatment that he had been subjected to whilst in prison, he was unable to respond sucessfully to the medical treatment that he received.

An unofficial report lists Tashi Tsering, in the fifth division in Drapchi Prison, as ill with heart problems. He reportedly was briefly admitted to the prison clinic in April 1991.



Tashi Tsering

Rinzin Wangyal life imprisoned



Rinzin Wangyal (also Rinwang) is a 57-year-old from Lhasa. he was first arrested in 1966-67 for allegedly organising an underground movement and served between 15 to 17 years in prison. He was again arrested in 1995 on suspicion of planning to disrupt "TAR" anniversary celebrations for which he was sentenced to a 16-year prison term. According to recent reports, in October 1997, while still in detention, his sentence was increased to life imprisoned.

The extension order came from the Pople's Intermediate Court. Before he could initiate an appeal to the People's High Court, Rinzin Wangyal received instructions stating that the decision made by the Intermediate Court had been approved and that it shall be considered final.

He is currently held in Seitru Detention Centre. The reason for the extension of Rinzin's sentence is not known.

Reports recently received also indicate that Rinzin is suffering from severe water retention in his leg. Drapchi prison officials have reportedly refused his transfer from Seitru for fear of query in case of problems resulting from his health condition.

His wife, Sonam, who was critically ill made repeated appeals to see her husband in prison fearing that she may die before seeing him. The pleas were ignored. Accounts differed then as to whether she was alive or not.

The source reported that although she is alive, she continues to be in a poor state.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

April 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 7

Monk interrogated for five months

Lhundup Monlam, a 28 -year-old, is a former monk of Gyaltse Pel-choy Monastery in Gyaltse County in Shigatse region. He served four years and six months in Chinese prisons in Tibet where he was treated horrendously for indulging in "anti-Chinese activities". Today, in exile, Lhundup believes that the brutal interrogations he experienced are representative of the general pre-detention treatment all political prisoners undergo in Tibet.



Lhundup Monlam

When I was 8 years old, I joined the People's School (Mangtsug) in Gyaltse. At the age of 17, I became a monk and joined the Gyalste Pel-choy Monastery. After the peaceful demonstration of September 27, 1987, in Lhasa, the Chinese called meetings in villages and towns of Gyaltse County to 'educate' the local people about the position of Tibet as a 'nation'. They maintained that Tibet had been an inalienable part of China since the Qing Dynasty and they claimed that the 17-Point Agreement was proof of this. The people were also instructed to secure the so-called 'solidarity and ethnic harmony' of the 'motherland' and to oppose the 'splittist minority'. At that time I hardly knew anything about the position of Tibet as a 'nation'. Later that year I was able to hear a recorded speech of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from another monk in the monastery which completely changed my way of thinking. The speech gave me the inspiration and strength to fight for my rights and express my opinions.

In the summer of 1988, I pasted independence posters on the Mani Lhakhang, which is near the main entrance gate of Gyaltse Phal-choy Monastery, and on the outside wall of Ri-Ding garden with a message that read "Tibet is an independent nation and China invaded Tibet in 1959. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is our supreme head. We must not come under Chinese influence. Let's drive imperialist China out of Tibet". Afterwards, I also distributed some copied speeches of H.H. the Dalai Lama to the monks and people of my village.

A year later, in the winter of 1989, Chinese work-teams from the Shigatse district and Gyaltse county arrived in our monastery. They started to conduct 're-education' sessions. They also made us copy some lines of a song on pieces of paper. I did not suspect that they were trying to compare our handwriting with that on the poster. They suspected that I was somewhat connected to the previous incident as they called me aside one day to make a complete account of the monastery's income and expenditure report. They later compared the numbers that I had written with the dates on the poster. Finding some similarities in the two they urged me to confess my 'crime' or else threatened that I would be 'severely dealt with'. I vigorously denied any involvement and refused to confess. For three months I heard nothing further.

A compulsory meeting was called on February 16, 1990 for all the monks at the monastery. During the meeting,an official of the County started to read a speech from a newspaper. He was, however, constantly distracted and looking at his watch. After a while, we knew that many vehicles had arrived because there was a lot of noise and a hurl of dust. There were many men in uniform from all the various offices in the County. There were a total of about 40 men. Once inside the monastery, one of them asked "Who is Lhundup Monlam"? My heart started to palpitate with fear and I was sure it was showing on my face because I could feel blood shooting into my cheeks. Then an official from the county who had been investigating my case pointed me out from the crowd. Immediately, my hands were placed in handcuffs which were so tight that the metal teeth inside bit into my skin. I felt immense pain.

I later realised that the reason behind

the meeting was to publicly arrest us so that we could be used as an example so that other monks would not take part in such activities.

Then they dragged me to the truck which they threw me into like a sack of potatoes. Two PSB men held me upright from both sides. I was positioned on an elevated chair so that my face could be seen through the metal bars of the truck. I was then driven around the town, past the school, past the villages and past the offices as a sign to all the locals of the implications of opposing the 'unity of the motherland'. For more than an hour and a half I was paraded around the town, followed by three other trucks, each of which was displaying one Tibetan accused of a similar activity. While we were exhibited around town, the town people were told that we had been convicted of involvement in anti-Chinese government activities and that we should therefore be condemned and dishonoured by all of them. I saw many of the villagers crying as they watched the whole scene with fear. It was winter and the cold wind was piercing me like a thousand knives.

We were taken to Gyaltse Prison. We were each thrown in separate cells. Once inside, it was disheartening to see the bedding. I could hardly make out the difference between the mattress and the quilt. The quilt was so dirty and old that its original colour was unrecognisable. It was a dark room with no ventilation and light. I was wearing my monk's robe which they confiscated. Then, with the same type of cuffs as were on my hands, they manacled my legs and left me. For 5 months and 23 days, from February 16 to August 4, 1990, I was kept in complete isolation in the small dark room. I had no communication with anybody from the outside. Sometimes for lunch I was given Tsampa which was insipid and a cup of black tea. Interrogations would go on and on and I would be kept standing during them. It was extremely difficult.

Moreover, for an entire month and 5 days I was subjected to intense interrogation almost continuously. I was interrogated and the same questions were asked repeatedly. It was torturous. I would hardly get any rest whereas the interrogators would take turns to question me. I even had to eat standing. Despite the gruelling sessions I was subjected to, I still maintained my stance. My only victory over them was not giving-in and confessing to the alleged 'crime'. I was then 19 years old.

On February 27, 1990, the county PSB went to my house to instruct my mother and grandparents to advise me to admit to the charges against me. They were told that my sentence would be lighter if I were to accept my crimes and simply record a message for me on a tape. That same night I was made to listen to the pleading voices of my grandparents and mother. Torn between my grandparents' plea and my conviction that I should deny any involvement, I was filled with sadness and I cried. Yet, I remained steadfast. The officials were shocked with my behaviour and said, "you are like a rock climber carrying eggs on your head". My persistence meant extra punishment.

The interrogations continued and the weights around my legs were increased by another 25 gyama to 40 gyama (one gyama is equivalent to 500 grams) by adding another cuff around my leg, making it more difficult for me to move. The suffocating room and the weight were tormenting for me. The cold cell with its cement floor and the metal continuously around my legs damaged my health. I first started to suffer from arthritis then. It was extremely difficult for me to move around in the suffocating prison room. My convictions were still very strong and I refused to give in. Yet my thoughts were of my family who I knew were suffering because of me. This thought finally compelled me to confess on February 29, 1990.

After a day of confessing, they unchained 35 gyama weight off my legs. However, I continued to have 5 gyama weight on my legs for 5 more months. I then had fewer interrogation sessions and I was allowed to eat food that was sent from home. Nevertheless, I was not allowed to meet my parents or relatives even once. That was the saddest part because I knew my grandfather who I was very close to was not well and I was desperate to see him. He was apprehensive about my well-being and I knew that it would gravely effect his health.

My trial began on July 24, 1990 in the People's Court of Gyaltse County. I was charged with propagating 'counter-revolutionary' activities and sentenced to 4 years and six months detention in the prison and deprived of my political rights for 3 years. After my sentence was passed, I was allowed to meet my family and relatives. I then learnt that my grandfather had passed away in agony and a state of anxiety. He was 68 years old.

On August 4, 1990, I was transferred from Gyaltse to Nyari Prison of Shigatse. I was sent to work in the vegetable garden. I spent almost 3 months and 17 days in Nyari prison. On October 23, 1990, I was again transferred to Drapchi.

On April 27, 1991, a protest broke out in Drapchi Prison against the continued isolation of our fellow prisoners for attempting to hand over a letter to the then US Ambasssador James Lilley about the prison conditions. Chinese PAP came into Drapchi to subdue the protesting prisoners. Many prisoners suffered severe beatings at the hands of the prison guards. I was among them. A Chinese jailer of the 5th prison unit 'Tru Shao Hrung' slapped me hard across my right ear. The blow was so forceful that I believe the guard must have used a piece of wood or rubber to hit me. My ear was ringing for a long time afterwards. My hearing has been impaired since then. They then hit me on my back near the kidney with a rifle butt and I fell unconscious. I continued to feel the pain in the pit of my stomach for days yet I was never provided with any medication nor allowed to consult a doctor.

In Drapchi I had a target quota of 17,000 yuan to fulfil through my work. For two years I worked in the green house vegetable garden. It was tiresome and suffocating with no proper ventilation. I could feel the harmful consequences of working under such confined circumstances and my body being constantly exposed to the pesticides. Yet, like all my fellow inmates, I had no choice.

On August 15, 1994, my prison sentence of 4 years and 6 months was completed. Around 10.40 a.m., I was issued with my release paper.

My emotions were mixed. I had nothing to go back to and leaving my fellow prison mates was difficult. I felt most uneasy returning home, especially after my grandfather's death. I had been prohibited from returning to the monastery since my arrest. I was happy to be back to see my family and relatives yet I was confused and missed my friends in the prison.

Today, I have various health problems. I have difficulty hearing, I suffer from arthritis and I can not maintain my concentration for long. If I try to read a book, I have blurred vision.

PROFILE

Nun dies in custody

Phuntsok Yangkyi, a Tibetan nun and prisoner of conscience, died in a police hospital in Lhasa in June 4, 1994, allegedly as a result of ill-treatment. Aged 20, a nun from Michungri Nunnery, Phuntsok was serving a five-year sentence in Drapchi Prison for taking part in a pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa in February 1992. According to unofficial sources, she was beaten by prison guards after she and other nuns sang nationalist songs in the prison on February 11, 1994.

On February 3,1992, Phuntsok also known as Mizang was arrested for staging a peaceful demonstration with five other nuns in Barkhor, Lhasa. However, not long after starting, they were taken into police custody where they were incessantly beaten. The nuns were then handed over to Seitru Detention Centre where they were detained for a year and two months. Finally, the People's Intermediate Court of TAR gave her a prison sentence of five years and deprived her of her political rights for two years following her release. Subsequent to her trial she was transferred to Drapchi Prison.

While in prison, she continued to promulgate Tibet's independence and protest the Chinese presence in Tibet. On February 11, 1994, she and a group of other nuns sang nationalist songs. They received severe beatings resulting in serious injuries for Phuntsok. In late May or early June1994, she was transferred to the police hospital in Lhasa. Rinzin Choenyi, a former political prisoner who is now in exile, reports that Phuntsok Yangkyi was injected twice in her back so that a Chinese doctor could extract body fluid (Tibetan : Gyechu). Chinese believe that this fluid increases vitality. Phuntsok went into a coma after the doctor extracted this fluid from her back. Her nails, tongue and lips turned bluish black. She died six days after being taken to the hospital. Her parents were not allowed to see her body or to remove it as the authorities said that was against the law and, therefore, not permitted. When her parents made repeated requests the authorities finally relented and let them see the body under the condition that two policemen would escort them and that under no circumstances would they ever speak about the visit. The authorities maintained their initial position of not allowing them to take her body home for the traditional cremation ceremonies.

Phuntsok's body was then handed over to the Tomdhen (a person who performs the sky burial ceremony). The Tomdhen refused to perform the burial as the body was severely scarred. (According to Tibetan tradition sky burials can only be performed when the death occurs naturally). This was said in the presence of both her parents and the Chinese prison authorities. The body of the deceased was reportedly black and blue all over due to severe beatings and the right foot was completely black. Her eyes and mouth were smeared with blood. The body, although one of a young woman with traces of youth and freshness about her, looked repulsive.

In July 1994, her case was submitted by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture to the Chinese Government, who replied that the prison administration had discovered that Phuntsok had tuberculosis, had sent her to hospital for treatment, and that after her death the prison had arranged for her remains to be taken for burial in accordance with Tibetan custom.



Phuntsok Yangkyi

Phuntsok Yangkyi was from the fourth neighbourhood of Chudha County of Taktse District under Lhasa city. Her father's name is Kalsang Tashi and her mother's name is Norzom. She became a nun in 1988 in the Michungri nunnery near Lhasa where she was studying and was a nun for three years. Following her ordination, she had immense courage and enthusiasm to work for Tibet's independence. She was 20 years old at the time of her death.

Monk arrested, detained and disappeared

According to reliable sources, Gedun Kalsang was arrested in Xiling (Qinghai) either in May or June 1997 for having visited India.

Gedun Kalsang is a monk of Golok Rakya monastery from Golok Machen County. He is survived by his mother Pelkyi, and two elder brothers. His elder brother Choekyab and mother Pelkyi are nomads. His brother Jintho is a teacher in Tahai County.

He visited India in 1997 on a pilgrimage and, immediately upon his return to Tibet, he was arrested. Gedun Kalsang was then detained in Xiling, Amdo (Qinghai) for an unspecified time and was later handed over to authorities of the Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

At present neither his whereabouts nor the details of his sentence are known. It is not even known whether he is dead or alive.

Nuns detained for song in praise of Dalai Lama

During the third day of the Tibetan New Year in 1997, the authorities summoned all the prisoners of Drapchi prison, both political prisoners as well as criminals, and forced them to sing a song in praise of the Chinese government policy in Tibet.

Then a group of Chinese women criminals sang a song in praise of the Chinese communist government.

Soon after that, two nuns, Nyima of Poto Nunnery in Phenpo and Jamdron of Gyarak monastery, also in Phenpo, sang a song in praise of the Dalai Lama.

As a result they were beaten indiscriminately and were then held in solitary confinement. Reports indicate that they are still in solitary confinement.

Both of them had been detained in February 1994 for indulging in political activities. Moreover, since Jamdron's detention, her parents and relatives have not been allowed to visit her in prison and her father passed away without seeing her.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

April 30, 1998 Volume III: Number 8

Years of struggle to fund escape

Eighteen year old Sonam is one of many young Tibetans struggling to make ends meet in a "new Tibet" which China claims is enjoying higher income and living standards. Lack of schooling and employment opportunities in her village in Dege county, Chamdo region in eastern Tibet (we have not given the exact location) pushed Sonam into hard labour at age 16. Carrying piles of rocks for at least 10 hours a day to construct China's new roads in Tibet and being paid about 60 cents a day - a fraction of the salary received by Chinese workers - Sonam's only thought was of escape.

My father, Sonam Tsering, passed away when I was 15 years old. My mother, Tsering Wangmo, used to tell me about how my father had suffered under Chinese occupation. He had been a monk and Chinese authorities found him in possession of religious scriptures. When he refused to give up the scriptures, he was beaten and later he died from related ailments. The Chinese authorities also made him give up his religious vows. He was forced to grow his hair long, to plough the fields and to marry my mother.

My parents were farmers. They owned land but it was confiscated by the Chinese authorities and redistributed. Our allocated piece of land was full of rocks and infertile. It was so arid that the crops barely sustained us. I had to help my family work the land and never received any schooling. My brother, who is nine or ten years old, is a monk.

Construction labour

When I was 16 years old I went to work carrying rocks on different road construction sites. The Tibetan workers were very poor and some were as young as 14. We were working for Chinese who told us that we would be paid 10 or 11 yuan per day but when our monthly salary came we only received 5 or 6 yuan (60 or 70 cents) per day.

Most of the workers on the road sites were Chinese and they were usually young. The Chinese working as cooks on the site received 50 to 70 yuan per day and the Chinese labourers received up to 100 yuan per day. The Chinese workers also received all their food and lodging. When they left Tibet they had made so much money that they could afford to fly back to China. Tibetans on the other hand had almost nothing left over after they had paid their living costs.

Tibetan workers had to rent housing somewhere close to the construction site. We were cheated a lot by the Chinese owners; because we were not educated and could not read or write Chinese it was easy for them to take advantage of us. I paid about 40 yuan per month for rent and in addition I had to pay for electricity, water and a "tax" for any space I used outside the walls of my room. I had to pay one yuan, six mosey for every "tui" (unit measurement) of electricity used but since I couldn't read the electricity meter it was impossible to check. For the use of a tap I had to pay 15 to 20 yuan if the landlord was fair and otherwise 25 yuan per month.

Every day we would cry but we had to keep working very hard and even then we wouldn't get paid on time. We worked from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. and then from 2 p.m. to at least 7 p.m. Sometimes, if the work was not complete, we would have to work until midnight but still we would be paid the normal amount for the day. There was no such thing as a "rest day"; we would work every day until the construction was finished. This is the Chinese system of working and if we took any rest then we would not be paid. Each time the particular construction was completed we had to go in search of further work.

Collection of Yatsa Gunbhu

My earnings from the road construction work were barely enough for me to live on and it was necessary for me to find extra work so that I could send some money to my family.

In the summer season I would go to collect yatsa gunbhu (a Tibetan medicinal plant) with my 14 year old sister. This plant is very difficult to find and can only be seen in sunlight from ground level. Some people were able to gather up to 60 or 70 plants at a time but my sister and I would usually only be able to find 10 to 15 plants each time. There are many other Tibetans doing the same work and so there is strong competition amongst people to find the plants first.

There is a lot of labour involved in this work: once the plant is gathered it must be dried, cleaned and weighed. Then we would later sell it to Chinese traders. For one gyama (500 gram) we would receive 1000 yuan and in one season my sister and I would make together between 600 to 1000 yuan which we would give to our whole family.

Village

There were no Chinese people living in our village and so we had no electricity and no roads. There was no school and no health services. The villagers lived on small business, farming and construction work. It was impossible to live solely on cultivation and people were forced to search for additional income to survive.

Chinese officials would come every autumn to collect taxes on grains, butter and animals. The number of family members determined the amount of taxes we had to pay. Our family had four or five yak, three cows, one dzo (hybrid of yak and cow) and a few goats. We were taxed 50 gyama (25 kg) of grain and for every two cows, for example, we would be taxed three gyama of butter.

Sometimes officials would come to our village to announce birth control measures. They would call public meetings in which they would distribute birth control pills and announce that women who exceeded a birth limit of three children would be fined. These officials were mostly Tibetans as the villagers would not have understood Chinese. Sometimes meetings would be called in the villages to announce that the possession of photographs of the Dalai Lama was forbidden.

My mother would tell us that we had to bear our poverty; that we should stitch our ripped clothes and be very careful with money. She was always urging me to try to save a little money in order to escape to exile. She would say, "Even if you are arrested, you must keep trying".

Escape attempts

I first tried to leave Tibet in the summer of 1996. I had saved a little money from selling yatsa gunbhu and I went to Lhasa and paid a guide 700 yuan. At Chushu Samba - a bridge near Toelung and on the border of Tibet and Nepal - our group of seven was arrested. We were each interrogated separately many times by Chinese military officials at the border about why we had been escaping. They searched us and the 100 yuan that I had was snatched from me. They grabbed hold of the chengdue (sacred thread) we wore around our necks and squeezed tightly, threatening to cut our necks if we did not reveal who our guide was and who had sent us to India.

Our group was then taken to a prison near the border and detained there for 15 days. We were finally released when some people in our group paid the Chinese officers 200 yuan. I had had all of my money taken and so some others in the group paid for me. We were told to return to our village.

When I returned home my mother continued to urge me to escape. "Even if you are arrested on the border 10 times, you must keep trying to escape," she told me. So again I began gathering yatsa gunbhu and slowly saving money. In autumn 1997 I was ready to try again and this time I left from Shigatse after paying a guide 750 yuan.

While travelling in a truck to the border, two trucks with armed Chinese stopped us. Our group of 15 or 16 people was put in a dark truck and we were taken to Drapchi Prison. We were kept there for 10 or 11 days and interrogated.

The prison officials showed us electric cattle prods and threatened to use them if we did not reveal why we were escaping and who had sent us. We told them we were going on a pilgrimage. I was beaten several times and electric shocks were applied on my back. These interrogation sessions would last 10 to 15 minutes and the interrogators, who were usually Tibetans, would come one after another. Sometimes one official would do the questioning while the other one would carry out the beating. They would hold us by the hair while kicking us and beating us.

Before we were released all of our personal information was collected: our names; details of our families; and where we lived. We could not read or write and instead of signing the document we had to put our fingerprints to it. Again we were told to return to our villages.

After my release I stayed in Lhasa for one or two months and then went back to my village. My mother was still advising me to escape and again, after saving money from selling yatsa gunbhu, I went to Lhasa in March 1998. I paid 850 yuan to another guide and there were 27 people in our escape group. We travelled to Chushu shen, changing trucks several times. We walked over the Chushu bridge (where I was caught on my first escape attempt) at night and while going through villages or crossing bridges we would get out of the truck and walk. From Lhatse we had to walk to the Shakambu border of Nepal.

From Lhasa to Kathmandu it took 19 days. For many days we had to walk through heavy snow and sleep on it with only tsampa (roasted barley flour) and dry meat to sustain us. I arrived in Kathmandu on April 12, 1998.

11 Monks Imprisoned Tells Expelled Monk

In November 1993 four monks belonging to Chang Ta Lung monastery staged a demonstration in Lhasa, carrying the Tibetan national flag and calling for Tibet's independence, said a recent arrival who was also a former monk of the same monastery. The informant, who wishes to keep his name confidential for security reasons, is a resident of Sumdring Shang, Lhundup County, of Phendak village.

The source describes that the incident took place two years prior to his joining the monastery in early 1995. The four monks were identified as Pasang (20) of Tha-lung from Lhundup county, Phurbu (30) from Phenpo Pu-Shar in Jema shang, Lobsang Tsundue (30) from Hor and Bhuchung (20) from Phenpo County. The four went in a procession, circumambulating the Barkhor (central market). When they were in their third round, the local police of the Barkhor arrested them and handed them to the Lhasa City PSB (Public Security Bureau). They were detained for five or six months in Gutsa detention centre. While in Gutsa, they were indiscriminately tortured, such as having cold water splashed on their bodies during the cold winter and their bodies jabbed with electric batons. They were then transferred to Drapchi prison after their sentences were passed. Except for Pasang who was sentenced to an 11 years prison term, the details of the other sentences are not known. However, they are currently held in Drapchi prison.

The source reports that there were 130 monks at the time when he joined the monastery. The authorities have since limited the number of monks allowed to remain in the monastery to only 106.

The second political activity occurred on December 20 1995, in which seven monks from the same monastery staged a

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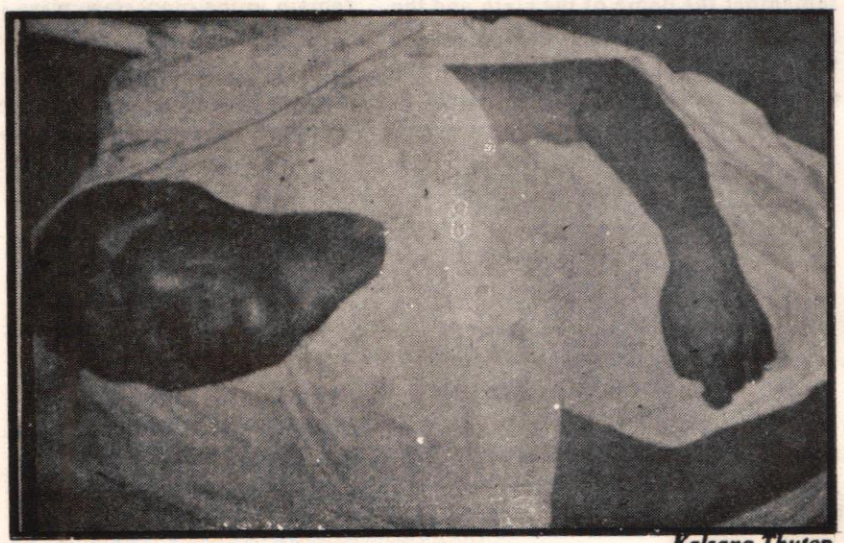
PROFILE

Died for translating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Kalsang Thutop, a leading Tibetan freedom activist, aged 49, died in Drapchi prison in Lhasa at 4 a.m. on July 5, 1996. He had served one third of his 18 year prison term. Kalsang Thutop, also known as Jampel Khedrup, a Drepung monk, took part in a peaceful demonstration for which he was arrested and sentenced. He was violently assaulted and inhumanely tortured during the time of his interrogation. Although totally battered he was not provided with proper medical treatment which he required. Kalsang passed away in the prison hospital as a direct result of the severe beatings and torture he sustained at the hands of the prison officials.

Kalsang, also known as Bagdro or by his ordination name of Jampel Khedrup, was among ten monks who were sentenced at a public rally on November 30, 1989 and received a 15 year prison term. Kalsang was described as the main culprit in founding an organisation which distributed "counterrevolutionary propaganda". He was also found guilty of "collecting information and passing it to the enemy, seriously undermining national security" and "illegally crossing the national boundary", according to a Radio Lhasa account of the rally.

Kalsang Thutop who came from Sangda in Toelung county was one of the four leading members of a secret pro-democracy group in Drepung Monastery which had printed a famous booklet on democracy as well as a translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was later discovered by the police. "An organisation built on the rule of force and coercion can never be justified", the monks wrote in their clandestine 1988 booklet which was entitled, "The Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet".



Kalsang Thutop

People with different individual views of what course of action to follow will be able to exercise their democractic rights and to say what they think without need of fear, hypocrisy or concealment," the monks wrote in their description of a democratic Tibet which would be "administered in the future by Tibetans, for Tibetans to decide Tibetan affairs".

Sources in Tibet with close connections to the prisoner said that he had been ill but described his death as "unexpected". For at least the first five years of his sentence, Kalsang, then working as a cook in the prison kitchen, was not allowed to have visitors and in 1993 when friends tried to visit him in the prison they were told that he was no longer there.

"Kalsang Thutop was transferred from Sangyip prison around the end of March with Ngawang Gyaltsen to Drapchi. He was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment.

In Drapchi on the morning of July 4, 1996, he was taken for interrogation. When he returned a few hours later, he could not utter a single word. Apparently he had sustained serious injuries as a result of severe beatings by the prison officials. He was immediately hospitalised in the prison hospital and the very next morning he passed away", reports Jampel Tsering, a former political prisoner who is now living in exile.

cont. from p. 2

similar demonstration in Lhasa. They called for Tibet's independence carrying the Tibetan national flag. They were immediately arrested and held in Gutsa for six months during which time they underwent severe torture. Thereafter, they were shifted to Drapchi prison for terms ranging from three to six years. However, the exact terms and details of the sentences are not known. The name of the seven monks are : Dhargay (25), Tseyang (18), and Jigme, all from Sertsa County, Norbu Phuntsok from Phuntoe County and Pasang (20) from Phenpo Lhundup County. The source did not remember the name of the sixth and the seventh monks. In total eleven monks from Chang Ta Lung monastery are currently serving their prison terms in Drapchi.

The source further elaborates that an 11 member work-team arrived in the monastery on February 22, 1997. The work-team stayed at the monastery for three and a half months. Though the official limit of the number of monks in the monastery was 106, in fact, only 96 monks were allowed to stay. Around 20 monks had been expelled since the work-team came to the monastery, added the escapee.

The expelled monks include monks below the age of 18 and others who had not conformed to the principles laid down by the work-team. Those of the monks who were allowed to remain in the monastery were issued a special pass; this pass permits the monks to remain only in the monastery, and their movement to other places is restricted. The authorities have threatened the monks that if they do not pledge to agree to the principles, the monastery would be closed and its property confiscated. The work-team also threatened that those of the monks who were expelled would not be allowed to do normal work such as farming or being a nomad or to conduct any business. However, this has not been strictly followed. Most of the expelled monks have since started to lead the life of a regular layperson.

The source also discussed a nunnery called Neykar nunnery which had about 85 or 86 nuns prior to the arrival of the work-team. Since their arrival, many of the nuns have been expelled causing the number of nuns to drop to only 12.

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

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Technology has finally managed to get through all the rain storms of Dharamsala, up the slopes of the Himalayas to reach our power point. We are now happy to announce that we have been connected to the Internet! So with the set-up of Internet facility in Dharamsala, our old e-mail address

tchrd@dsala.tibet.net

is being replaced by

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Please note the change and excuse us for the inconvenience caused.

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

May 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 9

Shooting in Drapchi

In a horrific display of power, 150 political prisoners in Drapchi Prison were recently fired at following a peaceful demonstration.

On May 1, 1998, in a shocking incident, 150 Tibetan political prisoners were shot at following a peaceful demonstration describes a confidential letter sent from Tibet and passed to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy on May 15, 1998. The prisoners are all currently detained in Drapchi, the "Tibet Autonomous Region's" No. 1 Prison.

The shooting occurred when the 150 political prisoners flew the Tibetan national flag and demonstrated within the prison compound. Shortly afterwards, the officials of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and People's Armed Police (PAP) force stormed into the prison to reassert control over the 150 demonstrators in a swift and forceful reaction to the demonstration.

The report further elaborates that armed police used every forcible means to clamp down on the demonstrators, leading to firing by the PSB and PAP armed forces on the unarmed political prisoners. It is not known how many prisoners were either killed or injured. Many are believed to have later been put in solitary confinement and to undergo brutal atrocities in those cells.

Youths flee Tibet

Yangzom Dolma, aged 17, and Tsundu, aged 20, are two amongst the continuing exodus of young Tibetans leaving Tibet. Almost all such youngsters flee in the hope of receiving education in exile: an education that will teach them about their language, their history, their culture and religion; an education that is very different to that given inside Tibet itself.

Yangzom and Tsundu have been unusually fortunate in that they had the chance to receive schooling: Yangzom for 10 years and Tsundu for nine years. The vast majority of Tibetan children do not have the chance to attend school for more than a few years before having to leave due to high school fees, discrimination in favour of Chinese students or because they simply cannot understand the teacher when he or she speaks in Chinese.

Tsundu was able to attend one of the 40 "special" secondary schools established in the Tibetan province of Amdo that teach exclusively in Tibetan language. As a student in the Ngapa (Ch: Apa) "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture"(TAP) Tibetan Medium Middle School, Tsundu had the chance to study in his own language.

Despite this, Tsundu reports, "All of our subjects were supposedly in Tibetan - language, history and literature - yet the "Tibetan history" subject consisted only of Chinese history. We were taught about the creation and success of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and it was assumed that Tibet was incorporated into the PRC. Even ancient Tibetan history was not referred to in our textbook. Our teachers were Tibetan and the Chinese school authorities forbade them from speaking of Tibetan independence but sometimes they would risk mentioning it."

Yangzom attended a "Mirig" middle school in Dechen "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" (in the Tibetan province of Kham and close to the border with China) meaning it was especially for China's "ethnic groups". Fifty per cent of the school's 2000 students were Chinese and Tibetans made up the next largest group with 500 students. No Tibetan was taught in the school and everything was in Chinese.

Yangzom says "We were discouraged from speaking in Tibetan even outside class and we were told that we would fall behind in our studies. If we did speak in Tibetan we would be ignored. The teachers were also from different ethnic groups but all had a good knowledge of Chinese subjects and the Tibetan teachers had no knowledge of Tibetan subjects. No Chinese language was taught as it was assumed that we already knew it well enough. I had learned Chinese in my primary school."

Both Tsundu and Yangzom had to pay a lot for their chance to attend school. In Tsundu's Tibetan medium school, students paid 1000 yuan (approximately US$125) per year, supposedly to cover food and books. In Yangzom's school, the "poorer" students were charged 300 yuan ($40) per month for food and books, while the "wealthier" students had to pay 400 yuan ($50) per month.

In March 1990, Dorjee Tseten, then Chairman of the "TAR People's Government" said at the Third Meeting of the Seventh Session of the Chinese People's Congress in Beijing that the "Tibet Autonomous Region" was still a very poor region with a per capita yearly income of only about 200 yuan (US$25). There is therefore no chance for the "average" child to have access to a school such as Yangzom's or Tsundu's.

Yangzom Dolma

There were four children in my family: two boys and two girls. My parents are farmers. I studied at primary school and middle school in Dechen "TAP" for a total of 10 years, completing my studies in July 1997.

I attended "Mirig Lobdra" (Ethnic Groups Middle School).

There were 200 students in this school consisting of eight different ethnic



Tibetan children in Tibet

groups. Fifty per cent of the students were Han Chinese and Tibetans made up the next largest group with 500 students. Close friendships were not common amongst the ethnic groups because of our differences and the Chinese students used to call us a name in Chinese meaning "dirty minority".

Our subjects were: Chinese history, geography, politics (concentrating on socialism and its advantages), chemistry, biology and astronomy. No Chinese language was taught as it was assumed that we already knew it well enough. I had learned Chinese in my primary school.

We had to pay only for text-books and food; the poorer students were charged 300 yuan (US$40) per month while the wealthier students had to pay 400 yuan ($50).

From Dechen "TAP", a maximum of four students got the chance to go on to further study in "TAR". They had to make it very clear that they were going to the "TAR" and distinguish it from our area as if we were not part of Tibet.

After completing middle school in July 1997 I returned home for three months and then went to Lhasa. My uncle had gone to India 14 years ago and had returned to Tibet last year. He had explained about schools in exile and the Dalai Lama and said that I would be looked after in India and so I decided to leave.

I tried to escape with a group of 30 people which included my uncle but we were arrested in Lhatse and taken to Shigatse where we were detained for 15 days. We were asked about why we were leaving Tibet but we said that we were going for pilgrimage to Mount Kailash. Some of the people in the group were beaten a lot and our money was taken although I don't know how much this was as my uncle was keeping it.

After the Tibetan New Year at the start of March, 1998 we again attempted to escape through Lhatse and Shakumbu and this time we were successful and reached Nepal on 12 April 1998.

Tsundu

My parents are nomads. I attended primary school in Marthang County for five years. I attended Ngapa "TAP" Tibetan Medium Middle school from the age of nine to 18 years.

Except for our food and books, everything else was provided by the school and the facilities were good. There were 13 counties in Ngapa "TAP" and those with good marks from each county were admitted into this school. If we scored good marks here we would also have a chance of further studies, possibly in China.

On May 4, 1997 - Chinese Youth Day - 40 students from our school formed the "Rig-Tsel Tsok Pa" (Arts and Literature Association). Myself and another boy from the school called M, aged 19, were the founders of the group. To commemorate the foundation, on that day all of our members gathered in the school auditorium and in front of all the students we sang a song of praise to the Dalai Lama. Behind us we hung a flag we had made. The flag was the size of a desk showing a snow mountain in the centre with a sun on one side and a moon on the other. At the bottom of the flag the name of our association was written.

The morning of the next day many local police officers came to the school and seven students from the group were arrested. I was amongst the seven who were chosen because we had been leading the song. The police had brought sacks with them and they tied these over our heads and handcuffed us when we were arrested. The sack was left in place for about two hours and when finally it was removed we were close to death from suffocation.

