



# **A GREAT MOUNTAIN BURNED BY FIRE**

## **China's crackdown in Tibet**

A report by the International Campaign for Tibet  
Washington, DC | Amsterdam | Berlin | Brussels  
March, 2009

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[www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org)

*“I would like to tell you how it is that a great lake gets dried up by heat and a great mountain burned by fire...”*

– An analysis of the crisis in Tibet today by Lunpo Nyuktok, in a collection of banned writings from Tibet, the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ (Shar Dungri), published for the first time in English in this report.

*“March 2008 was an extraordinary moment which made the whole world watch wide-eyed.”*

– by ‘Buddha,’ Sichuan, in the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’

# CONTENTS

<b>Summary</b> .....	4
<b>The crisis in Tibet and the 50th anniversary</b> .....	6
<b>'A Raging Storm':</b> a year of dissent and crackdown .....	20
<b>Covering up the crackdown - Beijing's propaganda offensive</b> .....	26
<b>Fear and betrayal:</b> the psychological pressures of interrogation – a first person account .....	32
<b>The enemy within? Policing thought, culture and speech in Tibet</b> .....	38
<b>A raid on Tongkor monastery</b> .....	54
<b>Political prisoners in Tibet today</b> .....	60
<b>"A sketch of history written in the blood of a generation":</b> banned writings from Amdo .....	70
<b>Bearing witness:</b> the Tibetan blogosphere .....	106
<b>Woeser's writings</b> .....	120
<b>Smashing the Dalai clique:</b> China's leadership and Tibet .....	136
<b>ICT Recommendations</b> .....	156

## The 2009 anniversaries

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established and Chairman Mao proclaimed in Tiananmen Square, "China has stood up." On coming to power, the Chinese Communist government made it clear that the last remaining task for the victorious People's Liberation Army (PLA) was the 'liberation' of Tibet; the leadership had already developed strategies for the incorporation of what they regarded as 'Chinese national minorities' within the framework of the PRC.

Prior to October 1, 1949, Tibet had emerged as a *de facto* independent state after the Qing, China's last imperial dynasty, collapsed in 1911. This independence was not recognized by China, nor was it formally and unambiguously acknowledged by Britain, India or any other state, despite repeated efforts to establish relations with foreign powers. Even so, under the government of the Dalai Lama, Tibet did effectively function independently of China, although it was increasingly vulnerable. Attempts during the first half of the 20th century to modernize the army and introduce reforms had been thwarted by the monasteries and conservative officials, who wanted to maintain the status quo. In the years leading up to the invasion, internal division and power struggles within the ruling elite further weakened the government. With the establishment of the PRC 60 years ago, this *de facto* independence came to an end.

The Chinese Communist Party used a combination of persuasion and threat in the early years of their takeover of Tibet; trying to win over the ruling elite while leaving no doubt of China's military might. In October 1950, China launched a full-scale military invasion, catching the Tibetan army by surprise, and taking Chamdo in the east. But rather than pushing on to Lhasa, the advance was halted, and efforts were focused on negotiating a 'peaceful settlement.' A delegation was sent to Beijing in 1951 and the '17-point agreement' was signed. This acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, but recognized the rights of Tibetans to regional autonomy and religious freedom. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) arrival in Lhasa signaled the beginning of a period of uneasy