We were taken to the Shang (township) police station. Every night police officers would get drunk and then come to beat us. We knew that they were drunk from the smell and the way they staggered when they moved. Each time they would bring the same sacks and cover our heads and tie our hands while they beat us. We couldn't see who was hitting us or what they were beating us with. Sometimes I could tell that they were using their fists, sometimes sticks, sometimes they kicked us. I don't know what else they were using or how long the beatings lasted.

We had been arrested on the charge that our flag resembled the forbidden Tibetan national flag and also because we had sung a song dedicated to the Dalai Lama. I don't know what happened to the flag after we were arrested but I heard that it was taken by other students. We were interrogated daily - usually during our nightly beatings - about our group's "political activities". If we admitted to "political involvement" then they would stop beating us.

While we were in detention we were fed only twice a day: in the morning we were given two tingmo (steamed buns) and then in the evening again only two tingmo. After three days of detention five of the students were released upon payment of 5000 yuan (US$625) each. The students were threatened with expulsion from school if they did not pay and each paid the money from their own pocket. The five were then permitted to return to school.

M and I were kept for 10 days in total and we too had to pay 5000 yuan each in order to be released. We had been labelled the "leaders" of the group and as a result we were expelled from the school. Upon release one official from Ngapa "TAP" came to collect us and take us home and we were told that we could not attend any school or hold any kind of employment for three years. When we were released we were suffering severe pain from the police beatings and it took several months of rest at home to recover fully.

I remained at home until March 8, 1998 helping my parents. M and I then escaped to Nepal from Rorki County.

Starving for Justice

On March 10, 1998, the Tibetan Youth Congress, an NGO based in Dharamsala, India, initiated one of the most resolute campaigns ever undertaken during the 40 years Tibetans have been living in exile. Six people representing the six million Tibetans decided to undertake a hunger strike unto death in Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the capital city of India. The following three demands were put forward to the United Nations which sought implementation of the recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists' December 1997 report:

- to resume its debate on the question of Tibet based on its resolutions of 1959, 1961 and 1965,
- to appoint a Special Rapporteur to investigate the situation of human rights in Chinese occupied Tibet,
- to appoint a special envoy to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Tibet and initiate a UN supervised plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Tibetan people.

The demands represented the dreams of all Tibetans. A lot of awareness of the problems faced by Tibetans was generated through this action and Tibetans all over the world held relay hunger strikes in solidarity with the six courageous people. A short biography of each of the hunger strikers follows.

Palzom, the only woman among the group, was known as "Peace March Mother" after her participation in the two peace marches for Tibet held in 1995 and 1996. Born in Shigatse in central Tibet, Palzom's determination to do anything she could for her country dates back to a very young age after she lost both her parents as a result of Chinese oppression.

Dawa Tsering is a 53 year old former soldier from Kunpheling settlement in north-east India. The father of six children, Dawa Tsering believes his wife and children understand his actions and know that what he is doing is for their benefit.

Karma Sichoe, a 25 year-old youth, could be mistaken for a regular young man with a pony tail out to enjoy life. But beyond this exterior lies a fierce determination to participate in the struggle for independence and to establish his identity as a Tibetan. A former student of Tibetan Children's Village, Karma Sichoe was a thangka painter for six years until he joined the strike.

Yungdrung Tsering, a 28 year old thangka painter, has a hazy recollection of his early childhood. After losing his mother when he was very young, Yungdrung was brought up in the Tibetan Children's Village school. He left school to master thangka painting where he met and became friends with Karma.

Kunzang is a 70 year old with one blind eye who fled Chinese repression in Tibet in 1978. He was a nomad back home in Shelkhar in central Tibet and led a very contented life until the "liberation of Tibet" in 1950. Kunzang also walked from Dharamsala to Delhi in the thousand kilometre marches for freedom in 1995 and 1996.

Dawa Gyalpo, born in Ngari in Western Tibet, fled when he was only 12 years old. A return trip to Tibet in 1985 prompted him to make a pledge to himself to free Tibet from the clutches of the Chinese. It tore his heart to see the pathetic life the Tibetans were reduced to leading and the extent of the influence of Chinese. It was this pledge that led him to join the hunger strike.

However, on 26 April, on the 47th day of the hunger strike, three of the hunger strikers were removed by the Indian police to hospital. The next day the other three were also removed at the intervention of the Indian police and forcibly taken to Ram Manohar Hospital in Delhi. This coincided with a visit by the chief of the People's Liberation Army, General Fu Quanyou, to the Indian capital. The President of the TYC stated, "The authorities were also "scared" the high-profile hunger strike would mar the first-ever visit to India by a chief of the Chinese army, General Fu Quanyou...The forceful hospitalisation of three Tibetans coincides with the arrival of General Fu. It was a move meant to placate the Chinese leadership at the cost of Tibetan issue." The six hunger strikers are still in hospital recovering from their arduous experience.

When the police arrived to remove the last three hunger strikers, Thupten Ngodup, a 60 year old man, covered his body with petrol and set himself on fire. He suffered from 90 per cent burns and died at midnight on 28 April, 1998, one day later. Thupten Ngodup is being regaled as a martyr for the Tibetan cause by Tibetans living in exile.

Five more Tibetans started a hunger strike unto death on April 27, 1998. They are:

1) Venerable Jampa Kalsang, age 23, male
2) Tsering Dorjee, age 37, male
3) Kalden Norbu, age 47, male
4) Tsering Gonkyab, age 55, male
5) Phuntsok Semsang, age 25, male

Thupten Ngodup was on the list to join the second group of hunger strikers and his portrait occupies the sixth cot with the others. Initially some of the hunger strikers even refused to drink water, however, after repeated requests from the Tibetan Youth Congress, they have agreed to drink one glass of water a day.

Supporters from all over the world have expressed their solidarity with the hunger strikers although no steps have yet been taken to implement the hunger strikers' demands. In Dharamsala, India, the seat of the government-in-exile, the Tibetan community is holding a candlelight vigil every week as a mark of respect to the deceased in accordance with Tibetan custom.

A letter from Tibet arrived shorlty before the first group of hunger strikers were forcibly removed to hospital:

To: The Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and the six hunger strikers

From: The "TIBET FREEDOM" organisation inside (occupied) Tibet.

Dear brothers and sisters,

To begin with, the "Tibet Freedom" organisation and the six million Tibetans from great motherland greets His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exile Tibetans. In addition, the "Tibet Freedom" organisation and the Tibetans inside Tibet commends the

heroism, courage and dedication of the six Tibetans who are in Hunger Strike Unto Death at New Delhi, the capital of India for over 40 days. The worsening health condition is a serious concern to us all Tibetans. We hope you all will be safe and also achieve your goals.

The "Tibet Freedom" organisation and all the Tibetans appeals:

To the United Nations and the International Community in general and the countries like United States, England, France, Germany and China in particular and their governments to take interest and listen to the demands of the Hunger Strikers.(We further request) you to listen to the voice of the Tibetan people on the Tibetan issue and their views. Similarly be informed about Tibet and support the wishes of the six million Tibetans.

United Nations and its members should debate on the question of Tibet as soon as possible. We hope that the Chinese government will support the (process) of dialogue and solve the question of Tibet in a peaceful and non-violent manner and Tibet will return to be a place of Freedom and peace.

The "Tibet Freedom" organisation and all the Tibetans urgently appeal and expect that the Chinese government will courageously and good mannerly take an open and farsighted step in order have a dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile based on history that will result into a realistic solution at the earliest.

The means propagated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama for solving the Tibetan question are realistic and practical. Besides that has taken into consideration the long term interest of both the sides. The Chinese government should realize this.

Once again with greetings and bows from all the Tibetans (in occupied Tibet).

ON BEHALF OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE "TIBET FREEDOM" ORGANISATION.

Issued on 16th Day of April, 1998 from Lhasa.

(The original message was in Chinese Characters)

Martyr for Tibet: Thupten Ngodup



"I appreciate the Tibetan Youth Congress organizing this hunger-strike unto death. I admire the six hunger-strikers and all those Tibetans back in Tibet. I am happy and at the same time proud in getting the opportunity to be one of the hunger-strikers in the second batch and I have no regrets. In future, I hope that the Tibetans will continue to take part in activities like this. I have full faith in the Middle-Way Approach of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and it is very important for all Tibetans to think this way."

Those were among the last words of Thupten Ngodup who became a symbol of undying patriotism as he set himself ablaze for the cause of the Tibetan struggle. Thupten Nogdup, aged 60, passed away at midnight on 28 April, 1998 at Dr Ram Manohar Hospital, New Delhi, hours after he committed self immolation. This desperate act of Thupten Ngodup exemplifies the growing frustration among Tibetans in exile. Tibetans have so far consistently fought for their freedom without taking up arms. However, Tibetans have now resorted to taking more serious steps; sacrificing their precious lives in order to gain international recognition for their cause. After all, what more can you give but your life?

Thupten Ngodup, a former monk at Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse, was born in Pen-nak in Tsang province of Tibet. In 1959 he fled Tibet through Sikkim in north-east India. He worked as a road-construction worker in Bomdila for about a year. From there he went to the Tibetan settlement in Bylakuppe in south India. In October 1963, he enrolled in the Tibetan section of the Indian army.

He was a veteran of the Bangladesh independence war in 1971. He resigned from the army in 1987 and came to Dharamsala around 1988. Upon his arrival in Dharamsala, he worked as the cowherd of Drip Tsechokling Monastery and sometimes also worked as the cook there.

Thupten Ngodup had no immediate family members in exile so the Monastery gave him a small plot of land where he built a little hut. Towards the end of last year, he was admitted to the old people's home for ex-armymen in Herbertpur, near Dehra Dun.

In April 1996 he joined the Department of Security as its peon. He worked in this department until he resigned to participate in the 1997 peace march to Delhi in December 1996.

Thupten Ngodup was a quiet man, not given to talking much. He was a hard worker and full of patriotism. He participated in both peace marches. During the unto-death hunger-strike he voluntarily attended to the needs of the first group of six hunger-strikers.

One of his closest friends, Tenzin, who lives in McLeod Ganj, acted as his witness when he enrolled himself in the unto-death hunger-strike the Tibetan Youth Congress organised. He told Tenzin not to tell anyone about his enrollment. He said he saw no alternative but to do this as he felt that his life was being wasted. Tenzin signed as a witness.

Sometime before he left for Delhi, Thupten Ngodup dropped by Tenzin's house. He left the key of his house with him and told him to give anything of value to the Tibetan Youth Congress. It was then that Tenzin had some idea of the seriousness of Thubten Ngodup's intentions. He also asked Tenzin to donate his small house to the monastery.

Before his death, on the evening of 28 April, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Thupten Ngodup and the other six hunger-strikers in hospital in Delhi. Thupten Ngodup will always be remembered for his courageous act in sacrificing his life for his country.

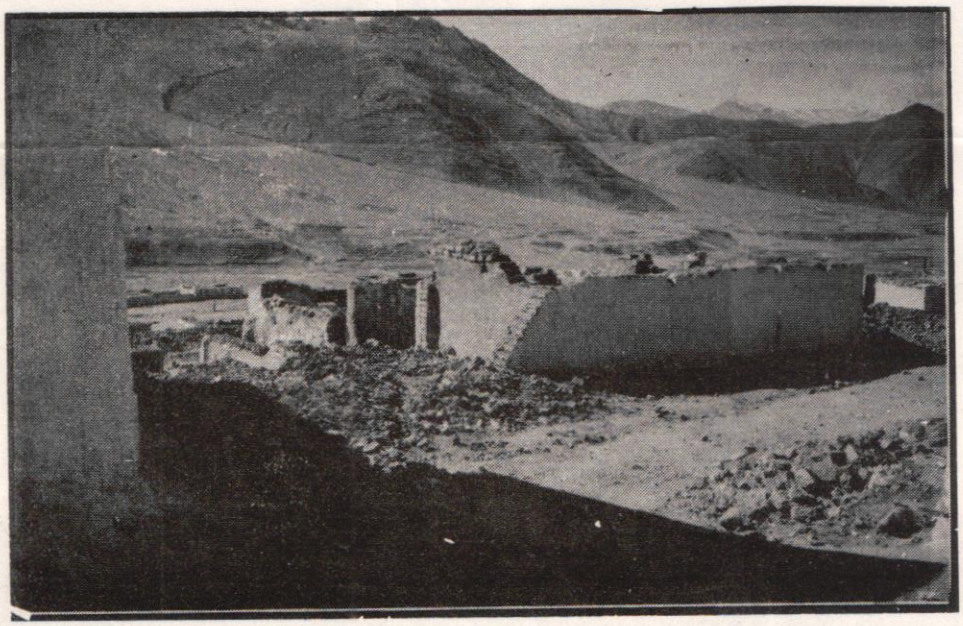
Rakor Nunnery Forcibly Closed

According to recent information received from within Tibet, Rakor Nunnery in Bang Village in Toelung Dechen County, which is about 12 km from Lhasa, was forcibly shut down following the entry of Chinese "work-team" members to conduct the infamous "patriotic re-education" sessions on March 17, 1997. Before it was closed, 80 nuns lived at Rakor Nunnery.

The Nunnery was reconstructed by Ven. Do Ngag after it had been practically destroyed during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 -1976. She took a personal interest in reconstructing the ruined Nunnery, and exerted every effort to raise funds for the renovation work. After the completion of the renovations, 80 nuns resided in the Nunnery until Chinese "work-team" members arrived there and disrupted the peaceful environment. When the nuns refused to comply with the instructions of the "work-teams" all of them were expelled, resulting in the complete closure of the Nunnery. Sine then, the nuns' rooms have been destroyed and the wooden planks of their beds sold.

However, in an attempt to camouflage the present condition of the Nunnery which has once again been partially destroyed, the Chinese authorities have issued false identity cards to the nuns which state that they are nuns at Rakor Nunnery despite the fact that they have been expelled. A huge sign that reads "Dechen County Rakor Nunnery Management Committee" hangs from the ruins of the empty Nunnery.

Below is a photo depicting the current state of Rakor Nunnery



12 Tibetan Youths Arrested

According to an unconfirmed report reaching Dharamsala, Chinese police opened fire on a group of 12 Tibetan youths at Dram on the Chinese border. Two of them were reported to be seriously injured.

The incident occurred on April 26, 1998 when 12 Tibetan youths were attempting to cross the border. The Chinese border police opened fire at them without any provocation. The two youths who were shot were reportedly taken to a hospital and the remaining 10 were arrested and taken to a prison Shigatse, most likely to Nyari Prison.

It is reported that the Chinese authorities have tightened the border over the past few months following the announcement by Tibetans that they intend to undertake a non-violent Satyagraha movement to end China's repression in Tibet and salvage their cultural identity. It is speculated that the Tibetan youths were shot at the border to prevent such undertakings.

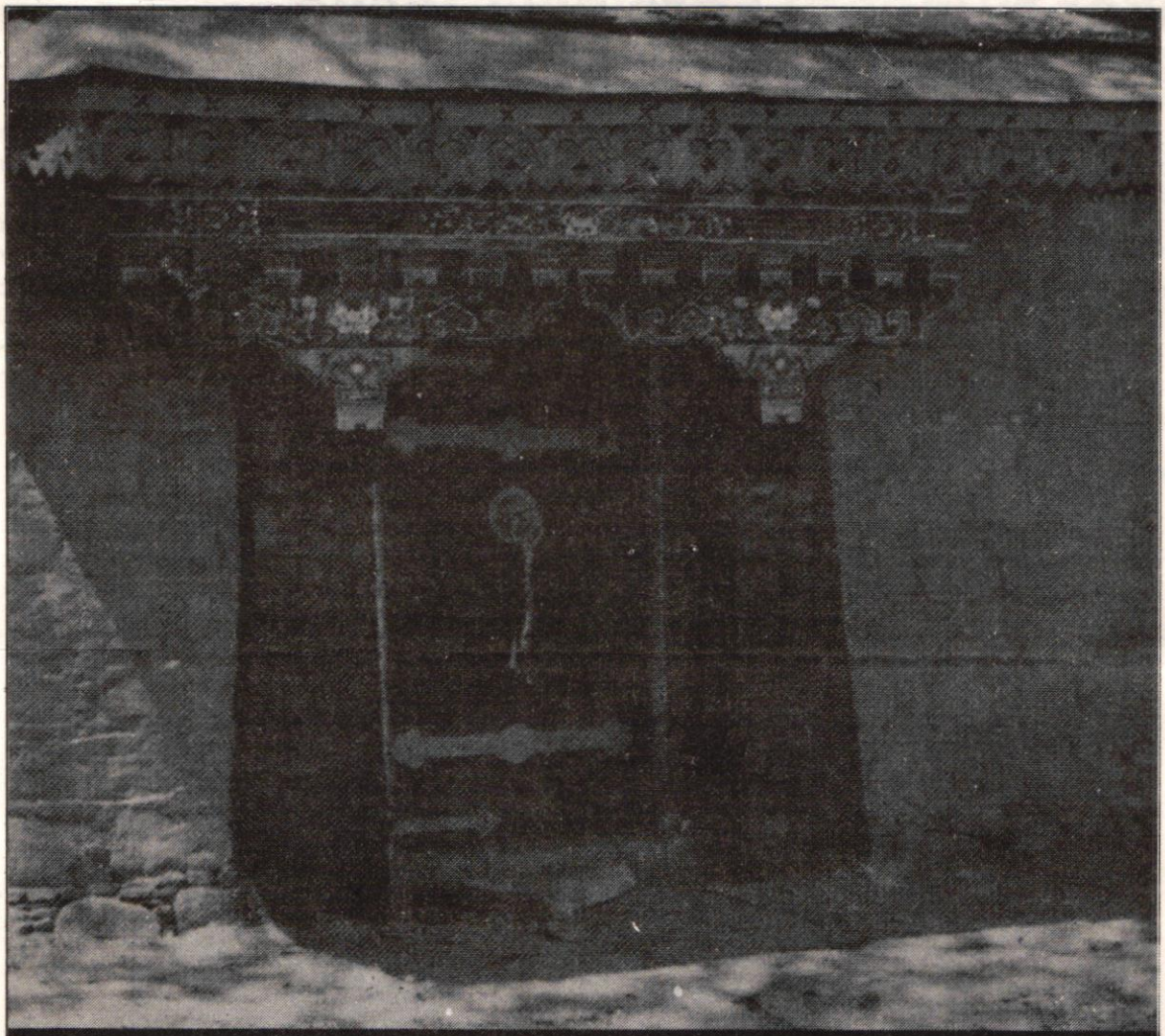
Ngawang Choephel still in Shigatse

According to a former political prisoner from Shigatse, Ngawang Choephel who was sentenced to 18 years on a false charge o espionage activities, is being held in Nyari prison in Shigatse. Th whereabouts of Ngawang Choephel has not been known since h was reported to have been taken to Drapchi prison in Lhasa a yea ago.

Ngawang Choephel was briefly transferred to Drapchi priso and was returned to his previous cell in Nyari prison. The reaso for his return was not known. The informer reported that Ngawan is planning to appeal to higher authorities but has no furthe information. Ngawang is reported to be in poor health.

Ngawang Choephel's mother Sonam Dekyi is still undertaking lone battle in Delhi making appeals to the Chinese authorities t permit her to visit her son before she dies. But all her appeals hav been ignored.

The thirty-one-year old Ngawang Choephel has bee detained since September 1995.



CLOSING THE DOORS

Religious Repression in Tibet

In January 1996, Chinese authorities warned , "(t)hose who make use of religion to interfere with administrative, judicial martial, educational and other social affairs, especially those who take advantage of religious reasons to split the country, must be severely cracked down upon according to law". Three months later on April 28, 1998, China's national "Strike Hard" campaign was launched inside Tibet. While the official aim was to crack down severely on general crime and corruption, in Tibet the campaign was targeted at "splittists who supported Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama".

"Closing the Doors: Religious Repression in Tibet" is a report compiled after intensive monitoring of the "Strike Hard" campaign. The principal part of this report is based on testimonials from Tibetan refugees, the majority of whom are monks and nuns who endured the Chinese repression and were forced to leave their monasteries and nunneries to seek freedom to practise their religion outside their homeland. It demonstrates an extremely widespread and systematic crackdown on religion by China.

To order this book we would appreciate a minimum price of Rs.50/- for India, Nepal and Bhutan or US $ 5 if you are resident abroad. You may pay by International Money Order or by cheque in favour of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. Thank You.

PROFILE

Died after prolonged illness

Deaths in custody or deaths related to torture in Chinese prisons in Tibet have distinct characteristics. Often many such deaths only occur outside the prison although the reason is directly linked to the severe inhumane beatings and torture inflicted at the time of interrogations. Deaths sometimes occur even after prolonged illness as demonstrated by Phurbu Tsering's death.

Phurbu Tsering, aged 36, from Dranagshol in Lhasa took part in a non-violent protest in Lhasa on March 5, 1989. Arrested by the Public Security Bureau that same day, he was severely beaten while being held in custody in a police station near the Tsuglakhang. Following a heavy blow to his head with an iron bar, Phurbu Tsering more commonly known as Phurtse, never recovered from his injuries and passed away on February 7, 1996.



Phurtse before arrest

Phurtse was born in 1960 and grew up in Lhasa. In the north of Lhasa, he worked as a scripture printer for a printing press. His father Dhondup Norbu passed away leaving behind his mother Sangay and his other eight siblings.

Coming from a large family of nine children, he had five elder brothers and two elder sisters, and one younger brother and a younger sister. From 1968-1975 he studied in a primary school (*Tibetan : lobchung*) in eastern Lhasa.

Around 1975 he worked in Lhasa

Once back in Lhasa, Dranagshol United Corporation, then as a road constructor in Powo Tramo in 1979. He returned to Lhasa in 1984. In 1985, he visited India to make a pilgrimage and returned to Tibet that year.

Once back in Lhasa, he started working at a scripture printing press as a printer till 1988.

On March 5, 1989, he participated in the March 1989 demonstration in Lhasa. He was caught along with the rest of the demonstrators by members of the PAP (People's Armed Police) and detained in a PSB (Public Security Bureau) office where he was beaten with an iron rod and suffered acute head injuries. That same day at about 5 p.m. he was taken to the Lhasa people's hospital.

Three hours after he was admitted his relatives came to see him after hearing about his condition. His relatives were informed that he would have to undergo urgent surgery. For 18 days after that he was in a coma and his relatives were informed that the chances of his recovery were very slim. His relatives even started to prepare for his funeral ceremony.

Because of his involvement in political activities, he was initially asked for 2000 yuan as part of an advance fee for his treatment but this request was later withdrawn.

As his full recovery was impossible he was then admitted to the Tibetan Medical Institute (Tibetan: Mentsikhang) in Lhasa for three months.

While at home one side of his body became partially paralysed and he started getting convulsions.

He never recovered and finally on February 7, 1996, he passed away. The acute damage he had suffered at the hands of the Chinese authorities was irreparable.

Phurtse following prison officials' beatings



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Report from Kenlho prison

Thinley Gyatso, a former monk of Tashi Gomang Ting-Khung monastery, spent two years and seven months in Kenlho Prison in Kenlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture for "counterrevolutionary activities". He suffered severe torture and beatings at the hands of the Chinese authorities. Thinley reports of a case of disappearance during his stay in Kenlho prison.

"Kelsang Thupten, aged 32, a monk of Taktsang Lhamo Monastery from Li-Chu Dzong had been arrested in December 1996 on charges of 'hoisting the Tibetan flag during the 29th day before the Tibetan New Year and distributing documents in the monastery'.

Kelsang Thupten was detained in Kenlho prison for 3 days and thereafter transferred to another unknown place. His family members were given varying replies as to his whereabouts. When the Lhabrang Prison authorities were contacted, they were told that he was detained in Kenlho prison. However, when inquiries were made at Kenlho prison, some other prison name was provided. Thus, to date nobody from his family knows where he was taken and detained. His family members, relatives and friends fear that he could possibly have been killed by the PSB under interrogation. At the time of his arrest, there was no real evidence to link him to the activities he was allegedly charged with.

Another Kelsang, aged 54 and a relative of Kelsang Thupten, from Lhamo Li-Chu County, was a Tibetan thangka painter. He earned his livelihood by painting thangkas and frescos. He was arrested, in late 1996, for painting a Tibetan flag and detained in Kenlho prison. After a few months, he was released from prison on payment of 6000 Chinese yuan to the PSB.

While Thinley Gyatso was in Kenlho prison, the other political prisoners who were detained there were Kunsang (25) from Machu Dzong, sentenced to 2 years; Dolkar Kyap (27) from Machu Dzong, sentenced to 3 years; Jigme, a monk (27) from Lhabrang Tashi Kyil, Machu Dzong, sentenced to 2 years; and another Jigme (32) who is also a monk from Lhabrang Tashi Kyil from Sangchu Dzong. The latter Jigme had undergone severe torture as a result of which one of his legs became paralyzed. He has become crippled and has to use a walking stick."

Thinley Gyatso states, "I knew all the above political prisoners when I was in Kenlho prison. I am the witness to the plight of all those prisoners."

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

May 31, 1998

Volume III: Number 10

Reports of Re-education and Arrests

Ngawang Thinley was a monk of Pomda Monastery before he joined Sera Monastery in 1991. He stayed there until 1995 when a Chinese work-team arrived and commenced "re-education" to oppose "splittism" and denounce the Dalai Lama. Having fled into exile recently with a group of 14 via Li-Me into Nepal, he reported on several arrests that took place while he was in Tibet.

In 1985-86, **Kyaga** (aged 30-35) was arrested for pasting a poster near the Pomda Monastery and tearing down the Chinese office signboard and throwing it in the gutter. He was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. He has now been released but still suffers from mental problems because he was beaten and tortured badly while in prison. Chinese officials once broke his ribs and he suffered greatly as his broken ribs touched his kidneys. Kyaga is now back in Pomda village and the other villagers urged me to tell his story "to the united people".

Gyalkye (nick name, real name: Lobsang Tsering) aged 30-35, was a senior monk of Pomda Monastery. The work-team had distributed "re-education" books to the monks to study. Gyalkye refused to read the books and told the work-team that they contained a lot of misinformation about the Dalai Lama and the reincarnation process. The police then took his robes off him and took him naked to the county police station where they subsequently arrested him. One Tibetan official at the police station felt sympathy for him and gave him something to cover himself with. As a result of that act of kindness, that Tibetan official had his salary cut as a punishment. While being taken to the police station, Gyalkye shouted Tibetan independence slogans. The police stuffed his mouth with cloth to shut him up as he was taken in an open car and others could see and hear him.

In Pashul Prison Gyalkye was beaten so much that he lost control of his bladder. He was then taken to Chamdo Prefecture Prison and kept there for three or four months. During that time he was beaten with electric cattle prods as a result of which he now suffers mental problems. Around the end of 1997 or the beginning of 1998, he was taken to a prison in Lhasa, perhaps Drapchi Prison, and it is thought that he has been given a five-year sentence although apparently if at the end of five years he still doesn't agree with the work-team's "re-education", his sentence will be further extended. His relatives once went to visit him in Chamdo Prison and said he was talking in a strange, disjointed way that they had never heard before.

Lobsang Samten (35) was Ngawang Thinley's neighbour in Lhagpa village. He was a monk and a painter in Pomda Monastery. Once, while the work-team were at the monastery, Lobsang made a drawing of a mountain with a snow lion. The work-team found out about this drawing and arrested him. He was first taken to Pashul County Police Station and then to Chamdo Prefecture Prison for two months and 12 days. His father went to see him in Chamdo Prison and Lobsang told him that both of his hands were tied and he was beaten every day for almost one month while being interrogated. Once a day he was given hot water and one tingmo (steamed bun).

Lobsang's father pleaded for his son's release to senior county officials and wrote in his appeal letter that it was not illegal to draw a mountain and a snow lion as the two went together and that the great motherland of China had very good laws. After this letter Lobsang's beatings were stopped. When Ngawang Thinley returned back to Lhagpa village, Lobsang was there, having been released in November or December of 1997 and expelled from Pomda Monastery. He was very weak and thin; his face was gaunt and drawn. His digestive system had been damaged as a result of his time in prison and he was no longer able to digest food properly.

Gendhun Gyaltso (aged 18-19) was also a monk of Pomda Monastery. He made a drawing of a mountain with a sun on one side and a moon on the other and in the middle he pasted a photograph of the Dalai Lama. Underneath he wrote in Tibetan, "Tibetan flag". He kept the drawing in a drawer under his desk during the "re-education" classes and the work-team discovered it. He was arrested on August 18, 1997 during the night so that the other monks wouldn't see.

The monastery's caretaker saw him as he was being taken by the work-team; he was being dragged along the ground so that his clothes were entirely ripped off him. It was winter time and they wanted him to suffer a lot; underneath he was wearing just thin pyjamas. Gendhun was taken to Chamdo Prison and Ngawang Thinley heard that he has been sentenced to four years imprisonment and is still in Chamdo Prison. None of his relatives have been permitted to visit him in Chamdo and when they tried to take food for him it was taken away by officials.

Work-teams in Pomda Monastery

Ngawang Thinley recalled, "The work-team arrived on August 4, 1997 and stayed in Pomda town while conducting the re-education sessions. There were 21 members and, except for one Chinese, they were all Tibetan. All were young; some were officials from Chamdo and some were from Pashul.

Every morning we had three hours of prayers from 7 a.m. until 10 a.m. and then from 10 a.m. the work-team began the "re-education" sessions. We had to learn to recite their slogans by heart. From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. there was another prayer session and then more "re-education' sessions from 3 until 6 p.m. This "re-education" was conducted every day for three months. From the 1st day until the 5th day we were made to memorise the slogans.

On the 5th day Gyalkye was arrested and five monks under the age of 16 were expelled. On the same day all of the monks fled from the monastery and didn't attend the "re-education" class. When the work team arrived there were 115 monks, but after the monks left on the 5th day there were only five monks left, including the caretaker.

In Lhagpa town there were seven monks from Pomda Monastery, including the two of us. The work-team came to our town as well as all the neighbouring villages and towns to call the Pomda monks back to the monastery. None of us went. The work team then phoned Pashul County and the county authorities sent two or three trucks full of army officers into the villages, along with one Tibetan official called Namyaling from Chamdo, and again requested that we return to the monastery. Again we refused to go. We told the work-team 'If you teach such things we won't return'.

The army officers threatened us with arrest if we didn't return and the work-team came with the monastery's caretaker and began to also threaten our families and the other villagers. That was when we finally returned, seven days after we had left. About 100 monks went back to the monastery but some others fled to Lhasa.

Again the work-team began the "re-education" classes. We were given five books, each dealing with a different subject, and we had four days to study and learn each book. In the morning and afternoon the work-team gave "re-education" and in the evening we were examined. If we failed to give the "correct" answers or we said we didn't know the answers then the work-team would impose much heavier rules and stricter discipline upon us. For each half-hour of class missed, each monk had to pay 50 yuan.

It took three months to complete the five "re-education" books to the work-team's satisfaction. During this period four army officers were stationed at each corner of the monastery compound. At the end of the "re-education" period 90 monks were given red passes as a sign that they were "reformed". Sixteen monks were not given the red pass; these were mostly young monks who had not attended the classes or answered properly in the examination.

After the three-month period a work-team from Pomda town continued to come every 15 days for further "re-education". They advised us not to believe in the Panchen Lama reincarnation recognised by the Dalai Lama and also to believe in Shugden (a wrathful deity, the worship of which has been advised by the Dalai Lama to be potentially harmful) in order to make a success of the monastery. A small police station was built inside the monastery with police officers permanently stationed there.

County authorities sent five male officials as a "Management Committee" for the monastery and after that the Committee and the county authorities controlled the whole monastery. When a monk wished to go somewhere he had to first get permission from them.

Now there are 96 monks in Pomda Monastery; six of whom are elderly monks who do not require a pass. If any of the younger monks are expelled they may be replaced but the older monks will not be replaced. Those with passes were threatened that if they spoke "incorrectly" they would lose their pass or be expelled. We were also threatened that if we didn't exhibit "good behaviour" we would be expelled.

We were very scared and so in February 1998 we left the monastery and went to Lhasa. We paid a guide 550 yuan and travelled with a group of 14 via Li-Me into Nepal."

Three Drapchi Prisoners Executed

On May 12, 1998 three male criminal prisoners from Drapchi Prison in Lhasa, Tibet were executed according to information recently received from Tibet. It is believed that two of the executed men were Chinese and one was Tibetan and that they were shot by members of the Chinese Army in Chusul County under Lhasa City.

A Tibetan man living in the Chushul area of Lhasa reportedly witnessed the execution of the three prisoners in Chushul under Lhasa City on the afternoon of May 12. There were many Chinese army officials at the execution site but, watching from a distance, the man saw each of the prisoners made to kneel before a freshly dug pit, his hands still tied behind his back. Behind each prisoner stood a uniformed Chinese army officer with a gun; the men were each shot through the heart and fell into their own grave.

The watching Tibetan said that two of the executed men appeared to be Chinese and one looked Tibetan. The Tibetan prisoner reportedly did not die immediately after he had been shot. He was trying to crawl out of his pit when he was shot again. He did not move again after this and then a man who seemed to be a doctor came to look at the bodies. It seemed that then the relatives of the dead men were called because some Tibetans who looked like farmers came and they were given the Tibetan prisoner's dead body. No one came for the Chinese men and so their bodies were left in the pits and covered over with dirt.

A 30 year-old Tibetan woman from Lhasa, who requested not to be named, also saw the three prisoners on their execution day. "At around 10.30 a.m. I went to Drapchi Lhamo, a small temple in the area of Lhasa close to Drapchi Prison, to make an offering as I regularly do. I was stopped at a crossing leading to the prison to make way for seven army trucks full of prisoners coming from Drapchi Prison. In each army truck there were two or three uniformed army men. The prisoners were wearing a uniform of dark blue shirt with a number on the chest," said the woman.

This is believed to be the prison uniform of prisoners in Outridu, part of the Sangyip prison complex which is close by Drapchi. Former Drapchi political prisoners report that in cases of execution it is common for

contd at pg. 4

PROFILE

Died in Hospital due to Gross Negligence

The official figure of the number of deaths directly as a result of Chinese repression from the period 1949-1979 stands at 1.2 million. This figure does not include the number of Tibetans who died following the 1987 demonstration which is often seen as the 'awakening' od political awareness in Tibet. Many lives were lost when the Chinese authorities severely cracked down on peaceful protestors calling for restoration of freedom and justice.

Lobsang Sonam was one such Tibetan who died in his struggle for Tibetan Independence when he was just 29 years old. Lobsang, who was from Lhasa Je-Bum gang, was shot during the 1988 demonstration in Lhasa. He did not survive.

Lobsang Sonam was born in Lhasa Je-bum-gang in 1959. His father passed away when he was very young. His mother, Choezom passed away in 1973. His brother Bhagdro stayed at home to take care of the household chores. His elder sister Trasil worked at construction unit number 7. His permanent residence was in Lhasa City Municipality, village no. 1 Je-bum-gang.

From 1966 to 1972 he studied at a primary school at Bon-shoe. Then from 1973 to 1978, he attended Lhasa City middle school where he continued until the 12th grade and then studied for a further three years at a vocational training school in Drungching City in China.

After the completion of his studies, he worked in a printing press (Tib: Ge-Chik) in Kongpo for three years.

In 1986, he was transferred to the TAR to work at another printing press for about 3 years. On March 5, 1988, when the most well-known protest broke out in Lhasa, Lobsang participated in it. Around noon that day, while the demonstration continued, Chinese authorities started to fire at the participants from a police station situated north of Lhasa. In this chaotic situation, Lobsang got shot in the back and the bullet was stuck on the right side of his stomach.

As soon as the news reached his parents, he was taken to his home rather than to hospital in order to conceal his involvement in the protest.

Then, when his condition did not show any sign of improvement, he was taken to the Lhasa City Hospital where he was denied admission. He was therefore, taken to the People's Hospital. However, even there he was not given the treatment that he immediately required because his injuries resulted from political activities and he was considered a "counterrevolutionary".

His family reported his injury to his superiors at the printing press and asked for their assistance, but the officials did not even visit him at hospital.



Lobsang Sonam at a young age

He never recovered and finally died of his wounds on April 5, 1988 in the People's Hospital.

Closing the Doors: Religious Repression in Tibet

"Closing the Doors: Religious Repression in Tibet" is a report compiled after intensive monitoring of the "Strike Hard" campaign. The principal part of this report is based on testimonials from Tibetan refugees, the majority of whom are monks and nuns who endured the Chinese repression and were forced to leave their monasteries and nunneries to seek freedom to practise their religion outside their homeland. It demonstrates an extremely widespread and systematic crackdown on religion by China.

To order this book we would appreciate a minimum price of Rs.50/- for India, Nepal and Bhutan or US $ 5 if you are resident abroad. You may pay by International Money Order or by cheque in favour of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. Thank You.

contd. from pg.2

prisoners to be brought in from all of the prisons around Lhasa to listen to the announcement.

The woman reported, "From the crossing I could see directly to the gate of Drapchi. I saw three male prisoners being brought out of the prison gate to where three trucks were waiting. They were also wearing dark blue shirts but without the number on the chest and their hands were tied behind their back. They seemed to be young." Former Drapchi prisoners have confirmed that this is the Drapchi prison uniform. "There were about five army men in each truck and, while another man stood behind the three prisoners with a gun pointed at their back, each prisoner was grabbed by the arm and dragged separately into each truck," she added.

These executions follow closely reports of protests at Drapchi and Outridu prisons, but it is not known whether the incidents are related.

Town's Rights Curbed

According to Chodak, a recent arrival from Drakpa town in Rinpung County under Shigatse Region, the entire population of Drakpa, consisting of approximately 1,000 Tibetans, was called for a public meeting towards the end of 1996. During the meeting, the people were instructed not to display any pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in their homes. They were threatened that any violation of the rule would result in severe repercussions if discovered by the authorities who planned to make regular rounds to check whether anybody was violating the rule.

They were also strictly forbidden from listening to any broadcast of the Voice of America. They added that all the news that is aired there was false and that the agency was spreading lies. Instead they were instructed to listen to Chinese radio broadcasts. The people were told that if they continue to listen to VOA, they would be severely reprimanded.

Hunger Strike Unto death Halted

The Tibetan Youth Congress temporarily halted the Hunger Strike Unto Death in response to promises of vigorous support from the Governments of Poland, USA, Hungary, the European Union and most specifically from Norway and Costa Rica which have promised to take up the issue of Tibet at forthcoming bilateral talks with China and at multi lateral fora.

Similar assurances of support were received from many parliamentarians from Australia, the European Union, Lithuania, India, Canada and the USA.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

June 15, 1998

Volume III: Number 11

Two prisoners shot dead in Drapchi Prison

Two prisoners in Tibet's Drapchi Prison died instantly on May 4, 1998, when prison officials opened fire on unarmed prisoners staging a protest in the prison. Sources from Tibet report that 200 other prisoners were seriously injured in the shooting and beatings used to suppress the revolt. The identities of the dead prisoners are unknown.

Earlier reports stated that the May 4 protest was begun by a group of 80 Drapchi prisoners from units 5 and 6. The group reportedly disrupted a prison function commemorating "Youth Day" by shouting slogans and pasting posters around the prison. Recent information indicates that the protesters distributed pamphlets and demanded the release of prisoners who had been placed in solitary confinement following an earlier protest in Drapchi on May 1.

Prison guards reportedly called in Peoples Armed Police (PAP) to help suppress the May 4 outbreak and then opened fire on the prisoners, killing two prisoners instantly. Four other prisoners were shot in the leg. The prisoners were also beaten with iron rods, sticks, bayonets and shocked with electric cattle prods. Sources reported that more than 200 prisoners were seriously injured and that the floors of the prison were smeared with blood. They said the prison cells were filled with injured prisoners but that no medical treatment was provided.

Just three days earlier a similar protest had broken out in Drapchi Prison in which Chinese authorities also opened fire on unarmed protesters. The May 1 demonstration occurred during a gathering of Drapchi prisoners for an International Labour Day ceremony and was reportedly led by two non-political prisoners in protest against the hoisting of Chinese flags in the prison.

The two prisoners, Karma Dawa (known as Kadar) who was serving 13 years and Karma Sonam, reportedly started throwing pamphlets amongst the crowd which read "Free Tibet", "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" and "Chinese leave Tibet" and shouting similar slogans. The protesting prisoners were also said to be demonstrating their solidarity with the group of Tibetan exiles conducting a hunger-strike in Delhi, India.



Drapchi Prison

In an attempt to break up the protest, PAP and Public Security Bureau officials began firing shots in the air and using bayonets, sticks, metal rods and electric cattle prods against the prisoners. Earlier information indicated that approximately 150 Tibetan political prisoners were fired upon and subsequently arrested. More recent reports say that 500 prisoners were present during the shooting. The protest resulted in some prisoners, including Kadar and Karma Sonam, being confined in dark solitary cells and the implementation of strict restrictions in Drapchi. The number of casualties was unknown.

According to reports by Tibet Information Network (TIN), an independent organisation based in London, a non-political prisoner called Aka led the May 1 Drapchi protest which TIN reported was joined by about 60 political prisoners. TIN reported that a number of prisoners were beaten, leading to the hospitalisation of two prisoners, one of whom subsequently died in hospital.

TIN also reported that a demonstration occurred in Outridu Prison, a detention centre within the Sangyip Prison complex in Lhasa, a few days after May 1. TIN referred to an unconfirmed report that prison guards in Outridu forced Tibetan prisoners who had been brought from Drapchi to make prostrations in front of the Chinese flag and were later badly beaten. The prisoners had reportedly been transferred from Drapchi to Outridu prior to the visit of a delegation from the European Union to Drapchi on May 4.

These are not the first incidents in which prisoners attempting to stage protests during visits of foreign delegations have attracted violent crack

downs. On April 27, 1991, Drapchi prisoners protested the solitary detention of Tenpa Wangdrak and Lobsang Tenzin following their attempt to hand a letter protesting prison conditions to the then US Ambassador to China, James Lilley. A large contingent of armed soldiers was called in and the protest violently suppressed. Prisoners were reportedly tied with rope and beaten unconscious, manacled and put in isolation cells.

The prisoners in Drapchi are reportedly greatly concerned for Karma Dawa and Karma Sonam who continue to be tortured by prison officials for their role in the protest. It is feared that they may receive the death penalty.

Chinese authorities have provided no information in confirmation or denial of the reports of the two Drapchi incidents and one source has said that released prisoners as well as prison officials have been threatened with death if they speak of the incidents.

A letter sent by a tourist claiming to have witnessed one of the Drapchi shootings was recently made open on World Tibet Network. The tourist wrote: "We happen to be on the top of the Potala, and we could see the courtyard of Drapchi Prison in the distance. We saw a large group of prisoners facing an official who was apparently delivering a lecture.

After the Chinese flag was hoisted, the prisonners rushed toward the official. Within seconds gards open fire with automatic weapons for several minutes and we saw a lot of prisonners falling down under the bullets.

A few days after, we were told by someone that families who use to bring food to their relative in the prison were not allowed to meet them and had to leave the food at the prison's gate. They were worried that their relatives might be dead.

Soon after 3 convicts, 1 Chinese and 2 Tibetan were paraded throughout town at the back of a truck and lead to a death squad. People were saying that the two Tibetans were prison innmates accused to have masterminded the protest, but this has not been confirmed."

These recent incidents in Drapchi indicate an increasing willingness by Chinese prison and security authorities to use the most violent measures available to suppress dissent. Further information received from Lhasa include reports of other deaths in Drapchi Prison but these are as yet unconfirmed.

Tibetan political prisoner dies after release

Yeshi Samten, a 22-year-old former monk of Gaden Monastery, died one week after his release from Trisam Prison on May 12, 1998. Yeshi Samten, also known as Tenzin Yeshi, suffered from sever torture during two years of imprisonment. At the time of cremation, the person performing the funeral rites discovered that two of Yeshi's ribs were badly broken.



Yeshi Samten

Yeshi Samten (layname: Tenzin Yeshi) was arrested on May 6, 1996. He, along with around 90 monks from Gaden Monastery, was protesting against Chinese work-team "re-education" sessions being carried out in the monastery and the removal of all photographs of the Dalai Lama. When the monks refused to co-operate the work-team left the monastery.

Soon after, around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, People's Armed Police (PAP) reinforcements were sent in. The PAP men opened fire injuring one monk, Dorjee, who was shot in the leg. Two other monks died and more than 90 arrests occurred as a result of the Gaden incident.

Yeshi was arrested immediately and taken first to Gutsa Detention Centre,Lhasa . He was later sentenced to two years imprisonment and sent to Trisam Prison in Toelung County. At the time of his arrest and throughout his imprisonment Yeshi Samten was reported to have been tortured severely. As a result he suffered from poor health for which he received no medical care.

Upon expiry of his prison term Yeshi Samten was released on May 6, 1998. Reported to have been maimed as a result of prison torture, Yeshi was forced to walk with the aid of crutches. Still suffering from health problems, he died just six days after his release on May 12.

Yeshi Samten was from Tsangtog in Taktse Dechen County under Lhasa City. He is survived by his mother Yangzom and elder brother Tsering Sonam. His father Tashi Dhondup died at an early age. Yeshi Samten went to school at the age of eight and left the school when he was 12 years old to join Gaden Monastery in 1986.

Yeshi Samten's death brings the number of known deaths of Tibetans as a result of torture recorded by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy to 55. Of these 55 deaths, 14 political prisoners died after release from prison or while in hospital. The difficulty of receiving information of prisoners in prisons in Tibet means that many deaths go unreported.

Political veteran speaks ...

Imprisoned in 1961 at the age of 22, Kunchok Tendar from Drayab County spent 19 years in Chinese prisons in Tibet. Kunchok was one of the many political prisoners at that time who were sentenced to life but were released in 1979 after the death of Chairman Mao. After his release Kunchok worked as a teacher of Tibetan language for many years but now, aged 61, he is living in exile. He reports on the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibet.

Health: "Tibetans must pay 500 yuan to be admitted in the government hospital in Chamdo. Even if a person is dying he or she will not be admitted without this payment. For admission to the Tibetan Medical Institute 500 yuan is also required. For Tibetan officials and Chinese it is much easier to access health services. In private

hospitals the patient must pay for everything. The average Tibetan lives in very miserable conditions and faces many problems in going to hospital."

Chinese settlers: "In my area the percentage of Chinese is 70%. In the villages there are more Tibetans. Many Chinese are settling in Tibet and shops, hotels and casinos are mostly owned by Chinese. On January 6, 1998, I made a count of these businesses in Chamdo. There were 1,433 Chinese shops in comparison with only 159 Tibetan shops. In Powo Tramo there were 315 Chinese shops and nine Tibetan shops and one is owned by a half Tibetan-half Chinese woman."

Prostitution: "In Chamdo there are 15 brothels and in Dramo there are four brothels and in Lhasa, near the military area, there are 38 brothels. The total in Lhasa is 1,806 brothels and the high-class prostitutes deposit 70,000 yuan monthly earnings in their individual bank accounts and the other prostitutes deposit 4,300 yuan. These figures were provided by a tax official in Lhasa."

Birth Control: "112 Tibetan women were forcibly inserted with contraceptive devices over a one-month period in Lhasung Yul in 1997. Although the birth control policy is said to be one of three children, women with only two children were also called to the hospital for the operation and this depended on the individual health officials. Tibetan women working in a Chinese office are allowed only two children.

The women were inserted with either a long-term contraceptive tubing in the upper arm or with an intra-uterine device. A few women I knew suffered badly and felt very weak after the operation."

Beaten and Suicided: "Jampa Choden, aged 21, was a monk from Chamdo Tawa Teng. He was badly beaten when Chinese officials interrogated him regarding his involvement with "splittists". Jampa was given "time to think" and was permitted to return to his home. When he learned that Chinese authorities would be coming to arrest him, Jampa committed suicide in the summer of 1997."

New Arrests: "In April 1997 in Jamdun Monastery, Drayab county, three monks - Nyima, Nyima Tsering and Gyaltsen - were arrested and taken to Chamdo and then to Lhasa. They were sentenced to five years imprisonment in March 1998. The monks, aged between 20 and 27 years, were arrested on charges of having pasted posters.

On January 20, 1997, Bhu Dawa of Jamdun Dogo, aged 24, was arrested on the charge of having pasted posters and is currently in Drapchi Prison."

Religious rights attacked

Dragyerpa Monastery: expulsions, arrests and destruction

In Dragyerpa Monastery, 30 km north-east of Lhasa, recent reports of expulsions and demolition have been received.

Kunchok Tendar, recently arrived from Drayab county, reported that in March around 112 monks and nuns in the monastery's hermitage were ordered by Chinese officials to stop meditating. "Four nuns, aged between 60 and 83, told the Chinese officials that they were not against the PRC but were simply religious people. The four threatened to commit suicide if they could not stay and they were pulled by the wrist from the caves and put into waiting vehicles."

The Tibet Information Network (TIN) has reported that the temple and monastic retreat at Dragyerpa were demolished by Chinese authorities in early April after officials ruled that the buildings had not received the correct permission from the authorities. TIN said that approximately 50 nuns and a Buddhist teacher with some of his followers were ordered to leave the site during the demolition work.

TIN also quoted unconfirmed reports that the hermitage cave complex of Samye Chimpu has also been destroyed.

Kunchok reported that on March 12 or 13 the monks and nuns from Dragyerpa together with around 400 monks and nuns from Chimpu went to Lhasa for circumambulation and prostration. "On 14 March, Chinese authorities told them to leave Lhasa immediately or they would be arrested. Some nuns replied with the question "If many Chinese can stay in Lhasa, then why not Tibetans?" and they were beaten by the officials. The monks and nuns were then forced to return to their homes."

"On April 7, 1998 Chinese officials entered Dragyerpa Monastery and destroyed idols and other items of worship," said Kunchok.

Rongpo Rabten Monastery: 15 arrested

On March 13, 1998, 15 monks were reportedly arrested at Rongpo Rabten Monastery in Sog county, Nagchu prefecture.

On March 10, 1998, 20 to 30 monks from Rongpo Rabten Monastery and Sog Tsen Dhen Monastery went to Sog county to demonstrate in reaction to work-team orders to denounce the Dalai Lama, calling "Long live the Dalai Lama" and "Tibet is independent". At the time it was snowing heavily and when the army arrived many of the monks were able to escape.

On March 13, 1998, 147 Chinese officials from Lhasa and army personnel were sent to the monastery to join the work-team and they arrested the 15 monks. It is unknown where they are now.

Reting Monastery: Six arrests

Dakpa Gyalsten, a former monk of Reting Monastery, says that a 20-member "re-education" work-team arrived in September-October of 1996 and remained until March/April of 1997.

"Their initial plan was to stay in the monastery only three months but they extended the duration when, in December 1996/January 1997, the work-team's jeep was set on fire. This outraged the work-team and their stay was extended to carry out investigations. They claimed that this incident demonstrated that the monks' "reform" had not been secured.

Six monks of Reting Monastery were arrested in the 11th month of 1996 (December 1996/January 1997) because they had disagreed the most during the "re-education" sessions in process. They were arrested separately over a series of nights and were kept for one or two months in Phenpo Lhundup County police station before being transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre.

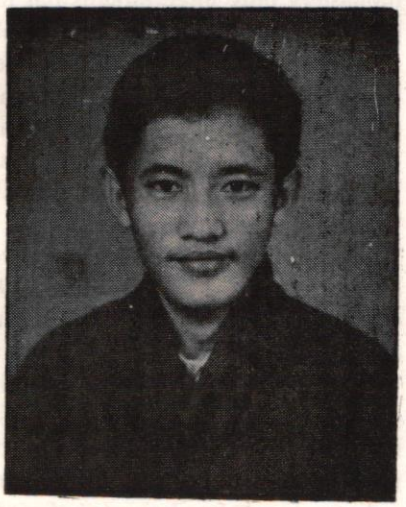
The monks were tried in the Lhasa Intermediate People's Court in spring 1997 and all except one were charged with possessing a prohibited audio tape. **Jampel Sangye** was charged with possessing a prohibited audio tape and was imprisoned for one year in Toelung "Reform-through-Labour" camp. He is the only one of the monks who is now released.

The sentencing of the other five monks ranged from two to eight years and all are currently detained in Drapchi Prison. **Phuntsok Rabgyal**, aged 23 or 24, and

Sigpa, aged 23 or 24, who was the *trulku* (incarnate lama) of Reting Monastery, were both from Chak-le township in Nagchu county and both were sentenced to two years. **Thinley Tsultrim**, aged 24 or 25, and **Lobsang Tundu**, aged 19 or 20, are both from Thango county, Lhundup county, and both were sentenced to six years. **Thinley Tsundu**, aged 27 or 28, also from Thango township, Lhundup county, was sentenced to eight years.

The source, a monk in Reting Monastery before he escaped Tibet, reported that "since the work-team arrived in the monastery there has been a considerable change in the attitude of the monks and a noticeable deterioration in the atmosphere of the entire monastery. The monks feel they can no longer continue their studies in their best interest, that there is no reason to stay on in the monastery and the sense of belonging to the monastery is also lost."

Political prisoners suffer mental trauma



Ngawang Jungney

Ngawang Jungney, (28) is originally from Damshung county, north-west of Lhasa. He worked as a Tibetan language teacher in Dharamsala, India for some time. When he returned to Tibet to do further studies in Tibetan language, he was arrested by Public Security Bureau officials and was accused of being a spy for the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

Ngawang was reportedly kept in a tight security cell in Sangyip Prison (the report in Human Rights Update of August 15, 1997 that he was being held in Drapchi Prison was later discovered to be incorrect). Initially, Ngawang was to be sentenced to one year imprisonment but, when he refused to kneel down before an officer named Paljor, the 46-year-old deputy in charge of Drapchi Prison Unit No. 4, he received a sentence of nine years which he is currently serving.

The latest update on Ngawang indicates that he now suffers mental problems due to severe torture and cruel punishment in prison. He has been tranferred to Powo Tramo labour camp where he is currently serving his term.

Lodroe Gyatso (profiled in Human Rights Update of May 31, 1997) is a 38-year-old dance artist and three times weight lifting champion in Sog district in Nagchu County, 326 km from Lhasa. Lodroe was originally serving 15 years in Drapchi Prison on murder charges.

In March 1995, Lodroe staged a one-man independence demonstration while in Drapchi. After refusing to "confess to his mistakes", an execution order was made against Lodroe. His fellow prisoners were able to smuggle the news of his impending death to the international community and, after a United nations appeal was transmitted to China, Chinese authorities announced that Lodroe had been sentenced to a further six years.

The latest update on Lodroe indicates that he has been transferred to Powo Tramo labour camp and that he is suffering severe mental problems due to torture he has sustained whilst in prison.

Oracle and family arrested

In Rinchenling village in Meldro Gongkar, near Pangsa Monastery, a female oracle and her family have been reported arrested in mid-1997. The name of the woman, aged 50, is unknown but she is the wife of Drakdok.

It was reported that while she was in trance she called for people to support Tibetan independence. Her husband tried to stop her but she could not hear him. Chinese police came and thought that both the husband and wife were calling independence slogans. They were both arrested, along with the woman's father, and taken to Meldro Gongkar police station before being transferred to Drapchi Prison.

Arrested on return to Tibet

Topgyal, a former monk of Ganden Monastery in Tibet, was expelled from the monastery for participating in a demonstration in Lhasa on March 5, 1988. In 1989, he traveled to India for the Kalachakra initiation ceremony after which he stayed on in India and joined Gaden Monastery in south India until 1997 when he returned to Tibet. There he was arrested and imprisoned.

"I was arrested with another companion by border police in Dram on August 18, 1997 and was held in an army detention centre for four days. When I left the army camp there were five men still imprisoned there who had also been arrested while returning to Tibet. Thukche and Tsering Chung were students from Soga School in Dharamsala, Nyima Tsering and Tenzin were students from a school in Nepal and Ngawang Lasang was a monk from Sera Monastery in India.

I met one of the prisoners, Ngawang Lasang, later in Lhasa after my release and he told me they had been kept for five days in a dark cell and for 12 days they were given no food. They were searched and found in possession of a photograph of the Dalai Lama that they were ordered to trample on. When they refused they were beaten.

The five were taken from the army detention centre to Nyari prison where they were held for six weeks. While in Nyari prisoners must remember to salute in respect to the prison officers. Ngawang Lasang forgot to do so on one occasion and an officer beat him so severely on the head with his rifle butt that Ngawang fell unconscious for half an hour.

Ngawang was not taken to hospital and he told me that he now suffers serious loss of memory. He had been to Lhasa hospital and they confirmed that he had suffered mental damage from the beating."

Our Sponsor

*We sincerely thank **"May All Beings Be Happy (M.A.B.B.H.) Intl."**, an independent voluntary and non-profit organisation which aims at relieving the suffering of others in France and abroad, for sponsoring this edition of TCHRD's Human Rights Update.*

PROFILE

Shugseb nuns die after prison release

Rinzin Choendhen and Nyima, both from Lhoka Gongkar, Lhoka county, were nuns of Shugseb Nunnery in Lhasa. Both nuns suffered beatings in Gutsa Detention Centre after being arrested for participating in a freedom demonstration. Rinzin died on October 10, 1992 at the age of 26, two years after her release and having suffered serious kidney damage since her imprisonment. Nyima, aged 25, also died after her release although there is little information known of death. While the date and exact cause is unknown, it is believed that her death was also related to prison beatings.

Rinzin Choendhen, whose layname was Kusang Choekyi, was born in Lhoka Gongkar, Lhoka county, south of Lhasa. Her parents are no longer alive; her father died about 10 years ago and her mother died when Rinzin was very young. Rinzin has one older sister called Shilok Dolma who is a farmer in Tibet.

On March 2, 1989, about 16 nuns from Shugseb Nunnery held a short demonstration in the Barkhor market area of Lhasa. As they were making their third circumambulation around the Barkhor, Public Security Bureau officials arrived and five of the nuns were immediately arrested. They were Rinzin Choendhen, Nyima, Ugen, Thupten Yeshi and Choenyi Choezom.

The five nuns were taken to the County Police Station and then to Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa. They were held in Gutsa for one day where they were interrogated while being beaten brutally. Rinzin suffered particularly from beatings on her kidney area.

After one day, Rinzin and Nyima were taken to Chushul County Prison and held for one week. The other four nuns who had been arrested together with Rinzin were already in Chushul and they later reported that they were shocked at the sight of Rinzin.

One of the arrested nuns, who asked not to be named, is now in exile. Our source remembers when Rinzin came in: "Rinzin's face was all swollen and we could see that her face and hands were black and blue. If someone touched her she would wince in pain. She was lying there like dead meat."

In Chushul they had to lie on cold cement floor without any bedding and it was thought that this exacerbated Rinzin's kidney condition.

After one week, the *Rinpoche* (revered lama) of Shugseb Nunnery together with some county heads, intervened to have Rinzin and the four other nuns released.

On February 9, 1990, all of the Shugseb nuns who had ever participated in any freedom activities were expelled from Shugseb Nunnery. Rinzin and Nyima were amongst them.

After her expulsion, Rinzin was taken to the Lhasa City People's Hospital but was not given adequate treatment, said our source. She then consulted a doctor in *Mentseekhang* (Tibetan Medical Institute) in Lhasa and was told that her kidney had become badly infected.

According to an unconfirmed report from a source in Lhasa, the kidney damage was probably due to being punched and kicked during her arrest and immediately after she was taken to Gutsa Detention Centre.

Rinzin was bedridden at home for a prolonged period and became so ill that she was incontinent and unable to eat. Finally, on October 10, 1992, Rinzin passed away as a result of kidney damage.

Nyima (layname Kelsang Choedron), who was one of the group of five Shugseb nuns, was also thought to have died as a result of the prison beatings. After her release from prison Nyima visited Lhasa People's Hospital for treatment for damaged ribs but the extent of her injuries is unknown.

Nyima was aged 25 and was also from Lhoka county. Her parents are no longer alive.

It was reported that Nyima's prison experience and her subsequent expulsion from Shugseb Monastery caused her to suffer a mental breakdown. Some time after that she died from unspecified injuries. The exact date of her death is unknown.

Tibetan men also subjected to Chinese birth control

A recent report received by a new arrival from Tibet indicates that China's birth control policy is not only being carried out against Tibetan women but that Tibetan men in some areas are also being subjected to sterilisation procedures. A source from Na-kar Tse County reports on birth control measures being carried out in his area of Tibet before he left for exile.

"Town people who had reached their quota of child birth would be called to the hospital to undergo an operation," says Namgyal Choephel, aged 56 from Na-kar Tse county. "Men would be given an injection in their lower side and women would be operated upon. We call this the "seven stitch operation" as afterwards they would have a scar with seven stitches on their abdomen."

"The women have to be very careful about this operation and are advised in the hospital to eat meat and not to work after their release. This is very difficult to follow because as farmers we must work every day," says Namgyal.

"Farmers were permitted three children while officials could have only two children. If any couple exceeded these limits they would be penalised: the parents must pay 200 yuan every year until the "illegal" child reaches the age of 16 and the child - known as the "black one"- is given no rights and no land."

Namgyal reported that such cases were rare however as the people cannot afford such fines and they are extremely careful not to exceed their quota. "The people used to give the doctors bribes of food to ensure the operation was successful. The people were scared that if they didn't give bribes the doctor would be hasty and careless and that they would later give birth and have to pay a fine," he said.

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NEW WEB SITE AND E-MAIL FORUM

TCHRD has launched its new website at: ***http://www.tibet.org/eng/ngo/tchrd/index.stm.*** *The site contains information about the Centre as well as TCHRD human Rights Updates.*

TCHRD also has a new discussion forum. The ***"Barkhor"*** *(replacing TCHRD-L) is a place to exchange ideas on Tibetan human rights issues. Write to* ***majordomo@cyborganic.net*** *and include in your message: "Subscribe Barkhor". Subscribers automatically receive Human Rights Updates and TCHRD News Releases.*

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

June 30, 1998 Volume III: Number 12

Seven Deaths in Drapchi Prison

Several unconfirmed reports from Tibet indicate that seven prisoners have died following incidents in Drapchi Prison in Lhasa on May 1 and May 4, 1998 in which officials opened fire on prisoners. At least 60 prisoners sustained severe injuries and 15 are reported to be in critical condition. Most of the injured prisoners are being kept in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR") military hospital near Sera Monastery. The reported deaths are of Karma Dawa, Lobsang Gelek, Tashi Lhamo, an unidentified nun from Phenpo Jhopo, and three other unidentified nuns.

On both occasions, Chinese prison officials and People's Armed Police clamped down severely on prisoners involved in a peaceful demonstration calling for Tibet's independence and expressing their support for the then on-going "Unto Death Hunger Strike" of exiled Tibetans in India.

Karma Dawa, a non-political prisoner serving a sentence of 13 years, reportedly led the demonstration along with Karma Sonam. The two prisoners began throwing pamphlets reading "Free Tibet" amongst the crowd of prisoners gathered during a Chinese flag raising ceremony on May 1. Earlier reports expressed serious concerns amongst Drapchi prisoners that Karma Dawa and Karma Sonam might be executed. The latest report from Tibet indicate that Kadar (Karma Dawa) has died in prison. The cause of his death is not known but it was reported that doctors found "Free Tibet" inscribed on Karma Dawa's body when performing the post-mortem. After taking pictures, his body was taken back to Drapchi Prison.

Lobsang Gelek, a monk from Damshung County in Lhasa Prefecture, was shot dead in the May 1 Drapchi demonstration. His body was cremated near Chusang Hermitage. His 74-year-old father was called to the cremation where he was told that his son had committed suicide and he was offered 700 yuan as a gesture of consolation. Another source reported that 24-year-old Tenzin Choephel from Damshung County was shot dead on May 1. It is presumed that these two names refer to the one person. Tenzin Choephel could be the lay name of Lobsang Gelek.

A nun named Choekey Wangmo, aged 21, from Phenpo Sharbum, and an unidentified nun from Phenpo Jhopo were reportedly subjected to severe torture for taking part in the May 1 demonstration and the nun from Phenpo Jhopo is said to have died from her injuries.

A nun named Tashi Lhamo and three unidentified nuns were shot during the May 4 demonstration that occurred during the celebration of "Youth Day" in Drapchi Prison. Tashi Lhamo died at "TAR" Military Hospital on June 7 at around 1:50 pm and her dead body was handed over to her relatives. Tashi Lhamo was serving a sentence of six years and it is reported that her prison term was about to expire. The three nuns are also reported to have died. The names and the details of their deaths are unknown but those who saw the dead bodies described them as swollen.

Gyaltsen Choephel, a 27-year-old political prisoner, refused to believe the Chinese officials who said that the four nuns had committed suicide by consuming poison. As a result he was beaten severely and one source reports that he is currently in "TAR" Military Hospital. Gyaltsen was a Drepung monk from Lhasa Garu Shar. He was serving a sentence of 15 years for his involvement in the demonstration on March 5, 1988.

The demonstration of May 4 was led by 27-year-old Dawa whose current condition is not known. Dawa,born in Meldro Gongkhar, is a nun from Garu Nunnery. Her lay name is Gyaltsen Dolkar. She was arrested and sentenced to four years for taking part in a peaceful demonstration in Norbulingka, the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lama, on August 22, 1990. In 1992 her sentence was further extended by eight years for recording "patriotic songs" while in Drapchi Prison. She is currently serving a 12-year prison term.



Ngawang Sungrab - shot and injured

Ngawang Sungrab, a 27-year-old Drepung monk from Phenpo, was shot by prison officials during the May 4 demonstration. He is reported to be in critical condition in "TAR" Military Hospital. Ngawang Sungrab was serving a prison sentence of 10 years for his participation in a demonstration in 1989.

It is reported that Ngawang Sangdrol, a nun who is the longest serving female political prisoner in Tibet, along with the nuns Ngawang Choezom (23) from Taktse



Ngawang Sangdrol - solitary confinement

County, Lhasa City and Ngawang Tenzin (24) from Jorenang are being kept in solitary confinement in Drapchi Prison and subjected to severe interrogation.

Ngawang Choezom was from Chubsang Nunnery and was serving 11 years while Ngawang Tenzin was serving 5 years.

Following the two demonstrations, all regular activities in Drapchi Prison were stalled and severe restrictions were imposed on outsiders attempting to enter the prison complex or to meet with prisoners. There are currently 520 political prisoners, including 250 female political prisoners, in Drapchi Prison and it was reported that every prisoner was subjected to interrogation. Prison officials threatened prisoners that those who spoke of the incidents to outsiders would be executed and prison staff were threatened with criminal indictment.

Four prisoners were reportedly released after the expiry of their prison terms several days after the incidents in Drapchi Prison. However, upon reaching the main gate of the prison, their papers confirming their release were confiscated and they were taken to Gutsa Detention Centre for fear that they might speak of the incidents.

Thekchen Jangchup Monks Arrested

Lobsang Choephel (or Choephel), aged 25 from Horlung, Nyagchu, was a monk from Thekchen Jangchup Monastery. He and 30 other monks visited Drepung Monastery and was arrested on December 4, 1996 for having pasted an independence poster in Drepung.

Twelve or thirteen days after his arrest he was taken to a reformation-through-labour camp (name and location unknown). He was sentenced while in the camp (sentence date unknown) and reportedly "accepted" the charge of pasting the poster. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment and transferred to Drapchi Prison where he is currently being detained.

Tsering Dorjee, also a monk from Thekchen Monastery, is around 33 or 34 years old. In September or October of 1996 he attended an inauguration ceremony in Lithang Monastery and was arrested there on suspicion of having distributed independence pamphlets. He was kept in Lithang People's Prison for five months where he was interrogated and beaten. When he was released from Lithang he had to pay 6,000 yuan which he paid with his family's help.

After his release many restrictions were imposed upon him and he was not allowed to speak about what had happened to him in prison. In October or November of 1997, Tsering Dorji also disappeared. He returned in December or January and was then called by police but didn't go. Once more he disappeared but it is unknown whether he was taken by police or fled in fear. He has not been seen again since that time.

Work teams in Thekchen Jangchup

Jinpa (ordained name Thupten Tenzin) is a 29-year-old former monk of Thekchen Jangchup Monastery who is now in exile. Jinpa said a work team arrived in the 40-monk monastery in May or June 1997 but he left before their arrival because he was not a permanent member of the monastery.

"The work team stayed in the town of Horlung but came into the monastery every day for 20 days to conduct 're-education'. During that period they held many mass meetings in which all of the monks were called and were instructed to oppose 'splittist' activities.

The founder of our monastery was a lama called Tenzin Delek. He went to India in 1981 and returned in 1982 and reconstructed the monastery in 1988. He has worked hard for the welfare of the Tibetan people and was very popular and for these reasons he had many problems with Chinese authorities.

In the Summer of 1997, Tenzin Delek disappeared from the monastery and left an audio message that he was not going abroad. After five months he returned and I heard that he had been to a hermitage. Some people thought he had been arrested. Since his return, the Chinese authorities have imposed restrictions on his movements and contacts, linking him to "splittists" and the "Dalai Clique". tell him that he should not consider himself a lama but a simple and 'ordinary man'."

Return to Tibet

Lobsang Jigmey joined Nyuk Choekor Ling Monastery when he was 18 and he stayed for one year and nine months. In 1993, he escaped to India and joined Drepung Loseling Monastery in South India.

On his return to Tibet in 1996 he carried some political literature and speeches of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He met up with two men and they travelled together through Pokhara, Nepal. While they approached the Tibet-border, one of them stayed behind because of pain in his foot. When the others reached the Chinese "Border Army Station", they were both arrested there.

It was thought that the other man, who was half a day's journey behind and could not continue with the journey due to foot pain, had told the Chinese officials they were sent by the Tibetan Government-in-exile with lots of documents to distribute in Tibet. The army searched their belongings and took them to the Drongpa town police station where they were interrogated and beaten all day. They refused to accept any of the charges against them and told the officials that the documents were sent by a monk in Nepal to be delivered in Tibet.

Lobsang reported, "We were kept in Drongpa police station for 12 days and then they handed us over to the Shigatse Police station. We were again beaten severely and kept in a room full of dirt and excrement. For six days we were kept in that room with our hands and feet cuffed and without any food. At one time, I nearly committed suicide but my friend stopped me. For 35 days, we were interrogated and

cont. at p. 4

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We sincerely thank **Professor Eileen Kaufman**, Vice Dean and Professor of Law from Touro College, Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Centre, Huntington, NY for kindly sponsoring this issue of TCHRD's Human Rights Update.

Ms. Kaufman recently visited Dharamsala with a group of law students from throughout the USA to observe the South-East Asian NGO Seminar on Tibet, coordinated by TCHRD and the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre.

PROFILE

Students lose "Uncle" from Tsasur

53

Lobsang Yonten, a 65-year-old teacher of Tibetan language, was arrested in May 1993 together with Lhasa tour guide Gendun Rinchen and Damchoe Palmo, a female shopkeeper in Lhasa's Barkhor market. He was released, on January 10, 1994 after a strong international campaign was conducted. During the eight months he was detained at the "Tibet Autonomous Region" Detention Unit No.4 in Lhasa, Lobsang Yonten was beaten, tortured and interrogated while being held incommunicado. Despite post-release medical treatment, Lobsang died upon his return to his home on October 30, 1994 from torture-related injuries.

Chinese authorities had labelled Lobsang and Gedun Rinchen "splittists" and accused them of "stealing state secrets". The real reason for his arrest was thought to be his attempt to contact a high level European Community delegation which was to visit Lhasa for six days.

Affectionately known as Tsasur Shangla (Tsasur Uncle), Lobsang Yonten was born in Nharab township in Gongkar County, Lhoka Region and at an early age joined Drepung Monastery. He belonged to Tsethang Khangtsen (monastic homegroup) of Loseling College, Drepung. When he came of age, he held various positions of responsibility at the monastery, including the post of *chapril* ("discipline master").

Lobsang was first arrested some time in June or July1959 from Chushur County. He had been assigned by his monastery to look after its estate at Seme and was branded as an "agent of serf owners".

After six years in prison in Chusur, Lobsang was released but assigned to compulsory work at an agricultural commune in the same area. When the Cultural Revolution came to Tibet, Lobsang Yonten was subjected to torture trials at enforced public gatherings as an "agent of serf owners".

In 1979, Lobsang Yonten went to Drepung Gomang Changseb ("Bamboo Grove") as a member of the Seme Rukhag ("work unit") which had a sub-contract to crush stones. He remained there for about six months, living in a cave along with the other members of his *rukhag*. After that his *rukhag* was assigned to crush stones at the Lhasa PariRukhag, located near and to the west of Sera Monastery, Lhasa. Lobsang remained at this job for about three years.

After the introduction of the "Liberalisation Policy" in Tibet, Lobsang Yonten left his *rukhag* and went to live in Lhasa where he worked as watchman of Tsasur House, located in Ramoche area. His ration card and residence registration remained at Chusur as he could not get them transferred to Lhasa.

In 1987 Lobsang went on a pilgrimage to India. Upon his return, he went back to his work at Tsasur House. His determination to be a part of the struggle for the Tibetan cause prompted him on many occasions to make contributions to help the imprisoned, those ill-treated by Chinese police or expelled monks and nuns.

Sometime after his return to Tsasur, Lobsang Yonten started a school. Initally there were six students and Lobsang taught Tibetan language to a group of children who had previously had no educational opportunities. The school grew in size and popularity and Lobsang Yonten came to be affectionately known as Tsasur Shangla.



Lobsang Yonten

By 1993, the school had over 60 students and was teaching both Tibetan and English. Gendun Rinchen, now Lobsang's next-door neighbour, was helping to teach English whenever he had the time. Most of the students were aged between 8 to 11 years and there were also a few 16 to 17-year-old students.

On May 14, 1993 Lobsang Yonten was arrested. He was detained at the "Tibet Autonomous Region" Detention Unit No.4 in Lhasa where he was beaten, tortured and interrogated while being held incommunicado. After intense international pressure and campaigning for Lobsang was finally released on January 10, 1994.

After his release, Lobsang was received medical treatment but his health continued to deteriorate and he had to be hospitalised at Mentseekhang (Tibetan Medical Institute) in Lhasa.

However, there was nothing that could be done for Lobsang and he died upon his return to his home on October 30, 1994 from torture-related injuries.

cont. from p. 2

then we were handed over to Nyari Prison.

On December 26, 1996, my trial took place along with eight other political prisoners in Shigatse Local People's Court. I was sentenced to one year imprisonment in Nyari Prison. The eight other prisoners who were tried and sentenced were: Ngawang Choephel (sentenced to 18 years); the unnamed chantmaster from Namling Gaden Chokhorling (4 years); Nyima Tsamchoe, a monk from Gyaltse Ney-nying Monastery (five years); the chantmaster from Gyaltse Ney-nying Monastery (4 years); a monk from Gyaltse Phalchoy monastery (3 years); Kelsang Gyatso, a monk from Amdo (one year); and a lay man from Gyaltse (2 years).

Ngawang Choephel

After the trial, I was taken to Nyari Prison along with Ngawang Choephel (ethnomusicologist arrested in 1995 for documenting traditional performing arts in Tibet) and Kelsang Gyatso while the others were taken to Lhasa's Drapchi Prison. Ngawang Choephel appealed against his 18-year sentence but nothing came of it. He was always kept inside the prison and I didn't get any chance to talk to him. I heard from one former prisoner of Nyari Prison in February 1998 that Ngawang Choephel is still in the same prison. Kelsang Gyatso was released after one year.

Release

Upon my release on October 24, 1998. I returned to my town and tried to re-enter the monastery. However due to work-teams arrival in the monastery in 1997, I was denied re-entry. I went to the Religious Office and County Police Station to obtain permission but they labelled me a 'counter revolutionary' and forbade me even from wearing monks' robes. They threatened me with arrest if I did so. They also warned me not to move out of town unless I sought permission from the county police station. I was instructed to work and not to wait for meals from the hands of people.

The 'work-team' members arrived in the monastery in 1997and stayed in the monastery for five months conducting re-education sessions. The rules were strict during the 'sessions' as no one was allowed to talk with each other. They instructed monks to be 'patriotic' and to work instead of waiting for meals.

There were 21 monks in the monastery but now only 9 monks are left, four of whom were old monks and the rest expelled.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

July 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 13

55

Nun dies from prison beatings

Nawang Dekyi, a 25 year old nun of Poto Nunnery in Phenpo Lhundup, was arrested in 1995 after participating in a demonstration in Lhasa. First detained in Gutsa Detention Centre, she was later sentenced to six years imprisonment in Drapchi's reform-through-labour camp. Nawang, originally from Damshung County in Lhasa City, was reportedly near death when she was taken to Lhasa Regional Military Hospital by prison authorities on January 5, 1998. She died on January 21, 1998 after being hospitalised for 16 days.

A Tibetan ("D") who cannot be named visited Nawang every month in prison. He reported that her weak condition was a result of severe beatings by prison guards and that her heath was good before her imprisonment in Drapchi.

On January 5, 1998, Nawang was hospitalised in the 'Regional Military Hospital' of Lhasa. Neither Nawang's parents nor D were informed of the deterioration of her health or her hospitalisation. It was not until Nawang had passed away on January 21, 1998 that her parents were finally told that she had been ill in hospital.

A vehicle reportedly transported Nawang's parents from Damshung County to Lhasa but their daughter's body was not handed over to them for three days. During that time Nawang's body was kept in Drapchi Prison and nobody, including the parents, was allowed to approach the body to carry out the customary Tibetan last rites of placing white *khatag* (scarf offerings) on the body.

On January 23, 1998 the 'sky burial' (traditional Tibetan practice of cutting up the body and feeding it to vultures) was carried out near Sera Monastery. D was called to be present during the burial and from 4 a.m. he was ready at Drapchi Prison gate to accompany the body. A prison official was also sent to accompany D and watch him during the burial. At around 4.30 a.m. Nawang's body was taken away in a prison vehicle with five prison officials. D, promising to take full responsibility for any "incidents", was granted his request to first take the body for the customary circumambulation of the Barkhor (Lhasa's central market area) and the Lingkor (circumambulation route around the Jokhang temple).

During the sky burial D was not allowed to go near the body. When the *togden* (person who carries out the sky burial) dismembered the body, D immediately ran and tried to look at the body but the Drapchi officials dragged him away. D had nonetheless had the chance to see injuries on Nawang's body and said that her head had turned red and blue.

After the sky burial was completed the prison officials travelled back to Drapchi. Later that same day D returned to ask the *togden* about what had happened to the body. He was told that: "from the injury marks it looked as though the deceased had received severe beatings and as a result blood had entered the circulatory veins of the brain, turning it red and blue. The red and blue colours on the shoulder blades also indicated severe beatings."

D requested the authorities of Drapchi Prison to help Nawang's parents as they were very old and poor and had no money to pay for their return home to Damshung. The prison authorities gave the parents 500 yuan (around US$60) and sent them back to Dhamshung County.

Arrests, expulsions, monasteries closed in 1998

Despite claims by Chinese authorities in September 1997 that 1,780 of Tibet's 1,787 monasteries and temples have been "re-educated", work-teams continue to be sent into monasteries and nunneries in Tibet and the numbers of arrests and expulsions in connection with China's "Strike Hard" campaign (launched in Tibet in April 1996 to cut down on splittist activities and support for the Dalai Lama) continue to grow.

A "re-education" work-team went to **Serpo Monastery**, Pakshoy County, in February 1998. "Re-education" typically requires the denuciation of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama recognised by the Dalai Lama and the acceptance that Tibet is a part of China. When some of the monks disagreed with the work team's "re-education", six monks were arrested and taken to prison. The remaining monks were reported to have been expelled and the monastery closed.

A work-team arrived in **Pa Dha Monastery** in Pakshoy County in January 1998. A monk named **Gyalchoy** was arrested when he refused "re-education" and the work-team subsequently searched his room and found a Tibetan national flag. Gyalchoy was taken to Pakshoy County Prison where he was beaten severely and his hands were

chained. Electric cattle prods were used to shock him and were inserted in his mouth. As a result his body has reportedly become very weak and frail and he is said to be struggling for his life in prison.

From February 1998 onwards work-teams are reported to have arrived in all of the monasteries and nunneries of **YuShul Prefecture**. Ten monasteries and nunneries are known to have been "re-educated" and pictures of the Dalai Lama have been banned (number of nuns/monks in brackets):

Ge-gyay Gon Nunnery (500)
Dechen Ling Nunnery (173)
Tashi Thong-Droy Ling Nunnery (60)
Dhung-Shing Woeser Ling Nunnery (78)
Chok-Tse Nunnery (40)
Sang Chen Nunnery (40)
Kyok-yu Nunnery (60)
Ge-Lha Nunnery (20)
Choe-Ling Monastery (38)
Tsa-Ngak Thong-Droy Ling Monastery (50)

"Age and seat limitations" have also been applied in these monasteries and nunneries and in some only five or 10 nuns/monks were allowed to remain and the rest were expelled.

In **Ge-gyay Gon Nunnery**, 330 nuns were reported to have been expelled and prohibited from entering any other nunneries. The work-team has also ordered that no new nuns will be admitted.

A work-team arrived in **Sang Ngak Changchup Ling Monastery** in Chuphur Township, Chushul County under Lhasa City on March 31, 1998. The monks were instructed not to keep photographs of the Dalai Lama, not to accept the Panchen Lama recognised by the Dalai Lama and to oppose the Dalai Lama and "splittism". Those who did not comply would not be granted "political and religious rights" to sit in on monastery "gatherings".

On March 18, 1998, work-teams conducted "re-education" in the following 21 monasteries and nunneries in **Phenpo Lhundrup County**, Lhasa City and prohibited the monks and nuns from performing religious ceremonies:

Thumo Dag Goed Monastery (16)
Gyara Goed Nunnery (95)
Shar Nunnery (115)
See Meeg Nunnery (35)
Rama Jankhang Monastery (15-20)
Palden Tse Nunnery (35)
Chag Ree Nunnery (32)
Naeb Sur Monastery (50)
Sar Pa Da Monastery (9)
Nam Mo Monastery (20)
Does Gyas Monastery (20)
Baelung Nunnery (45)
Khalung Monastery (18)
Rinchen Monastery (5)
Lu Gyas Monastery (18)
Langthang Monastery (47)
Samtenling Monastery (13)
Lo Toed Gyas Thang Monastery (4)
Rinchen Dag Monastery (20)
Dar Yul Nunnery (55)
Sin Poe Monastery (20-30)

Life in Lhasa

A forty year old businessman (who requests not to be named)who spent almost 20 years in Lhasa as a "traveller"(ie. a non-resiaent) recently arrived in exile. He describes the lack of rights and difficulty in living associated with his lack of "status".

"I had never been able to go to school and I worked with my parents in Ghonjo County doing farming. I first went to Lhasa in 1978 and started a small business in petty trading.

I spent almost 20 years in Lhasa with my family: my wife, my daughter and my seven year old brother-in-law. I lived without a *themto* ("ration card") in a rented house as a "traveller" and had to report regularly to the local police station. For each member of my family I had to pay 18 yuan per month as a "traveller's tax".

The local security officials sometimes came in the middle of the night to make enquiries and search for "travel papers". Since we didn't have a ration card for Lhasa, they would ask for money and when we refused they forcibly seized our carpets, radio and even a watch. Sometimes they beat us if we refused to give them anything. We were constantly living in fear and tension.

I escaped from Tibet for my daughter's sake. She is seven years old and I want her to go to school in India. I also brought my wife's seven year old brother. Both children have never been to school in Tibet because the school fees were so high and the medium of teaching is Chinese.

Even if I could send them to school in Lhasa, one day they would come out as a Tibetan who "speaks and thinks Chinese" and who had forgotten all about Tibetan culture."

* * *

Another Tibetan attracted to life in Lhasa only to discover the harsh reality of struggling to survive was 22 year old Kyizom from Phunsum Township in Nyemo County, Lhasa Prefecture.

"When I was 13 I received six months schooling at a locally-run school but then had to leave to herd cattle and sheep. When I was 16 I left the village for Lhasa hoping to find a better living.

I stayed there for six years selling prayer flags near Tsuglhakhang (Lhasa's central temple). I had to pay a "land tax" of 57 yuan and a "cleanliness tax" of 27 yuan every month to the Chinese municipality authorities. In a year I would earn only 3000 to 4000 yuan (US$375 to $500) and my expenses would always exceed this."

Birth Control in Nyemo and Sangchu Counties

T, aged 40, worked in Nyemo County for 12 years. On May 22, 1997, she saw 300 women summoned to Nyemo hospital to be sterilised and she said that the health department had surveyed a total of about 1,000 women who were to be subjected to birth control measures.

"On that day I saw women lying on the ground crying, pleading to the authorities to allow them the right to have children. I knew two of the 300 women who are named Chung Lag and Tenzin. I also heard that women who were up to three months pregnant had had their babies aborted," said T, who did not wish her name to be disclosed.

"In Nyemo County coupls can have up to three children with at least a three year gap between each child. Parents are fined 500 yuan even if they give birth a few days before the three year period elapses. Each couple must register their names with the Township People's Government Office before they are married and are required to obtain a certificate if they want a child. If they give birth without permission from the office, each parent is fined 500 yuan.

In autumn 1997 two women named Peldron and Nyi-Nyi gave birth to a fourth child and were both fined 500 yuan."

cont. p. 4

PROFILE

Shot dead in a police station

Hours after participating in a peaceful demonstration around the Barkhor, twenty one year old Lobsang Legden lay dead in a pool of blood in a police station in Lhasa on October 1, 1987. Lobsang, a monk from Sera Monastery, was shot in the head when Chinese police officials turned their guns on fifty or so demonstrators who had been arrested that day.

Lobsang Legden was born in 1966 in Takphu in Meldro County. His father's name is Woeser and his mother's name is Ali and Lobsang was the third of their four sons.

From the age of eight years Lobsang studied in a *mangtsug* (locally run school) and then in 1983 he joined Sera Monastery, on the outskirts of Lhasa, to become a monk. In time Lobsang was given the responsibility of blowing the holy horns for prayer rituals.

On October 1, 1987, the anniversary of the formation of the People's Republic of China, approximately 43 monks from Sera Monastery initiated a demonstration. Lobsang Legden was one of the leaders.

Lobsang Legden and the other monks reached Lhasa at early dawn on that morning. There they scattered in different directions, blending in with the activity on the streets leading towards the Barkhor, Lhasa's central market.

At 9.30 a.m. the monks commenced their protest and many lay people joined in. The demonstrators were able to circumambulate the Barkhor three times and then approached the Barkhor Police Station. Police vehicles and Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials had blocked the road leading to the station's gate and about 50 demonstrators, including Lobsang Legden, were arrested there.

The arrested demonstrators were taken inside the police station compound and the gates were locked and blocked by police vehicles and bikes. The remaining demonstrators stayed outside the gates and began shouting for the release of those arrested. Those inside the compound began reciting prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and shouting 'Free Tibet'.

The PSB officials tried to quell the arrested demonstrators by firing warning shots aginst the walls of the police station. When the people disregarded the warning and continued their shouting, the officials turned their guns on the demonstrators inside the police compound and commenced firing.



Lobsang Legden on the rooftop of Sera Monastery with his religious horns

Lobsang Legden was shot on the right side of the head and killed instantly. His body lay in a pool of blood. Soon after Lobsang was shot, the arrested demonstrators stopped their shouting and dispersed.

After several days of searching, Lobsang's family found Lobsang's body in the morgue of the Lhasa People's Hospital. The family had to pay 600 yuan (US$750) to be allowed to take the body home where the traditional seven days of last rites could be performed for the soul. Lobsang's body was then cremated at the Paphongka crematorium near Lhasa.

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cont. from p. 2

Gedun Kyi from Sangchu County in Ngapa "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" (Tib: Amdo) reported the implementation of strict birth control in her area which has about 400 Tibetans, all farmers.

"Only two children are allowed and a woman pregnant with a third child will be dragged to the hospital and forcibly aborted. If a third child is born the family must pay 1000 yuan (US$125) and the child is not entitled to any benefits until 18 years.

In some cases only one child is allowed before the mother is forcibly taken to the hospital for birth control. The majority of married women in the county have been called by hospital authorities for birth control.

In 1994 two village women who were pregnant with their third child were forcibly aborted in the third month."



Ngawang Sangdrol

Correction

A printing error was made in the last edition of the Human Rights Update (Volume III, Number 12). On page 2, a photograph of Ngawang Choephel was mistakenly printed above the caption "Ngawang Sangdrol - solitary confinement".

Ngawang Sangdrol, the longest serving female political prisoner in Tibet, is reportedly in solitary confinement following the May protests and shootings in Drapchi Prison. Ngawang Choephel, a musician sentenced to 18 years, is currently imprisoned in Nyari Detention Centre and is not connected to the Drapchi incidents.

We apologise for any confusion caused by the error.

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Human Rights UPDATE

59

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

July 31, 1998 Volume III: Number 14

Dead nun identified

Information received in June regarding the Drapchi Prison incidents on May 1 and 4 in which prison officials opened fire on protesting prisoners indicated that seven people had died. Four of the dead were unidentified. According to additional recently received information from Tibet, one of the nuns who died was Ngawang Choekyi.

Ngawang Choekyi was 26 years old. She was from Phenpo Lhundup County which is about 78 kilometres north of Lhasa. Her late father's name was Thinley. He had two wives, Choedon and Dolma. Ngawang's mother was the older of the two, Choedon. Ngawang has 13 other siblings and her family are farmers.

When she was a child, Ngawang attended a *mangtsug* (locally run) school and then later joined Sharbumba Nunnery which is in the northern part of Phenpo. This nunnery has more than 100 nuns, approximately 13 of whom are currently political prisoners at Drapchi Prison.

While they were still at the nunnery, Ngawang, her sister Seldon, Choekyi Wangmo, Ngawang Chemi and Choekyi Gyaltsen initiated a small peaceful demonstration in the Barkhor (market area) in Lhasa in June 1994.



Ngawang Choekyi (r) with her sister Sedon

They were arrested immediately by Public Security Bureau officials and later transferred to Drapchi Prison. Their sentences ranged from five to six years. Ngawang Choekyi was sentenced to five years.

Following the Drapchi Prison protests in May, Ngawang's parents heard that five nuns had died on June 7. Aware that their daughter often acted fearlessly, they searched and found their daughter's body together with four other bodies. The identities of the other deceased are currently unknown, although one of them may have been Tashi Lhamo who was earlier reported to have died on June 7.

Ngawang's parents were not allowed to touch her body but were able to see rope marks on her neck as if she had been choked or strangled. They were told by the prison guards that Ngawang had committed suicide by hanging herself. The officials stated that the other four nuns had died from asphyxiation after also committing suicide by stuffing cloth in their mouths and blocking their windpipes.

The prison officials decided without consulting Ngawang's parents that her cremation would take place on June 11. Her parents were not allowed to attend the funeral ceremony and its time and location were kept secret.

According to the last press release issued by TCHRD on June 29, 1998 relating to the Drapchi Prison incidents, five nuns had died on June 7, including an unidentified nun from Phenpo Jhopo and a nun called Tashi Lhamo. Three other unidentified nuns were reported to have been shot during the demonstration, and subsequently to have died.

This latest report from Tibet confirms that five nuns died but identified only Ngawang Choekyi. It appears that the two reports refer to the same five nuns. It is therefore probable that Ngawang Choekyi is the unidentified nun from Phenpo Jhopo whose death was reported on June 29 and that Tashi Lhamo is one of the nuns who was unidentified in the latest report.

Imprisoned for having Dalai Lama's autobiography

According to information received recently, Tseten from Phugsum County in Nyemo has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for possessing the autobiography of the Dalai Lama. She is currently detained in Drapchi Prison.

Tseten's birthplace is Nyemo Phugsum and she is now around 37 years old. Her knowledge of Tibetan language is said to

be very good and she often wrote compositions.

Tsetan had been detained on two previous occasions for pasting freedom posters. She was arrested in Nyemo County in 1988 and detained for six months in Nyemo County Prison. She was again arrested in 1995 for pasting posters and was held in Gutsa Detention Centre for eight months.

After her second release from prison Tsetan separated from her husband and started to sell *chang* (Tibetan beer) near Sera Monastery, close to Lhasa, in order to eke out a livelihood.

On the third and most recent occasion, Tsetan was arrested for possesing the autobiography of the Dalai Lama and was charged with "counter-revolutionary" activities. After sentencing, Tsetan was transferred to Drapchi Prison, Lhasa.

Tsetan's two children were taken care of by someone for some time but the Public Security Bureau (PSB) of Nyemo later decided to take them away, suspecting that they might attempt to escape into exile. Before the PSB arrived the children managed to flee into the mountains but work-teams in Sera Monastery handed them over to the PSB.

The two children, Wangchuk, aged around 15, and his sister, aged around eight, were reported to have been put under the charge of a teacher. The teacher was strictly instructed that the children should not be allowed to go outside the school boundary.

Extended term for prison protest

On October 11, 1997, a delegation from the United Nations Commission on Arbitrary Detention visited Drapchi Prison in Lhasa, accompanied by Chinese officials. Three prisoners staged a protest during the visit and subsequently had their sentences extended by four to five years.

On that day Kyil Khar, a prisoner from Nagchu Sog County, started shouting slogans such as: "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama", "Tibet is a free country", "People are suffering in the prison" and "Prisoners do not get enough to eat". His protest was supported by Sonam Tsewang from Meldro County and Wangdu from Sakya County.

Immediately afterwards the three prisoners were reportedly taken aside and detained in solitary confinement for five months. Information recently received stated that their sentences have been extended. Kyil Khar and Sonam Tsewang have had their terms extended by an additional five years and Wangdu's term has been prolonged by four years.

The three prisoners' original sentences and the reasons for their detention are unknown.

Expulsions from Drakyap Monastery

Recently a monk called Chodak, aged 16, arrived from Phenpo Drakyap Monastery in Tibet. He reported that a work-team had arrived in his monastery and expelled three monks, including himself, for refusing to denounce the Dalai Lama.

In April 1997, an 11-member work-team from Lhundup County arrived at the monastery. The 17 monks of the monastery were all called for a "re-education" meeting which included a revised history of Tibet and called for opposition to the "separatist force".

An exam was conducted after the completion of the "re-education" and the monks refused to answer "properly". This angered the work-team and the parents or close family of all the monks were called, including the head of the village or county, to urge the monks to co-operate with the work-team.

Finally most of the monks were forced to denounce the Dalai Lama if they wished to remain in the monastery. However, three of the monks - Chodak, Lhakpa and Ngawang Nyandak - told the work-team members that they would not oppose the Dalai Lama and that they would rather leave the monastery than deny their basic faith and belief.

As a result the three monks were expelled from the monastery and taken to Lhundup County where their photographs were taken and all of their personal details were recorded. The monks were then taken to their birth place and forbidden from leaving their village for any reason. They were required to seek permission every time they wished to go anywhere.

Imprisoned mother: family's ordeal



Migmar Dolma

Migmar Dolma, aged 46, was arrested on June 29, 1997. Migmar is still in detention and her family have suffered in many ways since her arrest, including being forbidden from from visiting her in prison and having to use family savings for bribes to obtain news of her.

When her arrest was first reported (Human Rights Update, September 15, 1997) it was thought to be linked to the July 1 Hong Kong handover in 1997. Recent information gives further details.

Migmar had been to India twice, first in 1994 and then in the winter of 1996. She returned to Lhasa on June 28, 1997 and the next day, at around 10 a.m., ten Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials burst into her house. They took her and her belongings away and her family members were told that she would be released after interrogations.

Shortly afterwards more PSB men arrived and started searching Migmar's house. Three PSB men searched each room and they found a book called 'Prevailing Truth of Tibet' and many letters sent from India to be distributed in Tibet. They also discovered and removed a photograph of the Dalai Lama and a small Tibetan flag which was placed under the altar.

Around the end of December 1997, Migmar's family members received a letter from Seitru Detention Centre, the detention centre for the "Tibet Autonomous Region". The letter reported that Migmar Dolma had been charged under the offence of "counter-revolutionary propaganda".

After that none of Migmar's daughters were permitted to visit her in detention. One of her daughters, Pasang, tried on various occasions to deliver food and clothing to her mother but each time she was refused.

A source in Tibet reported that following Migmar's arrest, her family suffered a series of misfortunes. Friends began to avoid them for fear of being associated with a "freedom activist" and many business associates and

cont. on p. 4

PROFILE

Death of a democracy activist

Chozed Tenpa Choephel, from Lhasa, was arrested on December 15, 1987, reportedly for possessing a copy of the Dalai Lama's autobiography and democratic documents. He died on August 25, 1989 in Lhasa People's Hospital at the age of 67 or 68. He had been transferred there from Drapchi Prison where he had been held for 20 months.



Chozed Tenpa Choephel (extreme right) with his family members

Chozed Tenpa Choephel was a groundskeeper at Norbulinka (the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lamas on the outskirts of Lhasa), and he and his wife ran a small shop in Lhasa.

Chozed's whole family was politically active. His wife, Tsering Lhamo, was imprisoned in October 1979 for one year for shouting pro-democracy slogans during the 1979 visit of a delegation from the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. Chozed's wife was again detained in 1980 for protesting the arrest of their son. One of Chozed's daughters, perhaps Lhakdron, was arrested in March 1989 for participating in a demonstration and was imprisoned for two years in Gutsa Detention Centre, Lhasa.

Chozed's son, Lobsang Choedrak, who worked in a truck repair shop, spent four years in prison from 1980 to 1984. Lobsang was imprisoned for pasting pro-independence posters and for his involvement with Geshe Lobsang Wangchuk, Tibet's best known dissident (who is now dead).

Prior to his imprisonment Chozed had been making reprints of documents relating to the democratic constitution of the Tibetan Government-in Exile and had distributed them widely. The discovery of these and a copy of the Dalai Lama's autobiography resulted in his arrest.

Chozed was kept in Drapchi Prison for more than a year without any formal trial. He was reported to have been heavily interrogated at that time. Continuous prison beatings combined with a poor prison diet caused Chozed's health to deteriorate. On August 6, 1989, he was transferred to Seitru Detention Centre, Lhasa.

In 1989, while in Seitru, Chozed suddenly fell unconscious. Different accounts have been given to explain his sudden collapse. Some say he suffered a minor stroke due to high blood pressure whereas others maintain he slipped and fell. Chozed's fellow inmates reported Chozed's condition to the prison officials.

He was taken first to Mentseekhang (Tibetan Medical Institute) in Lhasa where, despite his poor health, his children were not allowed to see him. Two days later, still unconscious, Chozed's family requested prison officials to allow him to be transferred to Lhasa People's Hospital. He died that same night in the hospital.

Four monks arrested, one disappeared

It was reported in May 1998 that work-team members had arrived in Rongpo Rabten Monastery and Chamda Dozong Monastery in Nagchu Sog County to implement the Chinese "re-education" campaign. Several monks from the monastery pasted freedom posters in the monastery and four monks were arrested. One monk later disappeared.

After the arrests more work-team members and People's Armed Police forces came to the monastery. They held meetings and instructed the monks to oppose the Dalai Lama and to accept Tibet as part of China as well as the existence of religious freedom in Tibet.

The monks were also ordered to elect a representative to advise them on these same principles. Bado Samten, a 70-year-old monk, was elected.

Bado was reported as saying, "I will not oppose His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his people because our identity is His Holiness. We Tibetans will not oppose other Tibetans. I don't know how to oppose. If there is any monk who wishes to oppose His Holiness, he must first take off his monastic robes. The Chinese authorities just said that Tibet is part of China but this is not true at all. Chinese have forcefully invaded Tibet. I don't know if there is religious freedom because if one does not have faith in one's teacher then where will the religion stand?"

That evening, after speaking out at the meeting, Bado Samten disappeared. Nothing has been heard of his whereabouts since his disappearance.

cont. from p. 2

acquaintances claimed repayment of money supposedly borrowed by Migm

Pasang, the younger daughter, a receptionist at the Lhoka Gongkar Airport in Lhoka County, was pressured by her employer to resign. The reasons given for her dismissal were that she considered her personal concerns more important than office matters and that she had not been punctual. Pasang was unable to get any other employment.

At the same time the family's savings were gradually exhausted in attempts to have Migmar released. It was reported that on many occasions Pasang had to pay more than 400 yuan (US$50) as a bribe simply to receive news of her mother.

Pasang is currently in exile with her eight month old baby and her husband Kelsang.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

August 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 15

63

Death toll rises in Drapchi Prison

Ten or possibly eleven prisoners are now believed to have died as a result of protests in Drapchi Prison on May 1 and May 4, 1998. Despite strict measures by Chinese authorities to restrict the flow of information regarding the violent crack down by prison and army officials, recent reports have named two or possibly three dead nuns who were previously unidentified and revealed the death of an additional three monks.

In an unprecedented display of violence, Drapchi Prison officials and army forces opened fire on prisoners staging peaceful demonstrations on May 1 and May 4 this year. The protests were timed to coincide with prison ceremonies marking International Labour Day and Chinese Youth Day respectively, and the visit of a European Union delegation to the prison on May 4.

Previous reports had indicated that a nun named **Tashi Lhamo** and three unidentified nuns were shot during the May 4 demonstration and died on June 7. The cause of the three unidentified nuns' deaths was not known but those who saw the dead bodies described them as swollen. A later report from family sources identified one of the three nuns as 26 year old **Ngawang Choekyi** from Phenpo Lhundrup County. Ngawang had been a nun at Sharbumba Nunnery in Phenpo. Her parents were informed that she had hanged herself.

On August 4, 1998, Tibet Information Network (TIN), an independent monitoring organisation based in London, reported that 24 year old Choekyi Wangmo, 24 year old Tashi Lhamo, Dekyi Yangzom, 21, and Khedron Yonten, all died on June 7. TIN reported that authorities said that **Choekyi Wangmo** from Sharbumba Nunnery hanged herself and that Tashi Lhamo, **Dekyi Yangzom** and **Khedron Yonten**, who were all from Nyemo County 150 km west of Lhasa, suffocated themselves by stuffing their mouths with scarves. A mark was reportedly visible on Choekyi's neck and the bodies of the other nuns were said to be bloated.

TIN noted that the official cause of death did not explain why the nuns all apparently died on the same day, particularly as they were reportedly being held in solitary confinement and had no contact with each other. The report suggested that the nuns may have been singled out for harsh treatment as protest ringleaders.

The reports of the death of Choekyi Wangmo and Ngawang Choekyi are almost identical and it is therefore unclear whether there were two such deaths on June 7 or whether one of the identifications is incorrect. Other sources had earlier reported Chokey Wangmo (reported as age 21 from Sharbumba, Phenpo) as having been subjected to severe torture for taking part in the May 1 demonstration.

TIN also refers to an unconfirmed report that a fifth nun, **Lobsang Wangmo**, has also died following beatings in the prison after the two demonstrations. Lobsang Wangmo may be from Phenpo in Lhundrup County.

Two monks from Ganden Monastery, **Khedrub**, 26, and **Ngawang Tenkyong** (lay name Lobsang Wangchug), 28, were also reported to have died after beatings following the protests. TIN refers to an unofficial source who said that after the May 4 incident, Khedrub was transferred from Drapchi to solitary confinement in Outridu, a re-education through labour centre on the outskirts of Lhasa. The details of his death are not known but it was reported that although his body was not returned to his family his relatives were forced to acknowledge the cause of his death as suicide. Khedrub, from Meldrogongkar area near Lhasa, was arrested in March 1994.

Ngawang Tenkyong, also from Meldrogongkar, was reported to have died following severe beatings on May 5. He had been serving a ten-year sentence after participating in an independence demonstration in May 1996.

Another unconfirmed report received by TIN stated that a fourth monk, **Ngawang Tenzin** from Nalanda Monastery, 25 km north of Lhasa, died on June 7.

Sources had earlier reported the death of **Karma Dawa** (or Kardar), a lay man imprisoned on criminal charges, who was said to have led the May 1 protest. The cause of his death was unknown although it had been rumoured within the prison that he might be executed. Other reports have since stated that Karma Dawa was executed within two weeks of the protest. If so, Karma Dawa may be one of the three male Drapchi prisoners who were earlier report to have been executed on May 12.

The other prisoner known to have been killed in association with the protests was 24 year old **Lobsang Gelek** (whose lay name is possibly Tenzin Choephel). He is thought to have been shot dead in the May 1 demonstration (other reports say it could have been on May 4), although prison officials told his father that he had committed suicide.

Hermitage closed and monk missing

One monk is missing following the closure of Karchung hermitage in northern Tibet in March 1998 due to "counter-revolutionary" activities. The monk, 27 year old Norsang, was one of three arrested at the time. Dupa Tharchin, a high lama who founded the hermitage, fled to exile to escape his own arrest and recounted the events.

Dupa Tharchin was born in 1967 in Zachu Kha, Sirshui County, Kham (Ch: Sichuan Province). He was discovered as a reincarnation of the high lama, Nyingma Lama Rinzin Drangaling, at the age of 18. In 1990 Dupa founded the Karchung Retreat near Namtso Lake in northern Tibet where his previous incarnation had taught and practised religion. The hermitage housed 36 monks and nuns.

Each autumn, Dupa initiated an annual occasion to pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and world peace. Up to 1000 local people would join the prayers which lasted a month.

However in 1997, the Chinese authorities from Damshung County Public Security Bureau banned the ceremony. Dupa was charged as a "counter-revolutionary", a "separatist" (a term for those who support Tibetan independence) and a follower of the "Dalai Clique", referring to those who support the Dalai Lama.

Realising his arrest was imminent, Dupa fled to India, leaving Norsang, a 27 year old monk, in charge of the hermitage. Dupa did not take Norsang with him, fearing it would cause trouble for the other monks and nuns.

When Dupa reached Nepal he broadcast the news about the religious restrictions in his area. Following this, in March 1998, the PSB of Palgon County closed down the hermitage, expelling all 36 monks and nuns, and arresting Norsang and two nuns.

The nuns were Gyaltsen Choephel, aged 23, the hermitage chant-master, and Phakchog Dupa, 22, the religious in-charge. All three were detained at the Palgon County PSB Office and both nuns were released after seven days. However, Norsang was taken to Lhasa and his whereabouts are currently unknown.

Political prisoners re-arrested

The Chinese government is tracking released political prisoners through spies, a source in Tibet has reported. It is believed that these former prisoners may be involved in political affairs and "a danger to society" and they are therefore strictly controlled by authorities. They are prohibited from re-entering monasteries and have difficulty finding jobs. The following four former political prisoners have been re-arrested on suspicion of "endangering state security":

Ngawang Dipsael (layname Penpa), 29, a monk from Drepung Monastery originates from Phenpo Lhundup County in Lhasa City. On May 13, 1992, he and nine monks demonstrated in Lhasa and were arrested. Ngawang Dipsael was sentenced to four years in Drapchi Prison and was released on May 16, 1996. He was re-arrested on December 22, 1997 by the Lhasa City Public Security Bureau (PSB), suspected of involvement in political activities. Ngawang was taken to Tsethang Prison in Lhoka Region and later sentenced to three years of labour through reform in Lhasa's Toelung Trisam Prison.

Tsultrim Sherap (layname Penpa), 23, of Sungrabling Monastery, comes from Gongkar County in Lhoka region. He was arrested in January 1992 for pasting pro-independence posters and was sentenced to three and a half years in Drapchi Prison. He was released in January 1996 and returned to his home. In the meantime, a "re-education" work-team had arrived at Sungrabling Monastery and expelled many monks. In 1997, Tsultrim was charged with transmitting this news of Sungrabling Monastery abroad and was arrested by the Lhoka PSB and sentenced for five years in Drapchi Prison.

Paljor Choegyal, 31, from Gongkar County in Lhoka Region was a monk at Sungrabling Monastery. In March 1989, Paljor ripped down Chinese posters banning independence demonstrations and replaced them with independence leaflets. In May 1989 he and six other monks from Sungrabling were arrested. The monks were sentenced to three to five years in Drapchi Prison. Paljor

cont. on p. 4

Tibetan receives human rights award



Palden Gyatso

Palden Gyatso was awarded the 1998 John Humphrey Freedom Award of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development on August 5, 1998. He received the award for his tireless efforts to shed light on the human rights abuses committed against Tibetan political prisoners by China. Palden Gyatso will receive the award in Montreal on December 10, 1998 at a special ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Palden Gyatso, now 67, has been a monk since the age of 10. He was arrested in late 1959 after participating in the first Tibetan national uprising against Chinese occupation and was held for a total of 33 years in various prisons, labour camps and administrative detention centres in Tibet until his release in August 1992.

When Palden Gyatso left Tibet in September 1992 he smuggled out a variety of torture instruments that are commonly used in Chinese prisons in Tibet. Since his release Palden Gyatso has testified about his experiences before parliaments, the US Congress and the UN Human Rights Commission. He currently lives in Dharamsala, India.

Following the award ceremony, Palden Gyatso will make a speaking tour of Canada. He said recently, "When I left Tibet, I never intended to lead a normal, happy life as my aim was to create international awareness of violations of Tibetans' human rights. This is the first human rights award that has been awarded to a Tibetan and so I consider it a great honour. I intend to continue to struggle for the human rights

cont. on p. 4

PROFILE

Man sacrifices life in demonstration

Sherab Tenzin was only 23 years of age when he was violently killed during a pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa. One of hundreds of Tibetans who participated in the mass demonstration of March 5, 1988, Sherab, who had already been shot in the leg, was attacked by a group of armed police who pummelled and stabbed him to death.

Sherab Tenzin was born in Lhasa Meru in 1965. His father, Sonam Topgyal, and mother, Yangzom, had five children. Sherab Tenzin was the third son. Tsering Topgyal and Sonam Wangyal are his two elder brothers and Chungdak and Phurbu Kalsang are his two younger brothers. Sherab's father worked for the government.

Sherab attended school from a very young age but, when he was 10 years old, his father fell ill with a severe kidney infection and became bedridden. His condition never improved and he later died. It then became much more difficult for the family to survive and Sherab and his brother Sonam Wangyal were forced to drop out of school in order to work in the same governmental department as their father.

Sherab worked in the department for four years. At the age of 19 he joined another department as a driver. In 1983 his mother died from an illness. In 1986 Sherab married Nyima, who was working as a cook in the Lhasa People's Hospital.

On March 5, 1988, during a demonstration in Lhasa led by monks from Gaden Monastery, hundreds of Tibetans staged a peaceful demonstration around Ramoche Street. They called out, "Tibetan independence", "Chinese quit Tibet" and "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama". When the demonstration began Sherab was standing on a corner in the Barkhor (Lhasa's central market) with a friend. As he saw the demonstration he said to his friend, "We are all Tibetans, we all eat *tsampa* (roasted barley flour), so it is our duty to participate in the demonstration."

Sherab and his friend joined in with the hundreds of other Tibetans who were demonstrating. At about 11 o'clock in the morning, People's Armed Police (PAP) forces marched into the street carrying guns, sticks and various weapons. The PAP rushed towards the unarmed demonstrators, most of whom quickly scattered. In the ensuing chaos, the armed forces opened fire on the demonstrators.

Sherab was shot in the leg and was unable to run away. PAP forces immediately surrounded him. One armed officer hit him over the head with all his strength and Sherab fell to the ground. Around 15 army officers then fell on him, covering him with blows. One of the policemen stabbed his back with an iron rod so forcefully that it almost completely pierced his body. One of his eyes was almost torn out.

As he was being beaten the Chinese officers continued to ask him, "Where are you from?" Sherab could only answer, "I ... I ..." in a very low tone before he died.

For some time Sherab's wife, who was pregnant, did not know of his death nor his whereabouts. After about two weeks Nyima was called and informed of her husband's death by the hospital superintendent. Police took her to the funeral parlour and showed her a dead body covered with blood.

Nyima looked closely at the bloodied body but still found it impossible to recognise her husband. When she finally recognized him by his clothing she fainted. Later she discovered that her husband's gold ring and watch were missing.

It was reported by someone who knew Sherab and is now in exile that it was frightening to see Sherab's dead body and that there was a large wound on his head. "He was mercilessly killed," said the source.

The authorities demanded 400 yuan (US$50) from Sherab's realtives for having "stored" the dead body. Sherap's brother Tsering Topgyal was forced to sign an agreement, promising to pay. One week later, the police station called Tsering Topgyal and demanded the payment of the 400 yuan.

Tsering Topgyal again agreed to pay but told the police, "Before I make the payment, I have something to tell you." Before saying anything further he told the police that he was fearful they would handcuff him but they agreed not to do so and asked him to speak. Tsering Topgyal then asked, "Why did my brother die? How did he die? Why do I have to pay 400 yuan? If you announce the answers to these questions in public, than I will go to Barkhor to beg for money to pay this charge."

After that the Chinese authorities began to target Sherab's family and they were often harassed. On one occasion local policemen went to the family's house and Sherab's elder brother Sonam Wangyal was dragged from the house and beaten. No reason was given.

When Sherab's wife Nyima was seven months pregnant she was told that she must get rid of the child because it was the "son of a counter-revolutionary". Nyima ignored the threats and gave birth to a daughter whose name is Namdrol Kunsang.

cont. from p.2

Choegyal was sentenced to four years imprisonment and released in February 1993. He spent most of his time in Lhasa and then in 1997 the Lhokha PSB authorities discovered some documents from India in his possession. He was arrested again, taken to Lhoka Prison and sentenced to one year. In Lhoka Prison he was reportedly beaten and tortured by the prison guards and was denied medical care.

Paljor became very weak and was eventually, upon appeal by his parents, he was released on medical parole and hospitalised. His family is required to report to the local PSB about his medical condition from the hospital.

1995 **Dawa Tsering**, 27, from Phenpo County in Lhasa City was a monk of Dha Lobu Monastery. He made a Tibetan national flag, hoisted it on the monastery and in 1989 he demonstrated with four other monks from Gaden Monastery in Lhasa. They were arrested by Lhasa PSB and Dawa was sentenced to three years. In December 1989 he was taken to Drapchi Prison.

Dawa was released in May 1992, after which he stayed in Lhasa. In 1995, he was suspected of involvement in political activities and was arrested by Lhoka PSB while he was in Gyatsa County in Lhoka Region. Dawa was charged with having compiled a list of political prisoners and sending it to India as well as circulating documents from India in Tibet. He was detained and later the Lhoka court sentenced him to six years imprisonment and deprived him with his political rights for three years. At present he is in Drapchi Prison.

cont. from p. 2

of all Tibetans which have been continuously violated since the Chinese occupation."

The award includes a CN$25,000 grant and Palden Gyatso has decided to donate $5,000 to the Universal Responsibility Foundation, a Delhi-based organisation set up after the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989; $5,000 to Amnesty International for its work for the release of political prisoners; $5,000 to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy; and $5,000 to the Security Department of the Tibetan Government in-exile for the benefit of former political prisoners living in-exile.

The award is named in honour of John Peters Humphrey, the Canadian who wrote the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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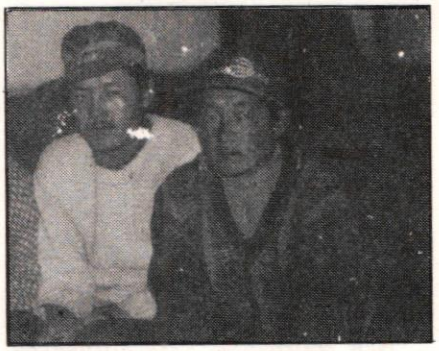
TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

August 31, 1998 Volume III: Number 16

11-year-old arrested, beaten and imprisoned

Sixteen year-old, Tenzin Tsedup of Taktse County in Thangkar township recounts his life's bitter experience at the hands of Chinese Police. A former monk of Taktse Phagmo monastery, he joined the monastery when he was only seven years old. He was at the monastery for only four years when he was arrested for involvement in political activities followed by his arrest and detention.

On August 17, 1993, Tenzin and his friends Tsetan Ngodup (19) and Pasang (23), left for Lhasa from their monastery to demonstrate at the Drepung Shoton (yogurt) festival held on August 18, 1993 in Norbulinka, Lhasa. At about 11 pm in the night by bicycle they carried the national flag and several independence leaflets and headed for Lhasa. On their way, they hoisted the flag and pasted wall posters on the gate of Thangkar township People's Government Office and then proceeded for Lhasa.



Tenzin Tsedup extreme right with a friend

At the festival there were many people gathere.Taking advantage of the situation, the three of them went up on the stage, and started shouting slogans such as "Tibet is independent", "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" and "Chinese quit Tibet". They were immediately arrested by the officials of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and taken to Gutsa Detention Centre. At the time of their arrest, they were brutally beaten.

Upon reaching Gutsa, a Chinese police kicked Tenzin on his chest and he fell unconscious. When he regained his consciousness, he was provided with a little water and moments later, they started to interrogate him.

On September 13, 1993 when the monks were in Gutsa, three PSB officials from Thangkar county came to them. The officials found out about the trio's involvement in the earlier flag and the poster incident again beat them severely. They splashed hot boiling water on Pasang's right arm and threw a chair after that on the same arm. Today, he still has a prominent scar on his arm and he is not able to lift anything heavy.

On September 14, 1993 the monks formally arrested and their sentences were passed. Pasang was sentenced to six years, Tseten Ngodup to four and Tenzin to one year. Tseten and Pasang were transferred to Drapchi whereas Tenzin continued to serve his term in Gutsa, working in a vegetable garden.

On August 18, 1994 Tenzin was released. He was not allowed to rejoin any other monastery. So, he had to stay at home.

In early 1998, he tried to escape to India along with 23 people, but was arrested at the Tibet-Nepal border near Shar Kumbu by Chinese patrolling police. He was detained in Shigatse Detention Centre for about a month then returned to his home town. He made his second escape attempt in April 1998 and was successful. He finally reached India in August 1998.

Imprisoned for poster



Migmar Tsering

Migmar Tsering was only 19 when he and his other young friends were involved in political activities for which they served time in prison. Having completed his term Migmar is today in exile.

My name is Migmar Tsering, aged 25, from Lhoka Gongkar Chideshol, Toephues Choekhor Monastery. I joined the monastery when I was 13 years old in 1986.

On 31 July 1992, along with two other monks from the same monastery, Tsering (18) and Lhakpa Tsering (17), we made independence posters and a Tibetan flag and pasted them in Chideshol township to correspond with the next day celebration of the founding anniversary of the People's Liberation Army.

For almost a month our involvement was undiscovered. However, on August 28, 1992, we were arrested by PSB officials of Lhoka region. We were taken to Lhoka Tsethang Detention Centre where we were kicked, boxed and beaten while being interrogated.

On November 9, 1992 our sentences were passed by the Lhoka People's Intermediate Court charged with "counterrevolutionary" propaganda. I was sentenced to four years and six months and Tsering to four years. We were both sentenced to two years deprivation of political rights whereas Lhakpa Tsering was sentenced to two years and one year deprivation of political rights. After our sentencing, we were

transferred to Drapchi prison fifth unit.
In Drapchi, we did prison labour which involved working in the vegetable garden. Regulations are very strictly controlled. Prisoners who fail to meet with the expectations of the authorities receive severe repercussions. I remember one time when I was beaten for getting delayed for the garden work. After the completion of my prison term on February 7, 1997, I was released.
However, I was debarred from rejoining any other monastery. Life outside prison was extremely difficult for me and I was subjected to strict vigilance and restrictions were imposed on my every movement. Not being able to bear all this, I was compelled to leave Tibet and come to India.

Expulsion of all the nuns at Toerong Nunnery

Toerong Nunnery in Sho Re township in Lhoka Region faced similar fate at the hands of the " work-team". All the nuns at the nunnery were expelled and their rooms were demolished with help from the local villagers to ensure that the nuns would not return after their expulsion.

Tashi Paldon, 25 years old is from Danak County in Lhoka Region. She was a nun at the Toerong Nunnery in Danak County in Lhoka region. This nunnery was constructed by Pawoe Rinpoche of Nyingma (a sect in Tibetan Buddhism) Lama.

This nunnery had been completely destroyed by the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution. However, it was rebuilt in 1996 by 20 nuns. Tashi was among the nuns who had rebuilt the nunnery.

In July-August, 1997, a four member "work-team" came to the nunnery to conduct a "patriotic re-education" campaign. The nuns were told to oppose the Dalai Lama and his 'splittist' activities.

Not one of the nuns accepted the principles posed by the work-team. As a result, the infuriated the members expelled all 23 nuns and told them to return to their places of origin. The "work-team" also ordered the demolishment of the rooms of the nuns by the local people living near the nunnery. The nuns were left with no place to stay therefore, they were compelled to leave for their respective homes.

Tashi Paldon, along with Lhakyi and Norzom went to Samye Chee Gur Waen Tsa Monastery's Retreat Centre where they planned to build a small house for their meditation.

However, in February1998, their plans were crushed when "work-team" members came to the monastery to conduct "re-education campaign". The "work-team" members recognised Tashi and her friends and told them leave that place immediately and return to their respective houses.

They were also threatened that if they were found at some other place, then they will have them arrested and put behind bars.

New restrictions imposed in Toeshung Choephel Monastery

New restrictions were introduced with regard to the "patriotic re-education" campaign in Toeshung Choephel Monastery in Chael Dae township in Lhoka region. Migmar Gyaltsen (27), a former monk from the same monastery faced expulsion for refusing to follow the instructions of the "work-team".

New regulations were imposed upon the monks of Toeshung Choephel monastery. The monks are not allowed to wear their monastic robes or conduct any religious ceremonies.

On March 20, 1996, a Chinese "work team" entered the monastery to conduct a "patriotic re-education" campaign. They stayed at the monastery for nine months and attempted to force the monks to oppose the Dalai Lama and denounce the Panchen Lama recognised by the Dalai Lama.

Migmar Gyaltsen could not follow these principles and refused to comply. This resulted in his arrest followed by detention for a month after which time, he was expelled from the monastery.

Strike Hard and Expulsions continue

Chungwang is a 21-year-old nun from Gongkar County in Lhoka region. She was a nun at Lhoka Samye Chee Gu Lhakhang Ser Po Nunnery. Chungwang relates the expulsion of thirteen nuns from her nunnery.

A six membered "work-team" came to their nunnery to conduct a "re-education" campaign. All six men were Tibetans.

Prior to the arrival of the "work-team", there were about 51 nuns in the nunnery. The "work-team" ordered the nuns to oppose the Dalai Lama and all the pictures of His Holiness to be brought down from the altar. The nuns were told that his pictures were totally banned.

The "work-team" members held "re-education" sessions. During one of these sessions, some of the nuns expressed dissatisfaction about the presence of the "work-team" and their instructions in the nunnery.

This resulted in the expulsion of 13 nuns. Some of them were: Chungwang, Tsering Wangmo (22), Tashi Paldon (25), Dechen Dolma (26), Pasang (20), Kalsang (19), Pasang (20), Dawa and Wangmo (22).

All these nuns were told to return to their respective homes. Some of them even fled to India.

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The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy would like to thank **Rev. Timothy J. Connor and his church** in Oslo, Norway for their generous contribution towards sponsoring this edition of the Human Rights Update.

We thank you sincerely for keeping us in your thoughts and including us in your prayers.

PROFILE

Young monk beaten to death

Sangye Tenphel's story exemplifies a case of a horrific death in custody ignored by prison officials. His intrepid behaviour of expressing his views cost him his life. Sangye Tenphel whose layname is Gonpo Dorjee was from Khangmar Monastery in Damshung County, in Lhasa City. Arrested for his involvement in political activities, Sangye died within the first year of his prison term. He was 19 years old.

On April 10, 1995, Sangye Tenphel along with four other monks from Khangmar Monastery held a pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa. All the monks were immediately arrested and detained in the Gutsa Detention Centre.

Sangye and his companions were subjected to severe interrogation sessions where they were badly beaten. Their sentences were later passed by the Lhasa People's Intermediate Court. Lobsang Gelek and Tenzin Choedak were sentenced to five years; Lobsang Choephel to four years; Tenzin Choephel and Sangye Tenphel to three years respectively.

In October 1995, the five monks from Khangmar Monastery were transferred to Drapchi Prison. Upon their arrival in Drapchi, they were reported to have been subjected to torture and beatings.

One day in November 1995, all the prisoners in the fifth unit were called for a random inspection. At that time one of the prisoner was found missing out of the 64 inmates. Paljor, the prison authority of the fifth unit enquired about the missing person and the head of the prisoners, Ngawang Tensang, affirmed there were no absenties. Ngawang was reprimanded by Paljor for negligence and kept in solitary confinement.

After the incident when the prisoners were later sent back to their cells, the prisoners refused to leave. They requested for the release of Ngawang Tensang. This was seen as an act of misconduct by prison officials who made them stand up with their faces against the wall while the prison warden scolded them. After some time, Phuntsok, the chief warden of Drapchi prison came and dispersed them.

Sangye was persistent and raised concern over Ngawang Tensang's confinement and asked why he was singled out for punishment. His comments were held in contempt and he was later called for interrogations by the prison official where he was beaten all over his body. From then on Sangye was singled out under strict scrutiny.

On January 30, 1996 the annual meeting of the Drapchi prison was held. The prisoners were all issued with a form to fill in. The prisoners were evaluated in accordance to the answers that appeared on their forms. Three monks wrote negative answers and were put in solitary confinement. They were Bhuchung (21) from Gaden Choekor Monastery; Thinley Ngawang from Tashi Gang Monastery in Phenpo, and Drubthog (21) from Chongyal County in Lhoka Region.

The prisoners of the fifth unit demanded that the three prisoners be taken out of isolation or else they would convene a hunger strike. All the prisoners stood in the courtyard of their prison unit. The prisoners were immediately surrounded by police and People's Armed Police (PAP) officials. An order came from the chief prison official that the prisoners would be given five minutes to vacate the area. If they refused, the PAP men would take immediate action against them. The prisoners had no choice but to comply. At the time when the prisoners dispersed, Sangye was overheard by one of the prison guards saying, "today we could not do anything".

He was immediately summoned to the prison office and subjected to interrogations. He faced harsh beatings and torture over his entire body. He was held from both his arms by two men, one on each side when another two struck on his head several times with a stick.

Inmates from Drapchi later saw him staggering towards his cell. Not long after the beatings Sangye started to have health complications. When he was taken to the doctor at the prison hospital, he was told he had no health problems and given no medication. However, his health worsened to such an extent that for almost a week he lied insensate on his bed.

Finally, he was allowed to visit the PSB hospital on May 5, 1996. He was assisted by few prison hospital officials.



Sangye Tenphel

He died the next day on May 6, 1996. His dead body was not handed over to his relatives but was taken to Sera Cremation ground with the help of a prisoner.

On May 9, 1996, Phuntsok, the chief warden of Drapchi prison called on the prisoners of the fifth unit, and held a meeting. He announced in the meeting that Sangye Tenphel died as result of brain hemorrhage.

The prisoners in Drapchi appealed to the chief prison guard to take all the necessary actions against the people who had beaten Sangye. However, so far no action has been taken.

Monks expelled from Pashoe Monastery

40 monks whose parents are government officials face expulsion

A "Work-team" in Pashoe Monastery has introduced a new policy where monks whose parents work for the government are subjected to expulsions. About 20 monks and another 20 novice monks have so far been expelled.

Jampa Choeden, 24 years old is from Kochen village in Pashoe County, Chamdo Region. He was a monk of Pashoe Monastery where 370 monks lived in 1996.

On August 1, 1996, a ten membered "work-team" from the county came to the monastery to conduct "patriotic re-education" campaign from the county. Two of the members were Chinese and the rest were all Tibetans. The "work-team" members stayed at the monastery for a month.

During this time, the monks were not allowed to perform any religious rituals in the monastery. 70 monks from the monastery were also expelled because they were not present when the "work-team" had arrived at the monastery. They had gone for pilgrimage or to their villages to meet their relatives. No reasons were provided for their expulsion.

Jampa Choeden was among those expelled. He stayed with his family until the "work-team" members left the monastery. When he rejoined the monastery, he was not allowed to attend any of the meetings of the monastery.

On February 15, 1998, the "work-team" revisited the monastery for the second time with 13 members including Chinese. Upon their arrival, the "work-team" conducted a a roll call of the monks. All the 54 novice monks below the age of 18 were expelled from the monastery.

The children of all government officials were also expelled including 20 monks and 20.

The "work-team" stayed in the monastery for two months. All the expenses incurred by the "work-team" members had to be borne by the monastery. There are at present only 180 monks in the monastery.

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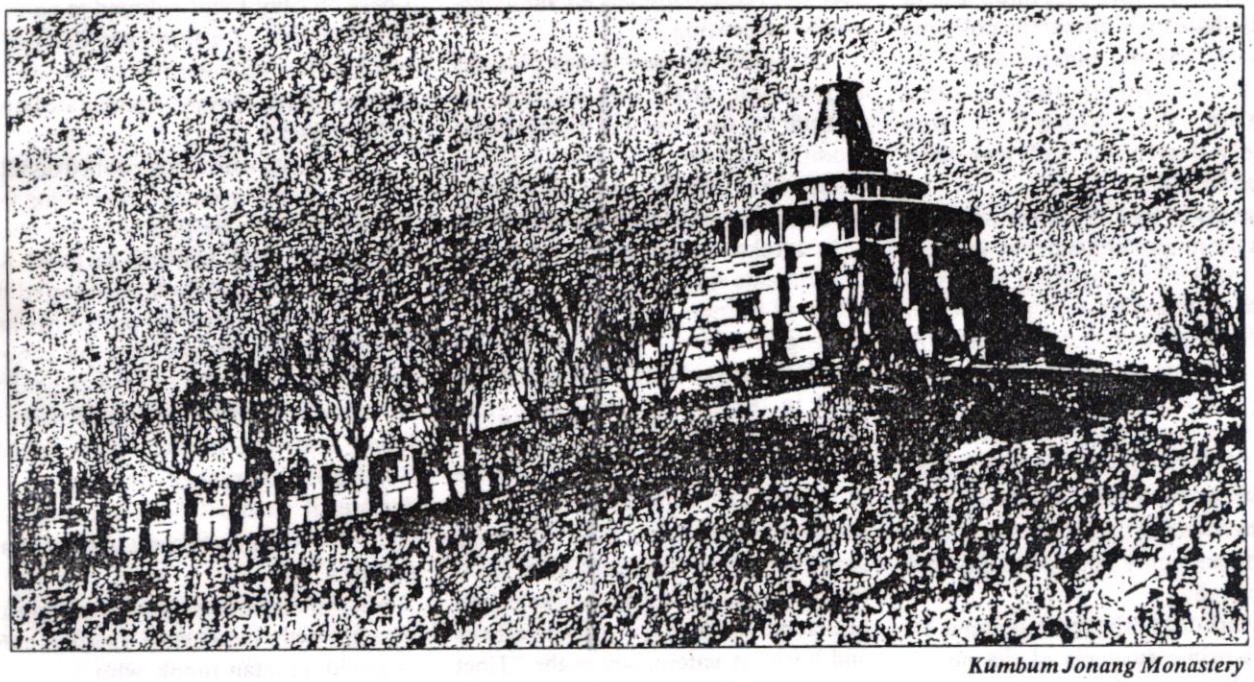
Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

September 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 17

Kumbum's Song of Sadness

Kumbum Jonang Monastery was visited by "work-teams" in May 1997. One year later, when our source returned to visit it, the monastery had been closed down. Among the pile of debris, a composition was found entitled, "My Song of Sadness....."



Kumbum Jonang Monastery

Kumbum Jonang Monastery is situated in the Shigatse region of central Tibet. The famous, enormous *Kumbum* (meaning "one hundred thousand images") stupa was originally built by Sherab Gyaltsen, the master from Dolpo, in the early 14th century, and was reconstructed after its destruction in the Cultural Revolution.

In May 1997 a 10-member "work-team" arrived in Kumbum Jonang Monastery to stay for three months. Sources (who wish to remain anonymous) learned that the "re-education classes" were being conducted every day for up to 10 hours with barely a break and that already half of the monastery's 25 to 30 monks had left for home or been expelled because they refused to sign a letter denouncing the Dalai Lama.

By spring 1998 (March to May in Tibet), Kumbum Jonang Monastery was completely closed, according to sources. There was not one monk left in the monastery and the monks' rooms were either locked or filled with straw and animal dung, probably to be used as stables. Villagers reported that all the monks had been taken to prison or forced to leave and that, although the nearby nunnery still had a few nuns it had no teachers.

In one room a box was found piled high with the wooden block prints of scriptures. To prevent them being used again for printing, each one had been carefully shaved so that only a faint impression remained. Other wooden blocks had been completely burnt.

A worn, discarded textbook of the "re-education" committee was also found in the ruins of the monastery. On the pages outlining Communist theory one despairing monk had written a short poem, entitled "My Song of Sadness":

... but then the Official Working Committee stormed in
And there was nothing at all to be done about it.
So now all monks, each and every one,
Have set out (back home) for the middle reaches of Amdo.
My dear father and mother,
To find you well and be happy once more,
This young One, [name withheld]
Shall set out in the seventh lunar month.

His final inscription several pages later read: '[Everything here] has been destroyed by the Jonang Working Committee.'

100 monks expelled

More than 100 monks in Tashi Choeling Monastery, Amdo, were expelled after the arrival of a Chinese "re-education work-team" and People's Armed Police members in May to June 1998. The monastery, which held about 530 monks prior to the officials' arrival, is 200 years old and a famous Gelukpa (a sect in Tibetan Buddhism) monastery.

Kalsang Tsultrim, 23 years old from Kansu Province, Jona County, was a monk in Tashi Choeling Monastery, situated in Amdo. The 200 year old monastery was built by Amdo Lama Kapa and has four monastic colleges which each function independently as a monastery. During the Cultural Revolution the monastery was completely destroyed and was then renovated in 1980.

Kalsang said, "By 1997, there were 530 monks in the monastery and they were all studying to their best capacity. In May to June 1998, some posters were pasted which read: 'Tibet is a free country and we will continue to stuggle for this until independence is achieved.'

After four days, about 100 People's Armed Police [PAP] and almost 60 'work-team' members came to the monastery. The work-team stayed in the monastery but the PAP men came only during the day and left in the night.

"The work-team singled out about 18 monks as prime suspects of the poster incident. They were taken for interrogation and released within a month. While at the monastery the work-team also searched each monk's room and confiscated all pictures of the Dalai Lama.

"After that a meeting was held in which the work-team laid down the basic principles of 're-education'. This went on for days and each monk was forced to put his thumbprint to the document which laid down the principles.

"A monk named Tenzin Tsultrim and about 100 other monks refused to sign the document. Some of them tore up the document and others threw it in the toilet. As a result, all of the 100 monks were expelled. The PAP men have now left the monastery but the work-team is still there conducting 're-education' sessions."

Employment cuts

A new campaign has been launched since the beginning of 1998 in government offices and enterprises in Lhasa City. Tibetan staff in government business, industrial, judicial and administrative sectors have been reduced and it is thought that the campaign is intended to reduce and control the number of Tibetan government officials in Lhasa.

Many Tibetans working in these sectors are reportedly being expelled from their jobs. Expelled staff are provided with a small payment for one year and retired officials are no longer granted a pension.

Externally, the authorities give the impression that the system of recruitment for these positions is being modified but sources say that, in reality, quotas have already been set limiting the number of staff in the various offices.

In Lhoka region in central Tibet, departments have been issued with a notice of the new "recruitment" policy although it has not yet been put into practice. It is said that 50 percent of the staff in the Lhoka Meteorological Department will be fired.

Another Tibetan reported that there is a "new economic policy being implemented by the Chinese government" in Tibet. He said that 3,600 (unconfirmed) Tibetan workers had been removed from government offices and business enterprises in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" in February 1998. He believed that the reason was that there were thought to be excess office staff.

UN Human Rights Commissioner in Tibet

China's record in heavily regulating visits by foreign delegations concerned with human rights still stands after the recent visit by the UN Human Rights Commissioner to China and Tibet. The 10-day visit to China by Mrs Mary Robinson, who was in Tibet from September 10 to 12, represents the first such visit of a UN Human Rights Commissioner. The visit, aimed at strengthening dialogue between China and UN bodies on human rights, was unfortunately hampered by China's heavy-handedness in preventing contact between the High Commissioner and the local people.

Mrs Robinson did not visit any prisons or detention centres while in Tibet, saying it was not part of her brief. Prior visits by international delegations to Chinese prisons in Tibet have resulted in severe retaliation against prisoners who tried to speak to the visitors of human rights abuses in the prisons. Most recently this year, two protests in Drapchi Prison in Lhasa on May 1 and 4, timed to coincide with the visit of a European delegation, were stifled with gunfire by prison and police officers. Eleven prisoners are known to have died.

Chu Hailan, wife of imprisoned dissident Liu Nianchan, was dragged screaming from a hotel lobby in Beijing on September 9 where she was waiting to hand Mrs Robinson a letter. She later reported that plainclothes officers had pulled her hair, punched and kicked her in a hotel detention room where she was held for about eight hours before being released. Upon learning of the incident, Mrs Robinson expressed her regret and declared it "completely unacceptable that somebody coming to me would have any problem."

Mrs Robinson was also prevented from meeting with Yulo Dawa Tsering, a 69-year-old Tibetan monk who served 27 years in prison on political grounds. Yulo Dawa Tsering is now reported to be effectively under house arrest, a punishment apparently imposed for speaking openly to a visiting UN human rights delegation in 1994.

While visiting Lhasa's central temple, the High Commissioner handed a written request to a monk attempting to set up a meeting with Yulo Dawa Tsering. No meeting took place, nor did Mrs Robinson meet with any other Tibetan political prisoners or dissidents.

The focus of Mrs Robinson's three-day trip to Tibet was on "developing a culture of and a concern for human rights and for the rights and culture of the Tibetan people". The High Commissioner also raised the issue of population transfer of

cont. on page 4

PROFILE

Nun shot and dies in Drapchi Prison

Tashi Lhamo was only 24 years old when she died. A nun of Nyemo Jewo Thekchogling Nunnery, Tashi Lhamo was shot during a peaceful protest in Drapchi Prison on May 4, 1998. Suspected as one of the instigators of the demonstration, she was held in solitary confinement and died about one month later on June 7, 1998.

Tashi Lhamo from Nyemo township in Nyemo county, 150 km west of Lhasa, first became a nun in 1992 when she joined Shugseb Nunnery in Lhasa. She stayed in Shugseb for one year and in 1993 she joined Nyemo Jewo Thekchogling Nunnery which was built in 1987.

On January 9, 1995, Tashi Lhamo and two other nuns from her nunnery went to Lhasa. The two nuns were Khedron Yonten, aged 27 from Nyemo County, and Khechok Sangmo, aged 20 from Kharu township in Nyemo County.

In Lhasa, the three nuns held a peaceful demonstration, calling for Tibet's freedom and other independence slogans. The Lhasa Public Security Bureau immediately arrested them and took them to Gutsa Detention Centre situated east of Lhasa. Upon their arrival in Gutsa, Tashi Lhamo and the other two were interrogated and severely beaten.

Tashi Lhamo was tried in the Lhasa People's Intermediate Court and a sentence of six years was passed against her. She was then transferred to Drapchi Prison in Lhasa.

In Drapchi, Tashi Lhamo was said to have suffered inhuman prison treatment. She worked in the prison's vegetable hot houses and spinning 2 kg of wool each day, as well as doing forced exercise.

On May 1, prison officials and People's Armed Police (PAP) forces opened fire on prisoners staging a peaceful demonstration during a ceremony marking International Labour Day. Three days later, on May 4, another protest broke out in the prison. The second protest was timed to coincide with a prison ceremony commemmorating Chinese Youth Day, as well as the visit of the European Union Troika delegation to Drapchi prison on May 4.

The May 4 demonstration prompted another violent clamp down in which the prisoners were again fired upon.



Tashi Lhamo on right

Early reports indicated that Tashi Lhamo and three other nuns were shot during this second demonstration and that all three died on June 7. The cause of the nuns' death were unknown but those who saw the bodies described them as swollen.

It was later confirmed by Tibet Information Network (TIN), an independent monitoring organisation based in London, that Tashi Lhamo had died on June 7.

TIN reported that authorities said that Tashi Lhamo had suffocated herself by stuffing her mouth with scarves.

This official statement did not explain why the nuns all apparently died on the same day, particularly as they were reportedly being held in solitary confinement and had no contact with each other. It was suggested that the nuns may have been singled out for harsh treatment as protest ringleaders.

cont. from page 2

Chinese settlers into Tibet during a meeting with Chinese officials.

Mrs Robinson stated that China would stick to its pledge to sign the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) within three months. The covenant protects freedom of expression and religion, peaceful assembly and public representation.

However there is international concern that China may hold off actually ratifying the ICCPR. The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was signed by China in October 1997 on the eve of Chinese President's Jiang Zemin's visit to the United States but has not yet been ratified and incorprated into Chinese law.

Deforestation in Nang County

A source from Nang County, Nyingtri region in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" has reported on unauthorised foresting and mining in his area.

In the last three years, the source said, there have been two incidents of Chinese individuals gaining unofficial approval to exploit "whole hillsides" in Nang. The county Department of Forestry had no authority to grant this use of land and the Chinese allegedly used connections to directly approach high level county officials.

The second incident occurred 18 months ago when an "agreement" was reached allowing three years' access to a richly forested piece of land in Kemnor township in Nang. A Chinese group set up tents, installed timber cutting equipment, employed 300 local Chinese settlers and used ten trucks to transport the timber. No Tibetans were employed. Some mining was also carried out by the same group.

In a separate incident, Chinese authorities were reported to have visited the township of Mingli in Nang and cut down a 1,000 year old tree. The tree was described as so massive that it would take 12 people with arms outstretched to encircle it. The tree was transported to Beijing and transplanted close to Tiananmen Square where it now stands as a tourist attraction.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

September 30, 1998 Volume III: Number 18

Concern for Drapchi Prisoners

There is grave concern for the well-being of two Drapchi prisoners who have been denied visitors since May of this year. Sources believe that Jigme Gyalpo and Bhu-khog, arrested in 1995 for independence activities, may have been involved in the violently suppressed demonstrations in Drapchi in early May which have thus far resulted in the known deaths of 11 prisoners.

Jigme Gyalpo (26) and Bhu-khog (24), both from Tsa-shod in Meldro Gongkar County, were arrested in May 1995. One night in April 1995, the two men pasted three posters in front of the township government office. The posters included slogans such as "Tibet is independent" and "Chinese quit Tibet" and drawings of a snow lion and snow-capped mountains resembling the Tibetan national flag. On the same night, the two men were also reported to have destroyed the main gate of the township government office and to have taken down the Chinese national flag and dumped it in the garbage.

After one month of investigation, Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials from Meldro Gongkar took the two men into custody. Bhu-khog was arrested in Kongpo region, in the south-east of Tibet. Jigme Gyalpo was later taken from his house. More than 15 PSB officials in two trucks were reported to have stormed his house at around 3 a.m. without any arrest warrant.

Bhu-khog and Jigme were both taken to the county detention centre of Meldro Gongkar. Jigme was interrogated and beaten severely, causing his ribs to be broken. During his five months' detention in Meldro Gongkar Detention Centre, Jigme was forbidden from receiving any visitors and it was only when he was transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre, Lhasa, in October 1995 that he was able to inform his relatives of his injury.

Later when his relatives were able to visit him in Gutsa and give him a change of clothes, Jigme gave them his old clothes and they saw that they were all smeared with blood. Many people in Tsa-shod township had seen Jigme being taken to the County People's Hospital when he was injured with his broken ribs.

After another series of interrogations in Gutsa, Jigme was sentenced to six years imprisonment and was shifted to Drapchi Prison, also in Lhasa. Bhu-khog was also sentenced to six years.

Up until May of this year, Jigme and Bhu-khog were permitted visitors in Drapchi. However, in an unprecedented display of violence on May 1 and 4, prison and police officials opened fire on prisoners staging peaceful demonstrations in Drapchi. Prison visits have subsequently been denied to Jigme and Bhu-khog, although it is reported that other prisoners are able to continue receiving visitors.

Sources believe that restrictions on Jigme and Bhu-khog may be linked to the two prisoners' involvement in the Drapchi demonstrations in May. They said there was great concern for the well-being of Jigme and Bhu-khog.

Jigme Gyalpo attended a township primary school for four years from the age of eight. At age 12 he left school to help at home with farming work. When he was 22 he went to Lhasa and stayed there for several years, and it was after that period that he began carrying out political activities. Jigme Gyalpo is described as a religious person. His elder brother was also involved in the Lhasa demonstration of the late 1980's.

500 monks and nuns forced to leave

Work-team members visited Drigong Sha Lhagang Monastery on March 7, 1998. After conducting the "patriotic re-education" campaign, all the 500 monks and nuns in the monastery were compelled to leave the monastery. They were threatened and told that the spiritual head of the monastery would be arrested unless they left.

Ngawang Sangmo (her ordained name) entered the monastery in 1997 at which time there were 300 nuns and 200 monks, including about 80 novice monks and nuns below the age of 18. She was one of almost 500 nuns and monks forced to leave the monastery when ordered to denounce their highest spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Ngawang reported that on March 7, 1998, an eight-member "work-team" from Meldro Gongkar County and Lhasa came to the monastery to conduct "patriotic re-education" sessions there.

On the same day the work-team convened a meeting to be attended by all the monks and nuns at which they lectured and distributed leaflets and booklets. None of the monks and nuns agreed to the work team's "principles", rejecting in particular the denouncement of the Dalai Lama.

Two similar sessions were subsequently held but the monks and nuns continued to reject the work-team's demands.

After a third session, four staff members from the monastery and one novice monk were forcibly taken to the township of Nyima-Chagra. They were forced to put their thumb print to a document denouncing the Dalai Lama. They were threatened with imprisonment if they refused to sign the documents.

Two days after the staff and the novice monk returned from the township, the work-team visited the monastery again and convened another meeting. This time the monks were ordered to strictly abide by the principles of the work-teams or to leave the monastery for their respective homes. They were told that any failure to comply with the orders wouls result in the arrest of their spiritual head (Lama Rinzin Gyurmey Thupten Gyatso).

Finally, with the exception of five monks, a lama and his attendant, everyone in the monastery left the monastery that day to return to their home towns. Two days later, Lama Rinzin Gyurmey Thupten Gyatso was arrested and held in Lhasa for two days before being sent to his hometown in Aazom, an area incorporated by China into Sichuan Province.

At present there are only five monks remaining in Drigong Sha Lhagang Monastery.

Drigong Sha Lhagang Monastery is located in Nyima Chagra township in the County of Meldro Gongkar, east of Lhasa. The monastery belongs to the Nyima sect of Tibetan Buddhism and both monks and nuns live and study there.

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, a large portion of the monastery was destroyed and in the early 1980s Lama Rinzin Gyurmey Thupten Gyatso and some local Tibetans worked together on the renovation of the monastery. Since the renovation many monks and nuns, mostly from Kham Province in south-east Tibet, joined the monastery.

Lhabrang Tashi Kyil Monastery visited by work teams

Lhabrang Tashi Kyil Monastery has the largest number of monks of any monastery in Amdo Province (Tib.) and it is also one of the largest monasteries in the Chinese Province of Qinghai. Many monks from different provinces come to Lhabrang Monastery to study religion as it has several learned teachers that help the monk students to understand the scriptures. Approximately 3,000 monks live at the monastery.

"Work-team" members came to Lhabrang Monastery in March 1998 and stayed there for three months conducting "re-education" sessions and instructing the monks to oppose "splittists" and to denounce the Dalai Lama. There were generally 15 to 20 work-team members and sometimes as many as 30 to 40.

The work-team imposed a ban in the monastery of all pictures of the Dalai Lama and sent home all monks who had come to Lhabrang Monastery to study scriptures. All monks below the age of 18 were expelled. Nine hundred cards were issued to those monks who were allowed to stay on in the monastery. It is believed that the other monks will eventually be expelled on the basis that they have an "unclear political stand point".

At present, the work-team holds meetings twice every week which all the monks are expected to attend. The monks are given political instruction during the meetings and are instructed to oppose the Dalai Lama which many monks find it difficut to comply.

Ala Jamyang Gyatso Disappearance

Ala Jamyang Gyatso was a high monk teacher in Lhabrang Monastery who is considered very learned. He was reportedly called to Beijing last year by Chinese authorities to teach the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama but he refused to go.

However in March 1998, he was unwillingly and forcibly taken to China to be a teacher to the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama.

Since then no one in Lhabrang Monastery has had any news of his whereabouts and the monks are all concerned about him.

Three Monks Arrested / Disappeared

Recent reports from Tibet indicate the mysterious disappearance of three monks from Rabten Monastery who reportedly pasted independence posters, distributed leaflets and shouted independence slogans in the market area in Tse-Drang Shang in the autumn of 1997.

When the local Chinese police came to arrest them, they fled to a nearby mountain and hid there in a herdsman's house. The Lhasa PSB again learned of their whereabouts and arrested them after a long search and fight.

Later on, the three monks were taken to Lhasa and beaten severely. Since then, there has been no news of them and not even their families know where they are. Local Tibetans reportedly suspect that the monks may have died due to severe beatings by police. Our source did not know the monks' names.

Work-Team in Sog Tsendhen Monastery

Before the arrival of an eight member Chinese work-team to Sog Tsendhen Monastery in the autumn of 1997, there were 250 monks in the Monastery.

The work-team stayed in the monastery for two months and instructed monks to oppose the Dalai Lama and "splittist" activities in the monastery. They forcibly collected all the monks' pictures of the Dalai Lama and examined the monks on their political views.

The work-team allowed 150 monks to stay in the monastery and provided them with passes. The remaining 100 monks were not allowed to remain in the monastery.

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PROFILE

72.

Another Death due to Prison Beatings

Maltreatment of prisoners in the form of torture and severe beatings, intended either as a summary punishment or in an attempt to extract a confession, is commonplace in prisons in Tibet. Further, denying prisoners urgently required medical attention until they are literally on death's doorstep is also very common.

Many Tibetan political prisoners who have been physically abused after they were taken into custody have subsequently fallen ill and died. One such victim is Tsamla, a 39 year old woman, who died on August 25, 1991.



Tsamla in her better days

Tsamla was 39 years old when she died. She was from "Khangsar" House, on south Gyalkha Lam (Victory Road) in Lhasa City. She was married to Nyima Ngodrup and had two children, a son and a daughter. Her husband worked in a mechanic's garage.

Tsamla worked for a construction company as an unskilled manual labourer until the mid-1980`s. After that she started running a small stall in the Barkhor (Central Market).

On October 1, 1987, she participated in a peaceful demonstration for Tibetan independence in Lhasa City but was not arrested. Then on March 5, 1988, she participated in another demonstration. She was again fortunate and escaped arrest.

On December 10, 1988, on International Human Rights Day, she is reported to have saved the lives of several Tibetan demonstrators by hitting a Chinese People's Armed Police (PAP) officer on the arm with an iron rod. The PAP officer had been shooting indiscriminately at unarmed protestors in front of the Jokhang temple in Lhasa. PSB officials who saw her doing this arrested her.

Immediately after her arrest, she was taken to Sangyip Detention Centre. Then, two to three months later she was transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre. According to reports from Tibet at that time, she was inhumanely beaten when the Chinese officials tried to make her confess.

She continued to receive severe beatings and torture at the hands of the Chinese officials for a long time which eventually led to severe internal injuries. A fellow inmate who is now in exile believes that she probably had a malignant tumour.

While in Gutsa, she was sentenced to two years "re-education through labour". Despite her critical condition, she was left unattended and uncared for during four months. It was reported that even when she was critically ill she was compelled to perform labour-intensive work.

Just six months before the completion of her sentence she was finally allowed to visit the hospital. By that time, she had already spent one and a half years in Gutsa and her health had deteriorated considerably. She visited Lhasa People's Hospital where she underwent surgery and was then admitted for about two months.

Despite being hospitalised, her health never improved. A few months later, on August 25, 1991, Tsamla passed away.



Tsamla shortly before her death

Monks and Nuns Expelled from Reincarnate Lama's Hermitage

Drupa Tharchin is a 25 year-old incarnate Lama who meditated for 2 years in the north of Namtso, Nagchu Region and gave religious teachings to the local people. In 1994, he built a hermitage in Namtso valley where about 30 to 40 hermits, both nuns and monks, lived. In the summer of 1996, all the hermits were expelled as the Chinese authorities branded the hermitage "illegal".

Drupa Tharchin was involved in offering long life prayers to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other prayers related to world peace. In the summer of 1996, he went to Nagchu Palgon County and Ao Bhu County to collect donations to conduct prayers the following winter.

The Chinese authorities learned of his activity and, on his return to Namtso, he was arrested and detained for seven days in Phalgon County Prison. He was questioned regarding his teachings and the authorities confiscated all the donations he had collected: amounting to about 70,000 yuan.

Moreover, the authorities forbade the performance of religious ceremonies that were usually conducted at the hermitage on the basis that the building did not have the necessary prior approval. All the hermits were expelled and sent back to their homes except for two caretakers. Fearing further repression and arrest, Drupa Tharchin fled Tibet on May 7, 1998. Now in exile, he is continuing his religious practices.

Recently, in exile, he received news about the arrest of Norsang, his principal aide in Tibet. Norsang was charged with involvement in Drupa Tharchin's activities and also in his plans to flee Tibet. Norsang was sentenced to three years and taken to Drapchi Prison. He was arrested in Nagchu Pango County. Information from the same source also reported that three nuns who used to live at the hermitage, namely Gyaltsen Chupar, Phagchog and Tsundue Tharchin, were detained and subjected to severe interrogation. Reportedly, Tsundue Tharchin fell unconscious several times while she was being interrogated.

It was also officially announced in the County that Drupa Tharchin is a "traitor" and that anybody who assists with his arrest will be handsomely rewarded.

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NEW WEB SITE AND E-MAIL FORUM

*TCHRD has launched its new website at: **http://www.tibet.org/eng/ngo/tchrd/index.stm.** The site contains information about the Centre as well as TCHRD Human Rights Updates.*

*TCHRD also has a new discussion forum. The **"Barkhor"** (replacing TCHRD-L) is a place to exchange ideas on Tibetan human rights issues. Write to **majordomo@cyborganic.net** and include in your message: "Subscribe Barkhor". Subscribers automatically receive Human Rights Updates and TCHRD News Releases.*

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

October 15,1998 Volume III: Number 19

79

Solitary confinement for two female political prisoners

A political prisoner released from Lhasa's Drapchi Prison in December 1997 has just spoken about the punishment of two Tibetan fellow women political prisoners. The prisoners, both nuns, are said to be kept in solitary confinement until the end of their sentences for singing independence songs in Drapchi Prison. This is the first reported case to TCHRD of such a prolonged period of solitary confinement.

Nyima, aged 18, from Phenpo Poto Nunnery in Phenpo Lhundrup County, is serving a five year sentence and is due to be released in 1999. **Jamdron**, aged 23, a nun from Phenpo Gyarak Nunnery, will not be released until 2002. Both were imprisoned in the 3rd rukhag (unit) at Drapchi, which contains all female prisoners, both political and non-political.

During the 1997 Losar celebrations (Tibetan New Year) from February 8 to 10, prisoners in Drapchi were ordered to sing and dance. Prisoners from the 3rd unit were ordered to sing a "eulogy song of Mao Tru-Shi" [Mao Tse Tung] that had been prepared for the occasion. Nyima and Jamdron stood up unexpectedly and sang an independence song loudly in front of the other female prisoners. Prison guards instantly took both of them to an interrogation cell where they were beaten. After interrogation they were taken away to a detention cell separate from the other female prisoners.

Other nuns imprisoned in Drapchi protested for Nyima and Jamdron's release and the prison guards reportedly called in army officials to control the prisoners and confine them to their cells. The confinement lasted for three days. On the fourth day they were taken out for regular exercise. The nuns then initiated a fast, refusing to eat until Nyima and Jamdron were released from their isolation cells.

The head of the prison, Chen Yo Trang, refused to release Nyima and Jamdron and said they would be given meals in their cell. After fasting for three days the protesting nuns became extremely weak and Chen Yo Trang insisted that they break their fast. They were advised to "come out clearly with their thoughts and points" regarding the mismanagement of the prison authorities.

After five days of fasting, the nuns were served with diluted rice gruel but it is understood that prison officials did not respond to their demands to remove Nyima and Jamdron from their special detention cell. They continue to remain there until the expiry of their sentences. Although prisoners are often punished by being kept in solitary confinement for restricted periods, the case of Nyima and Jamdron is unique due to the extreme length of intended solitary imprisonment.

Drapchi staff replaced for security reasons

Recent information from Tibet shows evidence that staff in Drapchi Prison are being replaced. It is believed that the purpose of the staff changes is to control leaks to the outside world from the high security prison prompted by the May protests which the Chinese authorities continue to deny had occurred. Drapchi contains the highest number of Tibetan political prisons.

The garage in Drapchi which employs people from outside the prison has also been closed as a measure by the authorities to contain information about incidences within the prison walls. International Human Rights groups have received reports of torture, solitary confinement and deaths since the demonstrations at Drapchi on May 1 and 4, 1998.

Restrictions have also been imposed on visitation rights from families of the prisoners. This seems to be particularly directed at political prisoners. The enforcements are so strict that even sweets brought by visitors are being unwrapped for security reasons.

Lhasans also targeted

TCHRD has also received reports that interviews are currently being conducted with the people of Lhasa City. People are being required to relay details of their life, including schooling, work place and specifically any trips abroad, since the age of eight. People who have been abroad are targeted for further interrogations regarding why they went, where and when. Information is also being asked on relatives abroad and their occupations.

Details on Powo Tramo

TCHRD has received details on Powo Tramo Prison from a former non-political prisoner who was sentenced to 10 years in prison. To date, details on conditions within the prison have been difficult to receive due to its remote location, lack of visitors at the prison, and the high security surrounding political prisoners.

Powo Tramo has been renamed as Tibet Autonomous Region Prison no. 2 and currently has a total of approximately 480 male-only prisoners. It is located in Dzona, Tramo County, about 40 km away from the main town in Tramo County. Most of the prisoners are from Chamdo region although a few are from Lhasa region or some other Chinese Provinces. The prison staff are Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials and outside the prison the guards are People's Armed Police (PAP) soldiers.

This prison is comprised of three units. Units one and two are together in the main prison complex. The third unit is in Damchu area, about two hours drive from the main prison complex. The first and second units each have 10 cells and in every cell there is room for 14 prisoners. The total number of prisoners in units one and two is 280.

The interviewee had not been to the third unit but understood that it was larger than the other two units, with approximately 200 prisoners. Prison cells are often flooded as the area is prone to floods. The road connecting the prison to the villages are cut off most of the year due to the floods.

There are currently 11 political prisoners known to be held at Powo Tramo. All are serving long term sentences (over 10 years) and are subject to deplorable prison conditions. The movements of political prisoners is restricted to within the prison grounds. Unlike criminal prisoners, they are not sent to work outside, for fear of contact with people beyond the gates. Neither are they granted any visitation rights during their sentence.

The source reports that in May 1997 a prisoner who was believed to be a spy from India was brought into unit number one at Powo Tramo from Lhasa. Other political prisoners, including three monks, were kept in the second unit, although he was unaware of how many political prisoners were in the third unit.

Every morning prisoners are forced to do "exercises" and then put to hard labour during the day. Criminal prisoners are assigned to agricultural work and felling trees. Food is allocated each month - the prisoners are provided with 45 gyama (22.5 kilograms) of roasted barley flour and a little meat. Every morning and evening they are given a cup of tea which is used to make tsampa, and at lunch they receive tea and vegetables.

Once a year, generally in November, a meeting is held for prisoners from all three units. At this meeting, some prisoners have their sentences increased or reduced, depending on behaviour.

One of the known political prisoners who is currently serving a term of 18 years at Powo Tramo is Lobsang Tenzin, a 30-year old former student of Tibet University. He was initially sentenced to death, which was reduced to a life sentence due to strong international pressure and then further reduced to 18 years on the grounds of "good behaviour". Lobsang Tenzin was one of the political prisoners at Drapchi prison who attempted to hand a petition to the then U.S. Ambassador to China, James Lilley, who visited Drapchi in March 1991. He was transferred to Powo Tramo after this incident.

As reported in Human Rights Update on March 31, 1998 this highlights an associated risk for prisoners when international delegations visit prisons in Tibet.

Reports from unofficial sources indicate that prior to delegation visits, the Chinese authorities clean the prisons and prisoners are briefed on behaviour, portraying a positive illusion of prison conditions. Many prisoners blatantly disregard warnings by Chinese authorities and attempt to tell visitors the truth. In every reported case these acts of defiance have been followed by punishment such as torture or heavy sentence extensions.

During the delegation visit a year ago, three non-political prisoners, Sonam Tsewang, Triga and Wangdu, had organised a short protest as they did not want the independent experts to be misled by prison authorities. Reports received around that time indicated that they were consequently beaten and put in solitary confinement. The delegation's report made no mention of the incident.

The Chinese authorities later gave assurances that no punitive actions would be taken against the prisoners However, unconfirmed reports to TIN say that Triga may be sentenced to a further ten years, Sonam Tsewang to five and Wangdu to three years. Their original sentences are not known.

TIN also states: "According to the source inside Tibet, after the incident they were tied with ropes and brought to a prisoner meeting afterwards and the increase in their sentences was announced."

In a letter from Wu Jianmin, the permanent representative at the UN, he said, "Neither Sonam Tsewang nor any other inmate in Drapchi prison has been beaten or suffered any reprisals as a result of the interviews by the working group. They are still serving their sentences in that prison, leading a normal life and enjoying the same treatment as other inmates." TIN was told that the UN Working Group intends to discuss the issue at its next session in November after repeated pressure from TIN.

Extension of prison term for three Drapchi inmates

The sentences of three prisoners who protested during a delegation visit to Drapchi Prison, have just been extended, reported TIN this week (October 7). The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention visited Drapchi Prison on October 11, 1997, sparking off severe repurcussions.

PROFILE

Victims of peaceful protest

March 5, 1989 is a prominent date in recent Tibetan history. On this day, a three day Independence demonstration was held across Lhasa, to mark the previous year's protest during the Monlam Prayer Festival, an auspicious day on the Tibetan calendar. The 1989 demonstration sparked off a conflict between Tibetan protesters and Chinese authorities. The number of deaths has never been confirmed, although many people were detained, tortured and killed at the time.



Dawa Tsering

Dawa Tsering, a layperson from Ramoche market square participated in the demonstration on March 5th. He was 18 years old at the time. After five days, Public Security Bureau officials came to his house to arrest him for his participation and he was sent to Yitridu prison, Sangyip Complex.

After a year of detention, he was released. However, during his one year detention, he endured harsh beatings from prison authorities which damaged his kidney. He developed a critical kidney condition so serious that he could not even stand straight. Reports received around that time indicated that he walked with a bent back. He was admitted to the regional hospital by his parents although his health did not show any signs of improvement.

Finally, on May 14, 1994, he died at his home as a result of his injuries. He was 23 years old at the time of his death.

Another man who demonstrated at the same event was **Phurbu** (commonly known as Tarak), a 34-year old from eastern Lhasa, Galingsha. His father Dorji and mother Tsamchoe carried out small business. The protest began at Tsemonling in Lhasa. When the demonstators approached the People's Hospital, about a kilometre away, Phurbu was shot three times. On admission to the People's Armed Police hospital, north of Lhasa, his left leg had to be amputed just below the knee cap. However, his wound became badly infected and septic, necessitating another amputation. Phurbu did not recover from his bullet wounds. Even after his discharge from the hospital his health continued to deteriorate and he remained fully bedridden. He stayed at home till September 3, 1996 on which date he passed away.

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LES AMIS DU TIBET-BELGIQUE, a non-profit Tibet Support Group based in Belgium, has kindly offered to sponsor the next three editions of Human Rights Update. The organisation has participated in effective lobbying for support at their government level, arranging meetings between Belgium poiticians and His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and generating awareness on Tibet.

Members of this organisation have also voluntarily assisted in the French translation of the TCHRD's 1996 and 1997 Annual Report and the regular Human Rights Updates. TCHRD is grateful for their generous contribution.

ICCPR covenant must be actioned

China's decision to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on October 5, 1998 appears to be a response to persistent international pressure on the Chinese government to uphold international human rights standards

The decision timed with the recent visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs Mary Robinson, to China and Tibet. Although TCHRD welcomes the signing, executive director, Lobsang Nyandak says "We are concerned that the signing of the ICCPR is another political manoeuvre by the Chinese government to deflect attention from its deteriorating human rights record."

The signing of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) a year ago was similarly timed with a high profile state visit, when Chinese President Jiang Zemin went to the USA.

Despite having signed the ICESCR China has yet to ratify the covenant and become legally bound by its provisions. China's latest gesture in signing the ICCPR does not guarantee that its provisions will be upheld. "If China genuinely intends to abide by these covenants, they would ratify the instruments," said Lobsang Nyandak. With the signing of the ICCPR, China has now signed and ratified 11 international instruments. In spite of this, gross human rights violations continue in Tibet and in China.

China's views on enforcing the Civil and Political Rights covenant were expressed by the President of the Chinese Society for the Studies of Human Rights, Mr. Zhu Muzhi, in an interview by Xinhua news agency on October 7. When asked about plans to promote these rights, he replied: "Since China did not participate in drafting the covenant and its national conditions differ from those in other countries, the Chinese government will pay attention to the issues of how to implement the covenant and how to adapt it to China's existing laws and regulations."

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We thank you for your continued interest and support.

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

October 31, 1998 Volume III: Number 20

Parents forced to bring back their children from India

According to a reliable source from Tibet, parents in Lhasa are being forced to bring back their children who are being educated in India. This enforcement took place earlier in 1994 when 37 children studying in schools run by the Tibetan government in exile were forced to return to Tibet against the will of both the children and their parents following an order stipulated on October 22, 1994.

Three parents from Lhasa Middle School in the "Tibet Autonomous Region" have reportedly arrived in Dharamsala recently to take back their children who are currently studying in the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala.

This school is included in the top 1000 schools in China. The school authorities, in an attempt to boost it's image, conducted an investigation as to whether its staff were complying with the 1994 orders. Out of the 200 staff, including 160 teachers, they found three who still had their children studying in schools in exile. The staff are required to be "politically clean", which included returning any children who were being educated in India back to Tibet.

The Lhasa Middle School was established in 1955 is located behind the Potala Palace. It is the largest and most reputed school in Tibet and accepts children from all regions. Of the 3,000 students who attend, half are Chinese. This school and Tibet University are the only two educational institutions that are under the direct administration of the "Tibet Autonomous Region".

On March 20, 1998 the head of the school asked the three parents to comply with this order within six months. However, their inability in immediately acquiring travel documents as well as the fear in travelling during the heat made it difficult for them to act upon the order.

In September 1998 they were asked by the school authorities to explain why they had not been to India to collect their children. They were suspended from their work until they complied with the order. Any monetary incentives, which staff are usually entitled to, from working the previous year, were revoked.

Presently it appears that the Lhasa Middle School alone is pursuing the 1994 orders.

When authorities found out that the parents had not left their travel documents were immediately issued by the Public Security Bureau (PSB). They were also required to pay 1,000 yuan (approximately $US125) as a deposit until they had returned with their children. Chances are, if they failed to do so, the parents would face expulsion from their jobs.

Other reports indicated that various administrative departments within the "TAR" are competing over "political purity" of staff. Those departments with staff who have children studying abroad (India) are looked down upon. This instigates concerned departments to implement measures to "clean up" the staff.

The demands follow an order stipulated on October 22, 1994 under document # 58 of the "Tibet Autonomous Region's" Disciplinary Action Committee. Of the nine points listed, the third states that "the party members and cadres must not send their children to a school run by the deserters' administration. Those who have already sent them must bring back within the specified period." The order also stated: "After this announcement those who fail to bring back and allow their children to study at the schools run by the separatist group and the escapees must be castigated depending on their mistake through the code of the communist party and through political process."

According to information provided to TCHRD by a student of TCV who visited Tibet in April 1998 and returned to India in July 1998 : "returned students below the age of 15 were admitted to primary schools with poor facilities. Children above 15 were either employed on their return as tourist guides or in a state department. However, they are constantly subjected to strict scrutiny and often discriminated against on pretext of fictitious grounds. Many face expulsion from work on suspicious grounds of organising clandestine political activities or having contacts outside".

"I found some of them doing petty business in Barkhor selling incense, prayer flags, rubber shoes, ordinary mat etc. For instance two former students Ngawang Seldon and Yeshi Tsogyal from TCV in Dharamsala were among them. Some students who became unemployed lived in poor family conditions resorted to excessive drinking. In May 1998, when I was in Lhasa I heard of one returned student who had committed suicide after excessive drinking. Those who have returned to Tibet say that they are not trusted", he added.

Authorities admit to shootings in Drapchi prison

After three months of China's denials of the protests at Drapchi prison in early May, authorities have now admitted that a shooting actually took place, although they claim that no deaths resulted.

The admission was made to a visiting delegation of politicians from the European Democratic Union (EDU) that prisoners began to shout slogans including "Free Tibet" and "Long Live the Dalai Lama" during a flag raising ceremony on May 1. Previous delegations that visited Tibet after May included a group of Italian senators and a Danish delegation who were given contradcitory explanations of the incident. The Governor of Drapchi prison told the Danish government officials that "nothing had happened" at the prison, while the vice-governor told the Danish delegation that "something had happened."

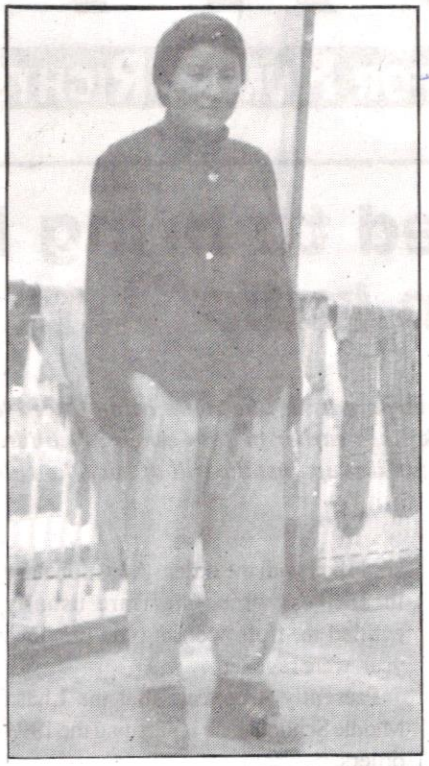
They were told by the Justice Bureau state that "prison guards were so frightened that they fired guns into the air to "attract the attention of policemen outside the prison. The statement confirms that guards were armed with guns and does not explain why they were so intimidated by the slogan shouting if this was the case" as stated by TIN in their October 21, 1998 News Update.

The statement from the high-ranking prison officials comes after three months of denials that any incidence occurred. This ran contrary to reports by human rights groups, including TCHRD, that 11 deaths occurred. The entire incident is reflective of China's ongoing assertions about respecting international laws on human rights issues in Tibet, while acting on the contrary.

According to the same report by TIN "the British government held the presidency of the European Union during the visit of an EU delegation to Drapchi Prison on the same day as the second protest on 4 May. The flag raising ceremony mentioned by officials at the Justice Bureau is said to have been in preparation for the arrival of the EU Troika, consisting of Beijing-based ambassadors from Britian, Austria and Luxembourg, to the prison".

The British government is yet to receive any response on the Drapchi incident from the Chinese authorities.

14 year-old minor sentenced to three years



Tsering Choekyi

Tsering Choekyi formerly of Shugseb nunnery, Toelung Dechen county of Li-Yu township, arrived Dharamsala on October 22, 1998. She recounts her experiences of three years ago when she was arrested at 14 years old.

Tsering Choekyi joined Shugseb nunnery at the age of eight, when there were 90 nuns in the nunnery. On December 12, 1993, Tsering Choekyi, then 14 years-old, and two friends Yeshi Tsundue (20) and Tsultrim Tharchin (14) led a demonstration around Barkhor, the marketplace in Lhasa. They marched across the Barkhor shouting slogans such as "Tibet is independent", "Chinese quit Tibet", and "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama." After demonstrating for about 10 minutes, three Public Security Officials in plain dress arrested them.

They were first taken to the local police station and later to Gutsa Detention Centre. While at local police station, they were kept in a small room and interrogated. "I told them I had initiated the demonstration and they slapped me, used electric prods and beat me with a nailed wooden plank," said Tsering. "I was asked: Who is behind you? Are you being told by the Dalai Lama to carry out such activities? What has the Dalai Lama done to help you?" The three were told that if they confessed and apologised, they would be released. "They interrogated me for about three to four hours, after which we were taken to Gutsa. On reaching Gutsa we were forced to stand in front of main gate for an hour and read what was written on the board. They kept us separately during the first day in a cell with no mat or bedding facilities - there was only a pot. I was then joinedin the cell by Jampa Choekyi (21), who was sentenced to six years and Yeshi Chosang (25), who was sentenced to four years."

Tsering's friends, Yeshi Tsundue and Tsultrim Tharchin, were sentenced to five years and three years imprisonment respectively. They were transferred to Drapchi.

Over the next month, Tsering was interrogated daily, then once or twice a week for a further two months.

In all, Tsering was detained in Gutsa Detention Centre for one year. For the first three months she was not allowed any visitors. After three months she was allowed to receive visitors twice a month, although she could not meet them personally.

While in Gutsa, despite being a juvenile prisoner, she was housed with other prisoners and had to work every day from 9a.m. She was provided with a steamed bun and a mug of boiled water for breakfast and rice and vegetables at 1p.m. "Since I had not attained 18 years old, I was formally sentenced for three years "re-education through labour" (Laojiao). A week after her sentence, she was transferred to Trisam Detention Centre.

Of three cell blocks in Trisam, one block is for women. There, she was subjected to further interrogations. "Every morning between 6a.m.-8a.m. we had to do military exercise. At 9.30a.m. the prisoners had to clean the staff's quarters until midday. Then at 3p.m. we had to pick pig food for four hours," says Tsering. "During winter we had to attend education sessions for a month. The subjects taught were Chinese, Tibetan and maths."

Tsering says she had demonstrated because of continued Chinese rule in Tibet and continued deprivation of the basic rights of the Tibetan people.

PROFILE

Solo demonstrator dies from prison beatings

The People's Republic of China signed the United Nations Convention Against Torture in 1986. Since then more than 60 Tibetan political prisoners are known to have died directly as a result of torture by police or prison officials. Pasang's death exemplifies one such case inflicted upon people who strive to defend and promote human rights. Pasang was only 21 years old when he died for beatings in prison followed by insufficient medical treatment.

On December 8, 1994, Pasang held a short solo demonstration in Lhasa, Barkhor (central market). This peaceful demonstration condemned the Chinese regime in Tibet and called for Tibet's freedom.

Pasang was immediately arrested by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and was severely beaten at the time of arrest. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment and subsequently taken to Drapchi prison. By the time he reached Drapchi, Pasang required medical treatment due to prison beatings while in custody.

Prevented from receiving ongoing medical treatment, his health deteriorated extremely. He was finally allowed to leave the prison complex during the day to visit a hospital, but was required to return to the prison every evening.

Pasang was eventually admitted to the "Tibet Autonomous Region" Chide (Public Welfare) hospital when prison officials felt that his condition was critical.

On December 17, 1997 at around 5.30 in the evening, Pasang passed away. He was 21 years old at the time of his death.

Pasang was a monk from Dechen Sangak Monastery in Dechen township, Taktse County in Lhasa City.

From October to December 1994, monks from Dechen Sangak Monastery staged a series of independence demonstrations earning it the label of a "problematic monastery".

This meant that the Monastery was liable to strict surveillance and restrictions. Eleven known arrests were made in 1994 alone at the same monastery and prison sentences of up to six years were imposed to those arrested.

Despite China's international obligations as a state party to the Convention Against Torture to "take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction", cases of intentionally inflicted cruel and humiliating torture practices are regurlary reported by Tibetan political prisoners.

NEW REPORT OF THE CENTRE

"Behind Bars: Prison conditions in Tibet" *examines the prison conditions experienced by Tibetan prisoners in Chinese-administered prisons in Tibet.*

This report collated primarily on the basis of 22 interviews of former political prisoners analyses the various aspects of the prisons including the cell conditions, forced labour and re-education, torture prison diet, medical treatment, protest in prisons, religious repression and treatment of women.

It also gives a brief summary of the the Chinese legal system and the different types of penal institutions in which Tibetan political prisoners are kept.

To order this report we would appreciate a minimum price of Rs. 50/- for India, Nepal and Bhutan or US $ 5 (or the equivalent in the currency of your country) for abroad. This includes postage. You may pay by International Money Order or by cheque in favour of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

Thank you.

Employment cuts

As reported in the September 15, 1998 issue of Human Rights Update a new campaign is launched since the beginning of 1998 to downsize the employees in the various government sectors such as business, industrial, judicial and the administrative division.

This earlier report of September gave the impression that the campaign was applicable to only Lhasa City whereas latest report from Dhrango County, Kanze Prefecture indicate the implementation of the campaign in other places of Tibet.

Khando Dekyi (24) and Kelsang Dolma (22), from Sichuan province, Kanze Prefecture, Dhrango County, were two of 51 Tibetan employees in a petrol station in Dhrango County. They had both been employed for the last eight years. The station was run by the Chinese office of the County Commerce Department.

In January 1998 they received a letter from the County people's government ordering staff cuts in various government offices as "businesses were running at a loss". The petrol station was to be privatised. As a result, 60 jobs were terminated including the positions of Khando and Kelsang. Seven jobs remained and six of them went to Chinese staff. In all, 50 Tibetans lost their jobs.

The officials were all sacked in February 1998, given a month's salary and told to look for alternative work. Many of them face subsistence problems and are unable to find other work. Consequently, Khando and Kelsang felt they had no alternative but to come to India.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

November 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 21

Hermitage destroyed and residents forced to leave

Former residents of Drakyerpa hermitage have reported that they were evicted by "work-team" members and their living area destroyed. A new construction, funded by donations of 150,000 yuan (approximately $US18,000), was also demolished. The first report of "work-teams" entering the hermitage appeared in the Human Rights Update of June 30, 1997. This latest report has been confirmed by former residents. Similar accounts of Samye Chenpo hermitage being targeted by "work-teams" was also reported in our August 31, 1997 Human Rights Update.

Drakyerpa is a hermitage in Taktse County, "TAR". Until this year, around 120 people lived in retreat at the hermitage, using it as a base for prayer and meditation. The majority of the people at the retreat were nuns, many of them over 65 years old. Some had lived there for more than 18 years.

In June 1997 construction started at the hermitage for a main assembly hall to accommodate people for religious teachings. The main funder was Lama Azom Trulku, well-known in Tibet for taking care of monks and nuns who have been expelled from their monasteries and nunneries since China initiated its 'Strike Hard' campaign in 1996. Funding for the building cost around 150,000 yuan with the majority donated by a tourist.

Halfway through the construction, ten officials from various level of offices came to the hermitage. They comprised of officials from Lhasa District, Taktse County PSB and officials from Bodoe township. They convened all the monks and nuns and announced that no 'splittist' activities would be tolerated and that they must denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama. An order to pay a land tax of one yuan each per day was imposed on all the residents. Only upon payment were they entitled to a blue coloured permit which allowed them to temporarily reside at the hermitage.

As daily living for the residents was reliant on donations from the local Tibetan community, many of the residents could not afford 30 yuan a month. Appeals to the authorities by the younger members of the hermitage were initially left unheeded. The monks then appealed to "TAR" authorities, and were no longer bothered by officials. Construction work resumed and was completed at the end of 1997.

However, at the beginning of 1998, the authorities resumed their crack-down. During the Tibetan New Year in February, around 100 of the residents of the hermitage went to Lhasa for pilgrimage and prostration, accompanied by Lama Azom Trulku. Ten days later, Lama Azom was surrounded by policemen at his relative's house and ordered to immediately leave Lhasa. Authorities threatened to arrest his relatives and confiscate his house and property if he refused to comply. He was put on a plane to Chengdu and deported to Gonjo County, his place of birth.

Authorities then sent a "work-team" to the hermitage and ordered all the elderly monks and nuns to return to their homes. Moreover, their town heads or village authorities were called to take them back to their respective villages. An elderly nun named Palden Wangmo and her daughter Kunchok Chodon were taken in a vehicle to Shigatse, and kept in the regional prison for three days. During their brief detention they were publicly humiliated by being paraded around the town with a red wooden plank hung on their back, their hands tied and a paper cap on their heads.

A 66 year-old nun, Ngawang Yangzom, was forcibly pulled out from the cave by "work-team" members while she was in meditation. She was later sent back to her home. Two other nuns, Nga Dron (65) and Tharlam Dolma (75) were also expelled.

The new assembly hall was ordered to be demolished on grounds that the construction was illegal. Around 30 men were present to carry out the order. The caves where the monks were meditating were also destroyed, the entrances sealed and sacred idols taken away. Valuable objects objects were taken to the Bodoe township and strict orders were issued that anyone who claimed them would be arrested. The "work-team" members were all Tibetan.

Eleven people remain at the hermitage and are forced to pay rent. The remaining 109 residents were forced to leave as they could not afford the rent. Nine of the former residents are now in exile in Dharamasala, India.

Ngawang Choephel transferred to Drapchi prison

Confirmed reports received from Tibet indicate that Ngawang Choephel, the musicologist who is serving 18 years for "espionage"has been in Drapchi Prison since June 27, 1998. He was transferred to Drapchi after being detained at Nyari Detention Centre in Shigatse, "Tibet Autonomous Region", since August 1995. While in detention he was able to appeal his sentence. His transfer to Drapchi prison, a high security prison in Lhasa housing the majority of Tibetan political prisoners, marks the end of his right to appeal.

Choephel was first detained in 1995, while travelling in Tibet to research traditional music and performing arts. Convicted on grounds of "espionage"and accused of being a spy for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, he was formally sentenced by the Shigatse Intermediate People's Court on December 26, 1996. During his time at Nyari Detention Centre, it is reported that he had on various occasions appealed to the Higher People's Court in Lhasa, but were all rejected.

On June 27, 1998 he was removed from the Detention Centre and it was suspected that he had been taken to Lhasa. His transfer to Drapchi prison was later confirmed by a source who had been imprisoned with Choephel at Nyari Detention Centre and has recently arrived in India. Unconfirmed reports in May of this year state that Choephel was suffering from ill health while in detainment.

The information about his transfer coincides with the current campaign of Choephel's mother, Sonam Dekyi to gain international support in requesting the Chinese authorities to grant her a visa to visit her son in Tibet, or to release him. Mrs Dekyi has, so far, received support from politicians and political groups in the US and the UK, including nine US senators who sent a letter to Ambassador Li, the Chinese representative in Washington DC, on October 6, 1998, requesting the authorities to grant a visitors visa for Mrs Dekyi.

As yet, there has been no response from Chinese authorities regarding requests made since 1996, or information relating to Choephel.

Ordeal of a former political prisoner

Gyaltsen Ngodup is a former nun of Chubsang Nunnery in Lhasa City. She arrived in India this month after being expelled from her nunnery and spending three years in prison and detention in Tibet.



Gyaltsen Ngodup

Gyaltsen, also known as Dadon, joined Chubsang in 1986 when she was 16 years old. There were around 20 nuns already living there.

In December 1989 a Chinese "work-team" of 12 members came to the nunnery and organised compulsory meetings to instruct the nuns on political ideology. They also told the nuns not to support or participate in 'splittist' activities in the nunnery, which supported His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

However, on December 10, 1989, when H.H. the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, 12 of the nuns made incense offerings and recited prayers for Tibet's freedom while the "work-team" members were present. Although Gyaltsen was not involved in this activity she was expelled from Chubsang with the 12 nuns, and ordered to return home immediately. She remained in contact with the nunnery and briefly returned for a prayer festival after the "work-team" had departed.

On August 19, 1991, Gyaltsen and five other nuns from Chubsang staged a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa. At around 11a.m. they carried a Tibetan national flag around the central Cathedral in Barkhor. The five other nuns were Tashi Dolkar (22), Ngawang Tseten (25), Gyaltsen Damchoe (22) and Tsultrim Sangmo (22). Within 15 minutes, they were arrested by Barkhor PSB officials, taken to the local police station and beaten. They were then transferred to an 'anti-riot control' department where they were interrogated for two hours, hit with rifle butts and slapped. Finally they were taken to Gutsa Detention Centre.

In Gutsa, they were individually interrogated and kept standing for four hours. In the evening, they were taken to separate cells without any bedding. They were kept in Gutsa for almost four and half months with constant interrogations and beatings.

When their detention period came to an end in early 1992, they were all sentenced to three years of "re-education-through-labour".

While in Gutsa, in February 1992, a Chinese prison guard reprimanded the nuns for reciting prayers in the cell, which is forbidden. He struck Gyaltsen's right leg with a baton. She fell down half unconscious and had to drag herself to her cell. The next day, Gyaltsen complained to Gutsa authorities about the unnecessary beating. That night officials asked her questions about the incident and Gyaltsen showed them marks from the beating. But instead of receiving help, she was confined to a single cell for 19 days.

Upon her release from solitary confinement, she was kept with six other women for five months. Gyaltsen fell ill for three months of her imprisonment which resulted in permanent scars. Her eyes were constantly swollen and her nose spontaneously bled. Dark blue marks emerged on her wrist and knuckles and she developed a burning sensation on her hands, making her unable to close her fist.

In May 1992, she was transferred to Toelung prison "re-education-through-labour" camp along with the other nuns. They were the first female political prisoners to be imprisoned at Toelung. For two years the nuns were subjected to hard labour on farms. On August 17, 1994, the nuns were released but an order was placed 'not to re-admit [them] in the nunnery'. Gyaltsen returned to her home and stayed there for one month.

She decided to leave Tibet in October 1994 so came to India via Nepal. However, after a few months in India her health deteriorated and she chose to return to Tibet. She reached Lhasa in February, 1995 and was treated for three months at Lhasa District Hospital. After recovering she returned home. In early 1997 Gyaltsen was constantly called upon by the district officials to report about her activities and whereabouts in Lhasa.

On November 24, 1997, Gyaltsen's house was raided by PSB officials and she was taken for interrogation at the PSB office. They accused her of travelling to India without proper papers and meeting with political prisoners in Tibet. She was

contd at p. 4

PROFILE

This is a regular section profiling Tibetans who have died fighting for Tibet's freedom

Tortured for independence activity

Torture is often part of the detainment process for people involved in political activity. In some cases the physical abuse may lead to death, although the authorities often deny responsibility, citing suicide as the cause of death. In other cases, torture can have severe psychological effects, which may drive the person to suicide. The following profiles personify both cases.



Tsenyi

Tsenyi was born in 1970 in Lhasa. Her parents worked as tailors for Yabshe Taktse, the family of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. She joined Lhasa Bonshod School in 1977, studying Tibetan and Chinese for five years and continued her studies at "TAR's" middle school until 1989. In the same year, she worked for Tibet Daily, a newspaper published from Lhasa.

In 1990, Tsenyi decided to flee Tibet for India and studied English for two years at the Tibetan Children's Village in Bir, northern India. However, in December 1992 her father died and she decided to return to Tibet to perform religious ceremonies for him. She left India in January 1993.

In May 1993 Tsenyi and her sister, Penpa, participated in a protest in Lhasa - the first large-scale popular demonstration among Tibetans since 1989. The event was initiated to protest against increased taxes on merchandise, but turned into a pro-independence movement which was broken up by security forces. On June 17, 1993, the PAP (People's Armed Police) raided and searched Tsenyi's family house and arrested Tsenyi. The following month, Tsenyi's younger sister, Penpa, was also arrested.

Tsenyi was taken to Gutsa Detention Centre and was beaten during interrogations. Reports state she was pregnant at the time. She was temporarily released but remained under suspicion and was constantly observed. Unable to cope with the harassment and pressure, Tsenyi committed suicide, leaving behind her child less than a year old. TCHRD has not received reports regarding the where-abouts of her sister, Penpa.

Lhadar

Lhadar aged, 33, was a monk from Lithang Monastery in Kham. On August 20, 1993, he was arrested along with four other monks from the same monastery for pro-independence activities.

Ngawang Tsultrim, the father of one of the monks arrested with Lhadar, said that they were arrested for "launching a massive wall-poster campaign on Tibetan independence in Lithang region from the late 1980s."

He was reportedly badly beaten while in Chinese police custody in Lithang district. A year later, in August 1994, he died from his injuries while still in detainment. Reports received from people who had fled Tibet around that time stated: "For two whole days, Tibetans refused to take custody of Lhadar's corpse from the prison because the Chinese authorities would not offer a satisfactory explanation for his sudden death."

The source (who requested that their identity remain confidential) said that the Tibetans in Lithang did not believe in the Chinese version of the story that "Lhadar committed suicide" while in custody. They believe the Chinese authorities were responsible for his death.

Lithang Monastery had been completely destroyed by the People's Liberation Army in the mid-1950s. It has since been renovated.

contd. from p. 2

kept under scrutiny and interrogation for one month in a PSB office, although she was not officially detained. She was released on January 1998. Since then, Gyaltsen was frequently interrogated at her home by officials from PSB, Lhasa district police and local police. In September 1998, she was again summoned to the district police station with 36 former political prisoners, on suspicion of involvement in a bomb explosion in Lhasa a few months earlier. However, everyone was released.

Gyaltsen says that she was unable to lead a normal life with the constant interrogations by police. Her family was also harassed by officials. Eventually she felt she had no choice but to permanently leave Tibet.

She left Lhasa on September 20, 1998. She reached Nepal on 11th October 1998 and now lives in Dharamsala, India.

Abbot of Kumbum flees to the US

The Abbot of Kumbum monastery, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama in the province of Amdo, has fled Tibet to America, according to a report from TIN on November 12. It is believed that the abbot, Agya Rinpoche, has fled Tibet after disputes with the Chinese authorities. He is one of the most high level religious leaders in Tibet.

TIN states that Agya Rinpoche may have refused to comply with Chinese authorities to move the Chinese-appointed 11th Panchen Lama to the monastery. The boy is currently based at Tashilhunpo monastery in Shigatse. Unconfirmed reports state that Tibetans in Shigatse have opposed his appointment, so authorities believed Kumbum monastery is a safer base for the child.

However, if Agya Rinpoche agreed to move the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama to Kumbum, - this would have indicated approval of this choice above that of the Dalai Lama,states the TIN report. The 11th Panchen Lama incarnation who was appointed by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, has been held incommunicado by Chinese authorities since 1995.

It is unclear whether Agya Rinpoche will apply for political asylum in the United States.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

November 30, 1998 Volume III: Number 22

Ngawang Choephel Transferred to Powo Tramo

On July 1, 1998, Ngawang Choephel was transferred to the remote and high security Powo Tramo Prison in Tramo County. Choephel, who has been imprisoned in N[illegible]i Detention Centre in Shigatse since August 1995 was moved to Drapchi Prison, Lhasa, on June 27 1998. He was detaine[illegible]e for just three days before being transferred to Powo Tramo Prison.



Ngawang Choephel in the woods of Vermont

Ngawang Choephel, the 32 year-old Tibetan musician sentenced to 18 years imprisonment and four years subsequent deprivation of political rights, has been transferred to Tibet Autonomous Region Prison No. 2, formerly known as Powo Tramo Labour Camp. His transfer has been reported by a reliable source in Tibet.

This transfer further inhibits the campaign of Sonam Dekyi, the mother of Ngawang Choephel, who is currently conducting an international campaign seeking permission from the Chinese government to visit her son in prison.

Powo Tramo Prison, an isolated high security prison, is located approximately 500 km east of Lhasa in a remote area of Dzona, Tramo County. Unlike in other prisons, political prisoners detained here are denied any visitation rights. The prison currently has a total of approximately 480 male inmates. The prisoners are subjected to harsh labour and a poor prison diet, and the movement of political prisoners is restricted solely to within the prison grounds. Due to its isolation, information from the prison is not readily accessible. The prison falls under Kongpo region (Ch: Nyingtri) where China has its military base and the area is said to be restricted to tourist.

Of the 480 inmates in Powo Tramo Prison, The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy knows of only 12 Tibetan political prisoners, each with long term sentences. No information about the condition of these prisoners is available.

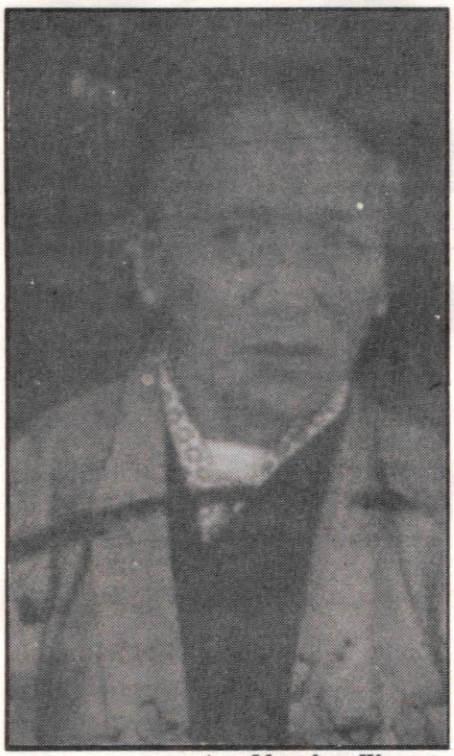
Prisons in Lhasa are visited by foreign delegations to see the prison conditions and political prisoners there have always received the attention of important dignitories. However, due to remoteness of the Powo Tramo Prison, no delegation has ever visited the prison. The recent transfer of Ngawang Choephel indicates that China attempts to isolate him from international attention.

Ngawang Choephel was reported missing in August 1995, a month after he travelled to Tibet to research ethnic Tibetan folk songs. A former fulbright scholar at Middlebury college in Vermont, USA, Ngawang Choephel was working on a documentary about traditional music and culture.

On October 15, 1996 over a year since Ngawang Choephel's disappearance, the Chinese finally admitted to his detention. He was subsequently sentenced on December 26, 1996 on charges of "spying" for the exiled government of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since then he has been detained in Shigatse Nyari Detention Centre. He was transferred to Drapchi prison on June 27, 1998. During his detention in Shigatse, he appealed to the Higher People's Court in Lhasa on various occasions but these appeals were all rejected.

An inmate of Choephel, who recently escaped to India, confirmed that Choephel was moved from Ngari Detention Centre to Drapchi Prison on June 27, 1998.

Woman in her sixties disappeared



Ama Lhundrup Wangmo

Ama Lhundrup Wangmo, originally from Phenpo County was a resident of Metok Changsey Gora in Tsomonling, in Lhasa City. She was reportedly arrested by Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials on political grounds. To date nobody knows about her whereabouts.

On August 20, 1998, Lhasa Public Security Bureau (PSB)official arrested her after raiding her house and was taken to an unknown location.

Family members appealed to PSB office to reveal her whereabouts and requested them to allow a visitation right. Their appeal was rejected. It is not known to date where she is detained.

According to our source who wishes to remain anonymous, Ama Wangla, (as she is more commonly known) was in her sixties and had visited India twice for pilgrimage.

Ama Wangla is known to be actively involved in visiting political prisoners. She was arrested on two occasions by PSB officials, once in 1987 and then again in 1993. Both on suspicion of involvement in political activities.

However, when they could not gather any evidence on her, she was released. They had continued to keep a strict watch over her dealings and her movements.

Tale of a former political prisoner

Yeshi Kunsang is a 25 year-old former nun of Shugseb Nunnery. She spent four years in Drapchi prison from the age of 20. Today in exile Yeshi recounts her story about her prison life.

On December 11, 1993 six nuns from Shugseb and I went to Barkhor in Lhasa and started a short demonstration. The other six nuns arrested along with me were;

Yeshi Chodon (23) from Toelung Dechen County sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and 3 years deprivation of political rights

Yang Dol (23) from Lhoka Gongkar County sentenced to 4 years

Yeshe Chosang (26) from Lhoka Dranang County sentenced to 4 years

Tsering Chodon (22) from Toelung Dechen County sentenced to 3 years

Pen Dol (23) from Lhoka Gongkar County sentenced to 4 years

Chemi Wangmo (26) sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment and

Yeshi Kunsang sentenced to 4 years and 2 years deprivation of political rights, all from Shugseb Nunnery.

We had no set plans but we wanted to continue a protest by eight nuns from our Nunnery who were arrested the day before. Our demonstration started at about 10 am in the morning. Within 10 minutes plainclothes policemen from the PSB arrested all of us and took us to the police station in Barkhor Square. Two PSB men took one nun at a time. When we staged the protest we had nothing with us, not even banners or flags. At the time of arrest, we were beaten, kicked and slapped all over. From the Barkhor police station, we were transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre.

In Gutsa, for one year and nine months I was interrogated rigorously three times a day. During these interrogations various forms of torture techniques were used including electric cattle prods. The worst experience was when they used these electric prods on my head, knocking me unconscious and sending vibrations throughout my body. They would ask the same questions repeatedly until they felt they had no more to ask. Our sentences were passed and I was sentenced to four years imprisonment and two years deprivation of political rights.



Yeshi Kunsang

I was transferred to Drapchi Prison. Upon our arrival in Drapchi Prison, the first thing we had to do was to undergo a medical check-up followed by extraction of blood. We were not told anything about the "medical check up" nor were we given any medication.

It was distressing to see the cells. There were no blankets or mattresses and it was one of the coldest times of the year. We were given inadequate food. Sometimes, when I could see the sun outside, it was exasperating. We were only allowed to go outside very briefly to go to the toilet. Only after nearly four months at Drapchi was I finally allowed visitation rights and my family brought us food and blankets. This was allowed because we pleaded consistently with the higher authorities. During the first month we were given a task force to fleece work and had to fulfill a certain work quota. As the nature of the work was completely new to us, the first few days were extremely difficult. If we did not finish it on time we had to work all night.

Another strenuous task during our stay in Drapchi was the army-like exercises. If we failed to follow the exact instructions of these 'exercises' we would receive malicious beatings.

Throughout my stay in Drapchi, I did not have any opportunity to speak to any other political prisoners who were arrested earlier. We were strictly restricted from even making eye contact with them as the authorities feared that we would get together and arrange independence activities. I was finally released on

PROFILE

22 year-old prisoner dies shortly after release

Yeshi Samten (layname : Tenzin Yeshi) was a 22 year-old former monk of Gaden Monastery. He died one week after his release from Trisam Prison on May 12, 1998. Yeshi Samten, also known as Tenzin Yeshi, suffered from severe torture during his two years of imprisonment. At the time of cremation, the person performing the funeral rites discovered that two of Yeshi's ribs were broken.

Yeshi Samten was arrested on May 6, 1996 when Chinese "work-team" members came to Gaden Monastery to conduct "patriotic re-education" sessions. He, along with around 90 monks from Gaden Monastery protested against the "work-team's" presence at the monastery and also against the removal of all photographs of the Dalai Lama.

The strong opposition from the monks aggravated the "work-team" members. Although they left the monastery, they returned with more force. Around 3pm that same day in the afternoon, People's Armed Police (PAP) reinforcements were sent in. The PAP men opened fire on the monks injuring one monk, Dorjee, who was shot in the leg. Two other monks died instantly and there were more than 90 arrests.

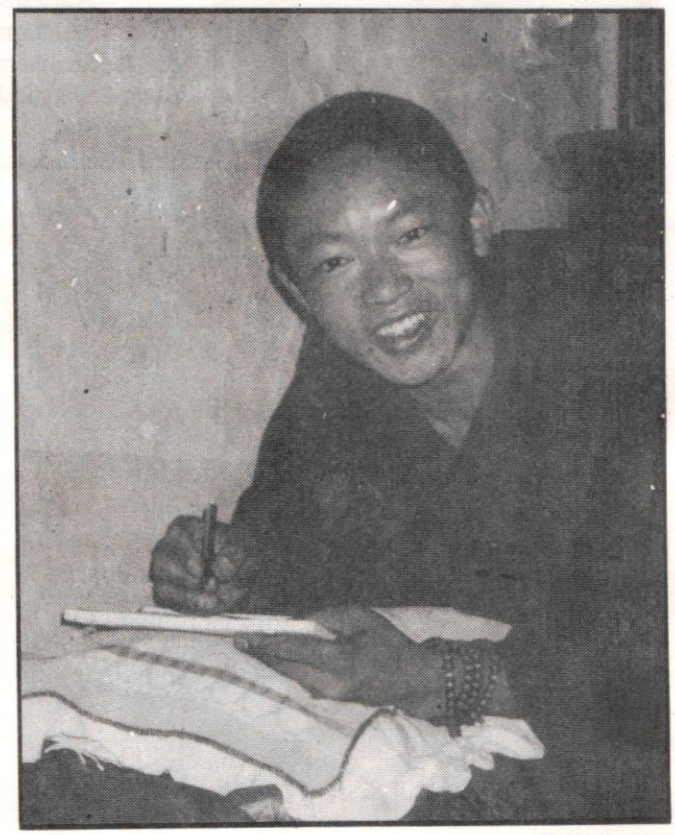
Yeshi was among those arrested. He was first taken to Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa where his sentence was passed. Yeshi's prison term was set to two years and he was transferred to Trisam 're-education through labour Centre' in Toelung County. From the time he was arrested to his imprisonment, Yeshi Samten was reported to have been brutally tortured and beaten and in need of medical care and attention which he failed to receive.

Moreover, his request to be exempted from prison duties was not accepted by prison authorities. Throughout his entire prison term he was denied medical treatment.

On May 6, 1998, Yeshi completed his term and was released. Upon his release he was immediately taken to the hospital by his family.

However, he never recovered from his poor health. Yeshi was reported to have the aid of crutches to walk. He died just six days after his release on May 12.

Yeshi Samten was from Tsangtog in Taktse Dechen County under Lhasa City.



Yeshi Samten

He is survived by his mother Yangzom and elder brother Tsering Sonam. His father Tashi Dhondup died at an early age. Yeshi Samten went to school at the age of eight and left the school when he was 12 years old to join Gaden Monastery in 1986.

Yeshi Samten's death brings the number of known deaths of Tibetans as a result of torture recorded by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy to 55. Of these 55 deaths, 17 political prisoners died after release from prison or while in hospital. The difficulty of receiving information of prisoners in prisons in Tibet means that many deaths go unreported.

Religious teacher sentenced to seven years



Trulku Ka Bukey

The case of Trulku Ka Bukey, a 30 year-old religious teacher who has been held in incommunicado detention for over a year, has been reported to TCHRD. Ka Bukey taught at Nubsur Monastery in Serta County, Golog "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", Qinghai Province.

It has just been confirmed that Ka Bukey was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in December 1997 and is currently detained in Maowan Qiang County Prison, which is a part of Ngaba County Labour Camp. He has been held incommunicado since his arrest on February 10, 1996, by the PAP.

He was arrested for initiating a 25km peace march from his monastery during the 40th anniversary of the founding of Serta County in July 1995. He had also distributed pro-independence leaflets to the public and was holding a Tibetan national flag and demanding Free Tibet.

The original Nubsur Monastery was more than three hundred years old but was totally destroyed during the Cultural Revolution between 1966-76. After renovation by local people in 1980, religious studies and practices were resumed. From 1996, Ka Bukey became head of the monastery until he was detained.

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Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

December 15, 1998 Volume III: Number 23

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New Arrests

Two arrests that took place in May and July 1998 were reported on grounds of suspicion of political activities. It is not known for how long they are sentenecd however, since their arrest, no one has been allowed to visit them.

Samdup is a 28 year-old from Phenpo County and a former Drepung monk. On May 13, 1992 he participated in a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa along with a group of another ten monks from Drepung Monastery. They were immediately arrested by Lhasa Public Security Bureau(PSB) officials and detained in Gutsa Detention Centre. In September 1992 their sentences were passed by the People's Intermediate Court, ranging from two to eight years. Samdup received two years imprisonment and was transferred to Drapchi Prison. In 1995 upon the completion of his term, he was released. However, he was not allowed to rejoin the monastery.

In May 1998, on suspicion of political activities, he was once again arrested by the PSB. Along with him, Ngawang Tenrab, also a monk from Drepung Monastery was arrested. Ngawang had previously spent seven years in Drapchi Prison for his participation in the 1989 demonstration. He was released after a month's detention. Samdup is currently held in Seitru detention Centre. Our sources confirm that his sentence is still not passed and he has been denied visitation rights since his arrest.

Ngawang Kyonmey is 28 years old and from Toelung Dechen County. He is a former monk of Drepung Monastery. He was arrested on July 28, 1998 after the UN High Commissioner for Human rights, Mary Robinson, visited Tibet. It is reported that Chinese authorities had suspected him of conspiring to hand over letters to the High Commissioner.

Lifestyle Restrictions

Norbu Tso who is from Karze(Eastern Tibet) recently arrived in Dharamsala. She reported on the difficult livelihood due to the taxation policy, the sterilisation of women in her village is forced to undergo and labour at construction sites without any payment.

Norbu Tso is a 30 year-old woman from Karze County in Karze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Norbu is a farmer and has three members in her family. Her mother not living, Norbu takes care of the household matters. She was never able to attend school as she started working on the farm since her childhood. Her family has 10 'mu' (67 square metres) of land, from which they produce 6 'khel'(84 kilos) of cereal per 'mu'. This year, due to unfavourable climatic condition, her crop production dropped to 2 'khel'(28 kilos) of cereal per 'mu'. Her family mainly survives on the annual yield.

With the harsh taxation policy, living alone on the annual yield is a threat to her family and many other families. Therefore, her family also has to collect 'yartsa-gunbu' through which they earn some money. The buyers were mainly Chinese.

Yearly, Norbu's family has to pay around 800 gyama (a unit of gyama equals 500 grams) of cereals as tax to the Chinese authorities and in return they receive 30 yuan (8 yuan equals US $ 1). This was compulsory and they had to pay it annually under any circumstances, in spite of any crop failures. If they failed to do so, they were prevented from cultivating their property or they faced confiscation of their land. The farmers constantly worry about the payment of this tax in case of any calamity which might cause a drop in the yield leaving the families without adequate food supplies.

Norbu also reported on the birth control policies in Lushul village which were implemented at the end of autumn in 1997. The Chinese officials regularly came to their village and instructed them to not have more than two children. The Tibetan parents who gave birth to more than 2 children were charged 1000 yuan as penalty. Norbu's own younger sister, Dolma Lhamo gave birth to her third child discretely in her house but the Chinese authorities came to know about this and demanded 1000 yuan as penalty even before the child was delivered.

Many other women in Lushul village were reported to have undergone the same penalty. All these women were ordered to undergo sterilisation in Karze County hospital. The doctors were not well experienced and they did not have proper equipment to perform the sterilisation, irrespective of this they conducted surgery. Many women were reported to have become weak and there are some cases where women died as a result. SoThar Dolma a 29 year-old from Lushul village had two children. She was called for sterilisation at County hospital before the delivery of her third child. After the surgery, she had been at home for seven days before she died. The doctors blamed her death on other unrelated internal ailments. Her husband Gyaltsen who had heart problems died after two months due to anxiety. He was 31 years old. The children of SoThar Dolma and Gyaltsen are looked after by a relative of Norbu Tso.

Since 1997, in Zora Nang area of Karze County, the Chinese were constructing a big powerhouse. For this construction, the local villagers were ordered to participate in the construction without any payment to the farmers for their labour. Each individual had to work for ten days. Norbu Tso worked there on behalf of all her family members therefore she laboured for a total of 40 days without any wage.

Arrests of Gyaltse Pe-choy monks

In early 1996, Damchoe, a monk from Gyalste Pe-choy Monastery in Shigatse printed the long life prayers composed by H.H. for the reincarnate Panchen Lama. He gave the scriptures to Bu chung chung who was a teacher at the County middle school to make photocopies of the scriptures. The prayers were later distributed in a nearby nunnery by Damchoe's student, Migmar Dhondup and another monk called Kelsang.

On November 2, 1996 they again distributed the prayers to the monks of Pel-choe Monastery. It was a religious occasion and many monks had gathered to pray.

On December 5, 1996 the Religious Management Committee of the County discovered the activities and came into the monastery. Kelsang was immediately arrested and all the distributed prayers were confiscated. The County PSB detained him in Gyaltse County prison. Damchoe's room was ransacked and they found a Tibetan national flag and some documents in his room. This was enough evidence for the officials to arrest them. Migmar was also arrested at the same time. They were all detained in Gyaltse County prison.

After four months of routine interrogation, they were transferred to Shigatse Nyari Prison. Their cases were submitted to the Shigatse People's Intermediate Court and their sentences were passed. Damchoe and Kelsang were sentenced to five years, Migmar to four and Bhu Chung Chung to two years. Damchoe was suffering from chronic lung infection at that time, therefore he remained in Nyari Prison. Bu Chung Chung was also detained in Nyari Prison. Kelsang and Migmar were transferred to Drapchi Prison.

In mid 1997 Damchoe was released on medical parole but he was not allowed to rejoin the monastery. He was ordered to return to his hometown and was strictly instructed not to leave his house unless he sought prior permission.

Bhu Chung Chung completed his term in August, 1998 but he too faced expulsion from his job as a teacher in the school. He currently owns a stall in Lhasa. Kelsang and Migmar continue to serve their term in Drapchi prison.

"Strike Hard" and Arrests in Rongpo Rabten Monastery

According to information recently received, on December 1, 1997 'work-team' members of Nagchu County came to Rongpo Rabten monastery to conduct 'patriotic re-education'. Rongpo Rabten Monastery is in Nagchu sog County in Nagchu Region. At that time there were around 400 monks at the monastery. 14 monks below the age of 18 were expelled from the monastery. The 'work-team' stayed at the monastery for 15 days.

In December the same year Tenzin Lobsang (25) Gyaltsen Tsultrim (18) Tenzin Tsultrim (17) and Gedun Tharchin (25), all monks from the same Monastery, wrote freedom slogans at the back of the township office's vehicle. For almost a month the PSB investigated into the matter but they were not able to held anyone responsible for the slogan.

Then in February 1998 few members of PSB came to the monastery and advised the monks to prepare well, for the second 'work-team' were expected to come. The monks were also told to prepare a grand welcome ceremony. The four monks feared that they would be found out and arrested, therefore, they made plans to flee to India on February 12, 1998. The head of the township came to know about their plans to escape and reported to the County PSB. Four of them were caught on their way to Gyamo Ngulchu (a name of a river in Sog County). They were detained in Sog County prison for a while. Later they were transferred to Nagchu Region Detention Centre. On September 23, 1998 'work-team' members came to the monastery and announced their sentence details.

Then on February 23, 1998, as instructed before, 'work-team' members arrived at the monastery. Jampa Tenzin, a 26 year-old monk of Rongpo Rabten, opposed the 're-education' policy and agitated the members from the very beginning. He was constantly taken in for further intensive interrogations and instructions. Pressure mounted at that time. Ngawang Tsultrim (26), also a monk at Rongpo Rabten, had earlier distributed speeches of the Dalai Lama in printed copies as well as on cassettes. Ngawang's room was ransacked and the incriminating documents were found. They were taken away to Sog County Prison on August 5, 1998. Their sentences were passed and on September 23, 1998 'work-team' members came to the monastery and announced their sentences. Jampa Tenzin was sentenced to two years and Ngawang Tsultrim to one year imprisonment. According to unofficial reports they are currently held in Toelung County prison.

Three years in Trisam

Lekshay Tharchin, 28 year-old, is a former monk of Nalenda Monastery from Changa township in Lhundup County.

On May 1995, Lekshay was arrested by Phenpo Lhundup PSB for wearing a 'Tibetan flagged neck-string' and taken to Gutsa Detention Centre. During transportation he was thoroughly searched and severely beaten by guards. Upon reaching Gutsa, Lekshay was again searched and suffered harsh beatings while he was interrogated. He was detained in Gutsa for two months and was then sentenced by the People's Intermediate Court to two years 're-education-through-labour' in Trisam, Toelung.

While in Trisam, Lekshay was subjected to hard labour throughout the year except for one month during winter. Work was carried out outside the premise of the prison complex. Food rations for the prisoners were inadequate considering the level of labour required.

On the occasion of official prison inspections, the prisoners were issued with new blankets and uniforms to indicate that acceptable standards were maintained within the prison. After the inspection, the blankets and uniforms were immediately taken from the prisoners. Any prisoner who tried to complain about such activities to higher authorities faced punishment of beatings, torture and extensive labour.

On April 12, 1997 Lekshay was released and he returned home. He tried to re-join his monastery but was not allowed. Even after his release he was constantly interrogated and restrictions were placed on his movements.

Lekshay fled Tibet on November 29, 1998.

PROFILE

This is a regular section profiling Tibetans who have died fighting for Tibet's freedom

Prison Torture results in Deaths of Two

Death due to torture continues to take place even after ten years of China's state party to the Convention Against Torture. The following two different cases illustrate the brutality of prison beatings. Ngawang Dekyi, a nun, died only 16 days after she had been hospitalised by prison authorities. Rinzin, barely a month after he had been released passed away at home.

Ngawang Dekyi, was a 25 year-old nun of Poto Nunnery in Phenpo Lhundup. She was originally from Damshung County in Lhasa city. Ngawang was arrested in 1995 after participating in a demonstration in Lhasa. She was detained in Gutsa Detention Centre for some time. Later she was sentenced to six years imprisonment and transferred to Drapchi Prison. Ngawang reportedly suffered horrific prison beatings and was near death when she was taken to Lhasa 'Regional Military Hospital' by prison authorities on January 5, 1998. She died on January 21, 1998 after being hospitalised for 16 days.

Ngawang's monthly visitor confirmed that Ngawang had undergone severe beatings by prison guards and her weak condition had deteriorated. Ngawang's parents were not informed of her health condition or her hospitalisation.

Sixteen days later Ngawang passed away. Her parents were notified only at that time about her ill health, hospitalisation and her subsequent death on January 21, 1998. However, her body was kept at Drapchi Prison until January 23, 1998. During that time nobody, including her parents, was allowed to approach the body to carry out the customary Tibetan death rites.

On January 23, 1998 the sky burial (a traditional Tibetan burial) was carried out near Sera Monastery and our source was called to be present accompanied by a prison official. During the sky burial he was not allowed to go near the body but saw that Ngawang's head had turned red and blue. Later the *topdhen* (person who performs the burial) told him, "from the injury marks it looks like the deceased had received severe beatings and as a result blood had entered the circulatory veins of the brain, turning it red and blue. The red and blue colours on the shoulder blades also indicated beatings."

Our source requested the authorities of Drapchi Prison to help Ngawang's parents as they were very old and poor and had no money to pay for their return home to Damshung. The prison authorities reportedly gave the parents 500 yuan (US $ 60) and sent them back to Damshung County.

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Rinzin, a 61 year-old man, was imprisoned in August or September of 1996 for possessing a photograph of the Dalai Lama on his altar. Photographs of the Dalai Lama had been banned earlier that year by the Chinese government. After answering back to the Chinese officials who discovered the photograph, he was detained for one month in the town prison and refused any visitors. Rinzin was sentenced to three years imprisonment, although a source said that no formal trial had taken place. He was transferred to Nyari Prison where he was reported as looking "very weak and [suffering from] malnutrition". Prior to his arrest Rinzin had minor health problems but developed tuberculosis while in detainment. A source commented that "no one knows what Rinzin went through in prison. He was kept in the prison hospital for one month and then released because his health condition had become serious. Upon his release he lived only a month at home. He was so sick that he could barely speak and he was completely bedridden. He passed away on February 11 or 12, 1997 in his bed." Rinzin was from Mugrum Trehte Township in Lhabrang County in Ngari Region.

New prison reported outside of Lhasa

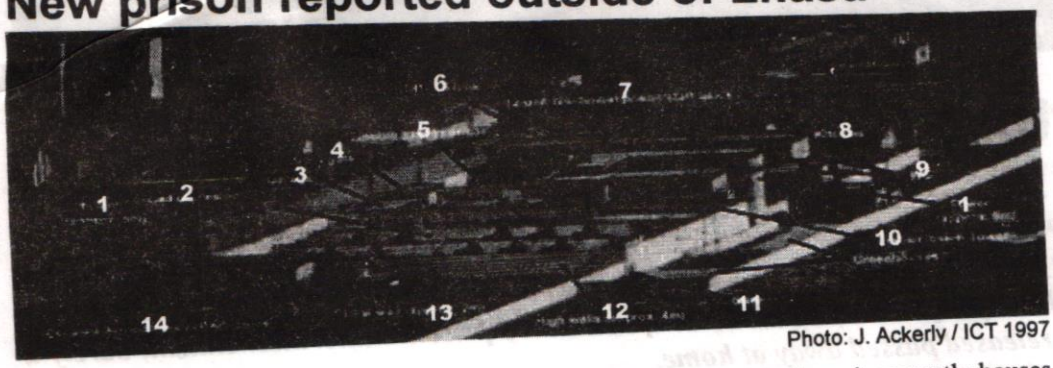


Photo: J. Ackerly / ICT 1997

A new detention centre housing political prisoners has been reported by the Tibet Information Network (TIN) last month. The new unit, believed to be a high security detention and interrogation centre, is situated on the outskirts of Lhasa, near Outridu and Sietru Detention Centres and possibly an extension of Sangyip prison. The building consists of six blocks with a capacity to house around 60 prisoners. People's Armed Police occupy one building and security is high. Photos of the building show that it was probably completed in 1997.

TIN reported that the unit currently houses political prisoners who were involved in the Drapchi Prison demonstrations in May of this year. TCHRD has received reports over the last months that Drapchi staff have been transferring prisoners since the incident, to prevent any further information leaks.

It is believed that the unit's main purpose is as an interrogation centre for political prisoners. These prisoners are usually detained without charge for up to three months prior to sentencing. Torture is frequently used during detainment to extract a confession in order to sentence the prisoner.

1. Tower (approx. 9m)
2. Cell blocks
3. Garage
4. Main gate
5. Double gate to prison
6. Office block
7. 12-unit residential prison staff block
8. Kitchen
9. Water Closet
10. Transmission tower
11. Gate
12. High wall (approx. 4m)
13. Lower wall (approx. 2m)
14. People's Armed Police block

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As notified earlier about the possibility of reverting to our old e-mail address, TCHRD's permanent e-mail address is:

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Thank you.

Human Rights UPDATE

TIBETAN CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

December 31, 1998 Volume III: Number 24

99

Tibet: Crackdown on Humanity

In 1998, the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was celebrated internationally. Despite recognition of this declaration, the People's Republic of China continues to breach the provisions therein, leaving the Tibetans very little to celebrate. 49 years after the PRC occupied Tibet, the freedom to exercise fundamental human rights has not been restored.

The People's Republic of China has successfully deflected international pressure with regards to its human rights record, primarily on account of its massive market economy. Despite a number of visits from foreign delegations during the year, few practical revisions have been made to amend the situation. Evidence actually indicates a contrary trend; an increasingly tighter governmental control over all sectors of Tibetan life which is seriously jeopardising the survival of the unique Tibetan culture and people.

It appears that China is attempting to alienate the Tibetans from their own identity in order to prevent dissension. The Tibetan population is being marginalised in all domains. Extreme repressive measures imposed on religion, an intrinsic element of the indigenous culture, continue to stifle Tibetan cultural autonomy. The right to freedom of expression and opinion is consistently negated and many Tibetans are arrested arbitrarily on account of such activity.

Tibetan autonomy is also severely restricted by lack of true representation in the political sector, and Tibetans consequently face discriminatory policies and further marginalisation in their own land. State-encouraged population transfer of Chinese into Tibet exacerbates this condition. Population transfer, augmented by harsh birth control policies contrary to domestic law, has grave implications on the survival of the Tibetans. These practices must be curbed.

The harsh suppression of a peaceful demonstration inside Drapchi Prison, Lhasa, in May 1998, is evidence of China's absolute disregard of the Tibetans' right to freedom of expression. There are confirmed reports of 10 prisoners who died as a result, and many more were injured. Others who participated in the demonstration have endured severe repercussions. The demonstration occurred at the time of an official visit by European Union Troika Ambassadors, yet the Chinese monopoly over information prevented the delegation from finding out about the incident until they had left the region. Information regarding the incident is still very restricted. This is an indication of overwhelming governmental control in the region, and causes concern to human rights monitors as the Chinese government obviously has an unbounded ability to manipulate the dissemination of information regarding all human rights issues.

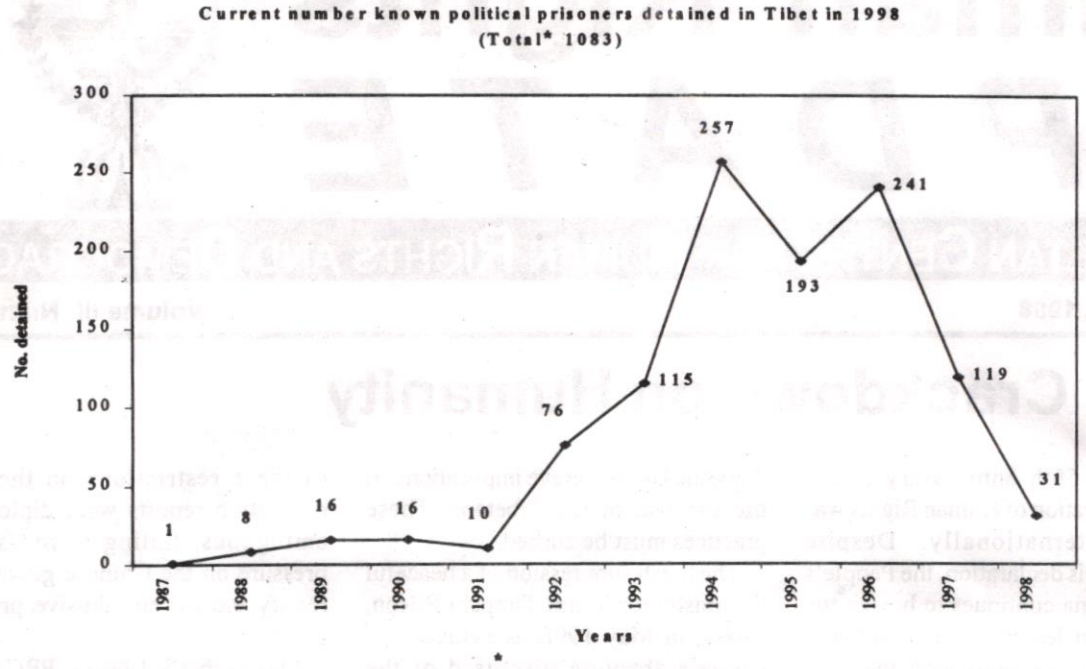
Following the EU Troika mission, Tibet was also visited by members of the Danish Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee in August 1998, and by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, in September. Each visiting party expressed dissatisfaction with the limits imposed on their visit by the Chinese government. Little contact with Tibetans was permitted unless accompanied by government officials and all items on the itineraries were subject to Chinese approval. Unfortunately, despite the admission of these restrictions on their visits, delegation reports were diplomatically ambiguous, failing to put sufficient pressure on the Chinese government to rectify the current abusive practices in place.

On October 5, 1998 the PRC signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is a welcomed gesture, and both Tibetan and international communities await evidence of suitable adaptations to bring Chinese domestic law and practice into line with these standards. Present practices transgress international human rights standards, and although improvements have been made in some areas, a more comprehensive scheme for the protection of the Tibetans' human rights must be implemented immediately.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Despite their obligation to ensure that all citizens can enjoy freedom of expression and opinion, the PRC has actively repressed this right. Any expression of opinion contrary to Chinese Communist Party ideology can result in arrest and in 1998 56 Tibetans were arrested for such actions, 31 of these were detained.

The repressive measures are focused on religious institutions which the Chinese identify as the primary source of contrary ideas. Since the launch of the "Strike Hard" campaign in 1996, the Chinese government has systematically covered religious institutions in Tibet in



an attempt to eradicate allegiance to the Dalai Lama, Tibetan nationalism and any dissension. Thousands of monks and nuns have been expelled as a result of this initiative and hundreds have been arrested.

The campaign has been introduced into the lay sector so no Tibetans are exempt from this repressive policy.

This is a deliberate denial of the right to freedom of expression and if continued, the Tibetan cultural heritage will be seriously endangered. This governmental policy must be immediately checked.

ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION

The 1996 amendments to the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law failed to implement mechanisms to protect individuals from arbitrary arrest and detention. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China signed in October 1998, contains provisions which uphold the right of citizens to be free from such a risk, and appropriate amendments to the national constitution are anticipated.

The vast majority of the 135 arrests of Tibetans in 1998 were arbitrary; imprisoned on ambiguous charges of "endangering state security." Incarcerated for exercising their basic rights, the prisoners are denied many rights whilst in detainment. Legal proceedings fail to meet international standards; the accused are often denied legal representation, visitation rights and the right to appeal. They are often subjected to torture in order to extract a 'confession,' and many are detained without any judicial proceeding at all.

POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

In December 1998 there were 1083 known Tibetan political prisoners in Chinese prisons. 246 of these were women and 12 were juvenile. An additional 93 prisoners, now of adult age, were imprisoned as juveniles and remain in incarceration. 76 of the prisoners are serving sentences of more than ten years. The rate of imprisonment for political reasons in Tibet is far greater than in other areas beneath Chinese rule. It is indicative of the extent of the comprehensive campaign of the government to eliminate any views contrary to official policy in Tibet.

This is a direct violation of basic rights to life, liberty and freedom of expression.

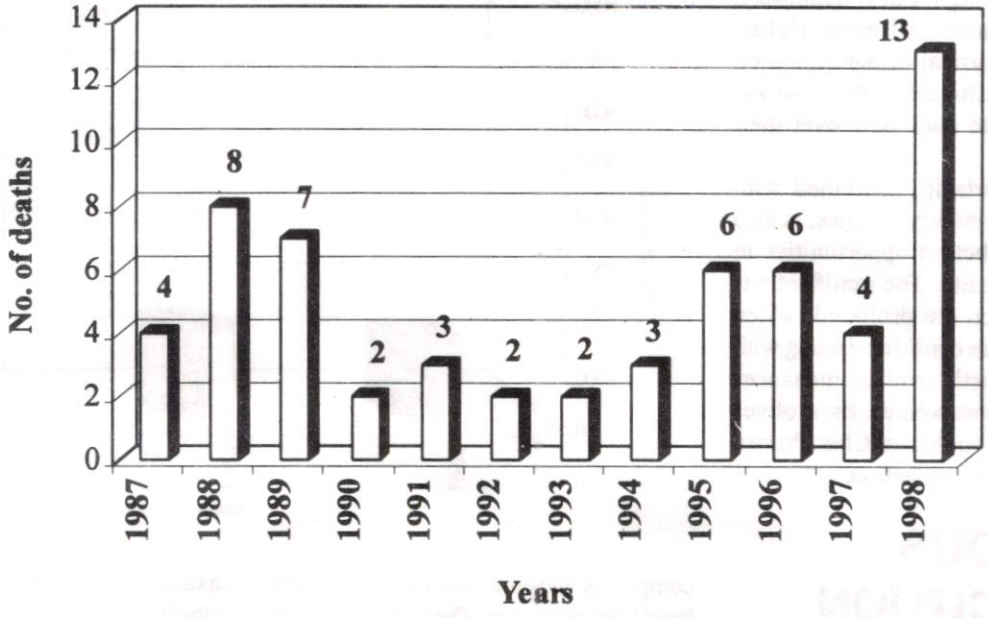
TORTURE IN DETENTION CENTRES AND PRISONS

Torture constitutes a profound abuse of human rights yet despite being party to various international conventions which outlaw the practice, the Chinese government continues to tacitly endorse its use in detention centres and prisons.

The ultimate violation of human rights is the termination of life. In 1998, 19 Tibetans died prematurely whilst in detention. Eleven of these deaths resulted from the Chinese suppression of the peaceful demonstration in Drapchi Prison in May. Since 1986, the deaths of 60 Tibetans in detainment have been recorded.

Testimonies from former political prisoners confirm that torture remains prevalent in prisons in Tibet. The primary function of this torture is to extract a confession from the prisoner in the pretrial stage but accounts indicate that it continues throughout detainment. This practice is unacceptable, and is in direct contradiction with the United Nations Convention Against Torture. After a decade of participation in this convention, China is yet to fulfil its responsibility to eradicate torture from its detention institutions.

Number of known deaths due to torture in 1998
Total * (60)



WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Domestic legislation and international obligations have failed to uphold the rights of Tibetan women in Tibet. The primary violation of their rights results from birth control policies. Despite domestic laws which guarantee concessions for minority groups, Tibetan women continue to be subjected to enforced sterilisation, contraception and abortion procedures. They are not given the option of voluntary contraception methods nor are they provided with adequate healthcare following these procedures. Fear of sterilisation deters many women from seeking medical attention for other ailments and thus the health of Tibetan women is compromised.

The rights of women to freedom of expression are also violated. There are presently 246 known female Tibetan political prisoners. These women are vulnerable to sexual abuse, torture and hard physical labour. China ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1980 but is yet to fulfil its requirements.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Contrary to international and domestic regulations, the rights of Tibetan children are not being fully protected by the Chinese government. Due to subsistence difficulties, inadequate facilities and discriminatory measures, many Tibetan children are denied access to adequate healthcare and schooling. The health of Tibetan children is of a substandard level. In some counties the weight-for-age ratio has been classified as "unacceptably low" and reports indicate that chronic malnutrition is restricting the growth of Tibetan children.

Within the education system, indigenous children face significant discrimination. As they are now part of a minority population, the education system is not directed to them but to the Chinese immigrants. Consequently they are disadvantaged throughout their entire education and this in turn impacts on future employment opportunities.

Tibetan juveniles are not exempt from China's repression of freedom of expression. There are presently 12 Tibetan political prisoners below the age of 18 and 93 others who were imprisoned as children but are now adult. 2,206 child monks and nuns were dismissed from their religious institutions in 1998 and were thus alienated from their right to freedom of religion, culture and education.

Overall subsistence levels must be raised and discriminatory tactics abolished in order to address the urgent needs of Tibetan children.

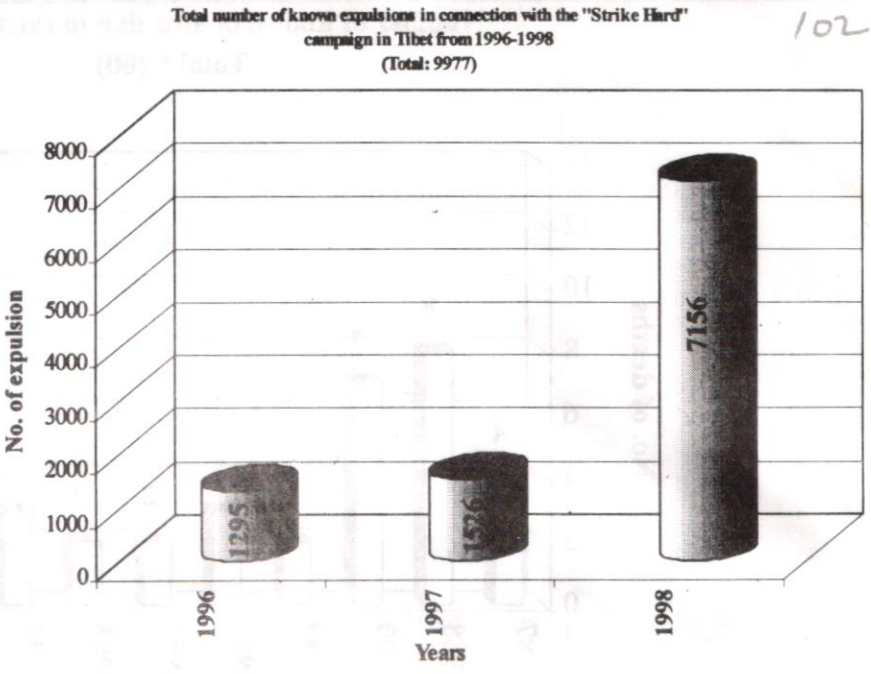
POPULATION TRANSFER

The transfer of Chinese citizens into Tibet is perhaps the most significant threat to the Tibetan people as a whole today. If the government is permitted to continue its present policies of population transfer, Tibet may face total marginalisation; a fate not unlike that of Inner Mongolia, Manchuria and Eastern Turkistan.

The affects of the deliberate strategy are already apparent. Tibetans are denied complete access to the political sector and are subjugated to Chinese law. As a result, they are vulnerable to exploitation and negligible policies. Massive economic developments, the catalyst for much of the immigration, is exploiting the land and destroying the livelihood of many

indigenous people. The traditional subsistence economy is being replaced by a market economy from which the Tibetans are alienated. Subsistence capabilities are being severely diminished which compromises all other rights. Tibetans face physical displacement on account of the Chinese influx and are losing the right to autonomy over their land.

Economic hardship, combined with blatantly discriminatory policies, is also disabling the Tibetans opportunities in education and health. The ramifications of such alienation are profound. When all these factors are considered along with the stringent birth control measures imposed on Tibetan women, the motives of the People's Republic of China have a much more guileful undertone.



RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

China's comprehensive repression of religion in Tibet was intensified in 1998. An overwhelming increase in the number of expulsions of monks and nuns from their institutions is evidence of China's intention to further restrict religious practices in Tibet. 327 monks and nuns were arrested and 7156 religious people were expelled from their religious institutions as a result of the "Strike Hard" campaign during the year.

The campaign was introduced nationwide in May 1996 with an overall aim of reducing general crime and corruption. In Tibet, the accompanying programme of "patriotic re-education" was the focus, aimed at diminishing any subversive sentiment and restricting Tibetan nationalism. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has recorded 9,977 expulsions since the inception of the programme and 492 arrests of monks and nuns.

China has recently declared Tibet to be non-Buddhist and is implementing measures to achieve this end. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibetans, and his recognised Panchen Lama have been denounced. The nine year-old 11th Panchen Lama has been missing since his status was announced in 1995. Even photographs of the Dalai Lama have been banned. Numerous institutions have been closed down completely and other religious monuments have been destroyed. The right to freedom of religion is consistently negated in Tibet.

SUBSISTENCE RIGHTS

Increased Chinese migration, discriminatory policies and inadequate social welfare combine to create a hostile economic environment for Tibetans. More than 70 per cent of Tibetans in the "TAR" now live below the poverty line. The destruction of their traditional subsistence economy is creating an economic void for the indigenous people as they have been alienated from the market economy which has replaced the former. China's economic development programmes are repeatedly failing to alleviate the poverty and new means of financial assistance must be employed.

These difficulties are compounded by harsh taxation policies that have been implemented without concession. Tibetans are being greatly affected by these demands which sometimes constitute as much as half their salary. China plans to equate tax revenue from the "TAR" to that of the rest of China and with so many "TAR" residents living in poverty, such an intention is clearly abusive.

It is essential that China relax their taxation policies and redirect their annual subsidy for the "TAR" so that the living standard of Tibetan individuals may be raised. Until this is achieved, many basic human rights cannot be assured.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

A major breach of the human right to life, liberty and security of person is in cases of enforced disappearance; when a person is taken into custody by the state and details of their detention are not disclosed. Such acts cause immense anxiety to the detained person and to all concerned individuals.

12 new cases of such disappearance were reported to TCHRD in 1998. Details of all remain inaccessible. The condition and location of 18 of the 22 reported cases last year are yet to be released. The Chinese government is urged to immediately release all information regarding the situation of these missing persons.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The immigration of increasing numbers of Chinese into Tibet has forced the

continued on page 8

PROFILE

This is a regular section profiling Tibetans who have died fighting for Tibet's freedom

Two deaths in prison from the same monastery

103

On April 10, 1995, five monks from Khangmar Monastery, Damshung County staged a peaceful demonstration. They were all arrested and imprisoned in Drapchi Prison. Two have since their arrest died due to prison brutalities. Lobsang Choephel and Sangay Tenphel's death exemplifies the horrific use of power in prisons in Tibet.



From L to R Lobsang Gelek; Tenzin Chodak; Sangay Tenphel; unknown; Lobsang Choephel & Tenzin Choephel

Lobsang Choephel was a 22 year-old from Gerpa township, Damshung County. He attended mangtsuk school for a brief period of two years. For some time till he joined Khangmar Monastery in the beginning of 1995, he helped his parents at work at home. He was at the monastery for three years.

On April 10, 1995, few monks of this monastery initiated a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa. They were **Tenzin Chodak** (23); **Tenzin Choephel** (21); **Lobsang Gelek** (22); **Sangay Tenphel** (19) and **Lobsang Choephel** himself. They started shouting slogans like "Free Tibet" and "Chinese quit Tibet" infront of Jhokhang (the central cathedral). They were immediately arrested by the Lhasa City Public Security Bureau and taken to Gutsa Detention Centre.

While in Gutsa they were severely punished. At the time of interrogation sessions, they faced harsh beatings and torture.

That same year, in October months, Lhasa City Intermediate Court passed their sentences. Tenzin Chodak and Lobsang Geleg were sentenced to five years in prison, Lobsang Choephel to four and Tenzin Choephel and Sangay Tenphel to three years.

Upon their sentencing, they were transferred to Drapchi Prison. Sangay Tenphel (refer to Profile page of August 31, 1998 Human Rights Update) did not live to complete his prison term. He died due to prison beatings. Prison authorities reasoned his death as brain hemorrhage but no further investigation was carried out as appealed by other prisoners of Drapchi.

On May 4, 1998 when a protest by prisoners in Drapchi took place, prison officials opened fire on the prisoners. Among few others who were shot, Lobsang Choephel was one of the victim. He died instantly.

After two-three days, his father was called by the prison authorities. They told him that Lobsang had committed suicide in prison. His father was given a sum of 700 yuan as compensation for his son's death.

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NUMBER OF KNOWN ARRESTS RECORDED IN 1998

(M=Monk, N=Nun, L=Lay)

DATE	PARTICULARS	M	N	L	COMMENT
Early 1998	Arrested one nun: Palden Wangmo and Kunchok Chodon from Drakyerpa hermitage in Taktse County.		1	1	Arrested while a Chinese "work team" stayed in the hermitage. Over 109 residents were forced to leave and the hermitage was destroyed.
Early 1998	Arrested one former monk of Taktse Phagmo Monastery, named Tenzin Tsedup and 23 other people.	1		23	Arrested when they tried to escape to India. Tenzin Tsedup was detained in Shigatse Detention Centre for about one month.
Early 1998	Arrested Thupten Tenzin (lay name: Jinpa) from Thekchen Jangchup Choeling Monastery.	1			Arrested when he tried to escape Tibet.
Early 1998	Arrested one senior monk from Rongpo Rabten Monastery.	1			Arrested during a "re-education campaign" in the monastery. He was imprisoned for one month.
Jan. 1998	Arrested Gyalchoe from Padha Monastery in Pashoe County.	1			Arrested for refusing "re-education". The "work team" later searched his room and found a Tibetan national flag. He was taken to Pashoe County Prison and tortured.
Feb. 1998	Arrested six monks from Serpa Monastery.	6			Arrested for disagreeing with the "work teams" in the monastery. Names and arrest details are not known.
Feb. 1998	Arrested Tenpa Rabgyal (27) from Tashi-ge-Kunphel Ling Monastery	1			Arrested for writing some "prayer" notes for the long life of H.H. the Dalai Lama.
Feb. 2, 1998	Arrested Tenzin Lobsang (25), Gedhun Tharchin (25), Gyaltsen Tsultrim (18) and Tenzin Tsultrim (17) from Rongpo Rabten Monastery.	4			Arrested for pasting independence posters during a "work team" stayed in the monastery. They are currently detained in Sog County Prison.
March 1998	Arrested Rinzin Gyurmey Thupten Gyatso from Drigong Sha Lhagang Monastery	1			Arrested while a "work team" stayed in the monastery. He was held in Lhasa for two days and then sent to his hometown.
March 1998	Arrested one monk, Norsang (27) and four nuns: Gyaltsen Choephel (23), Phakchog Dupa (22), Gyaltsen Chupar and Tsundue Tharchin from a hermitage in Namtso, Nagchu Region.	1	4		Arrested while a Chinese "work team" stayed in the hermitage. Norsang was sentenced to three years in Drapchi Prison. Gyaltsen Choephel and Phakchog Dupa were released after seven days.
March 1998	Arrested 4 nuns (aged between 60 and 83) from Dragyerpa Monastery.		4		Arrested after the four nuns refused to leave the nunnery during a "work team" stayed there.
March 10, 1998	Arrested around fifteen monks from Nagchu Sog County.	15			Arrested for staging a demonstation in the town.
March 12, 1998	Arrested two monks from Tehor Domthog Monastery.	2			Arrested for hoisting a Tibetan national flag.
March 13, 1998	Arrested 15 monks from Rongpo Rapten Monastery.	15			Arrested for a pro-independence demonstrations held on March 10, 1998 in Sog County, Nagchu Prefecture.
April 1998	Arrested one monk: Tenzin Tsultrim (16) from Phakmo Monastery.	1			Arrested when he tried to leave Tibet for almost one month.

April 26, 1998	Arrested 10 Tibetan youths.			10	Arrested when they tried to cross the Chinese border at Dram. Chinese police opened fire on the group of 12 Tibetan youths. Two were injured and taken to a hospital. All the arrested were taken to Shigatse Prison.
May 1998	Arrested four monks from Chamda do County Monastery.	4			Arrested for pasting freedom posters in the monastery when a "work team" arrived. One of the arrested monks died later.
May 1998	Arrested Wado Samten (70) from Sog County in Nagchu Prefecture, "TAR".			1	Arrested after he had protested against a "work team" during a public meeting in Sog County.
May 1998	Arrested Samdrup (28) and Ngawang Tenrab from Drepung Monastery, Lhasa.	2			Samdrup was arrested on suspicion of political activities. Ngawang was released after one month. Samdrup is still in Seitru Detention Centre.
May 23, 1998	Arrested Dakpa Kalko (48) from Ngaba County, Sichuan Province.			1	Arrested for distributing pictures and speeches of the Dalai Lama. He was transferred to an unknown prison and his whereabouts is not known.
May 30, 1998	Arrested Jamyang Tsultrim (29).			1	The reason of his re-arrest is unknown.
May / June 1998	Arrested approx. 18 monks from Tashi Choeling Monastery.	18			Arrested for pasting posters, which claimed Tibet's independence. They were released after one month.
June 1998	Arrested Gyatso (19) from Tsongon			1	Arrested because he tried to escape to India and was detained for 93 days.
June 1998	Arrested Sonam Wangdu (33)			1	Arrested when he tried to escape to India. He was detained for five days in Shigatse Detention Centre.
August 5, 1998	Arrested two monks: Jampa Tenzin (26) and Ngawang Tsultrim (26) from Rongpo Rabten Monastery.	2			Arrested for keeping a speech booklet of H.H. the Dalai Lama. Jampa Tenzin was sentenced to two years and Ngawang to one year imprisonment. They are detained in Sog County Prison.
August 17, 1998	Pentso (further details not available).			1	Arrested for his involvement in political activities.
August 20, 1998	Arrested Ama Lhundrup Wangmo (or Ama Wangla) from Metok Changsey Gora in Tsomonling, Lhasa City.			1	Arrested on political grounds after she had visited political prisoners and had been to India for pilgrimage. She was taken to an unknown location.
Sept. 18, 1998	Arrested Ngawang Kyonmey (28, from Toelung Dechen County) from Drepung Monastery, Lhasa.			1	Arrested because one of his friends had tried to hand over some letters to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson during her visit to Tibet.
October 1998	Arrested Wotse (30) from Ngaba County, Sichuan Province.			1	Arrested on suspicion of political activities.
Nov. 29, 1998	Arrested a 60 year-old man.			1	Arrested for shouting "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" near the Jokhang Temple.
Nov. 1998	Arrested six monks: Lobsang Sherab (33), Lopel (25), Palko (25), Tingzin (34), Tenzin (25) and Palden (29) from Kirti Monastery.	6			Arrested for pasting independence posters during a Chinese "work team" stayed in the monastery. They are detained in Ngaba County Prison.
TOTAL	**135**	**82**	**9**	**44**	

Tibetans into minority status and made them vulnerable to various forms of discrimination.

Despite being a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, domestic laws are failing to provide the Tibetans with an environment free from discrimination. Some government-endorsed practices are blatantly discriminatory, to the detriment of the Tibetans.

Tibetans rights in the political sector are severely restricted which annuls their lawful right to autonomy. They also suffer distinct biases in education and healthcare which greatly affects both their cultural and physical development.

The continual influx of Chinese settlers is also resulting in discrimination in the employment sector and the Chinese government is yet to introduce steps to rectify this issue.

CONCLUSION

By the end of 1998, the People's Republic of China had at least signed each of the three covenants comprising the International Bill of Rights. This gives rise to the hope that effective measures will soon be implemented to align China's domestic laws with these international norms in order to cease the current violations of human rights.

The cultural and physical survival of the Tibetan population in Tibet is greatly threatened today by continual infringements of these rights. China must actively address this issue. Previously, participation in such covenants has not guaranteed compliance with the provisions therein, and the international community is urged to monitor the situation closely.

Individual and collective rights abu continue to challenge the Tibetan peo in their daily lives and in the fut survival of their unique cultural ident The Chinese government is obliged rectify this situation immediately amending their domestic law to provi for the protection of all rights. The signi of the International Covenant on Civ and Political Rights is a welcom indication, but the Tibetan people awa evidence of China's adherence to this an other codes. Continual internationa pressure is essential in encouraging th Chinese government to abide by th regulations of the covenants of humar rights.

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The temporary address **tchrd@tcrclinux.ernet.in** is no longer valid. Kindly notice the change. we apologise for any inconveniences.

Thank you.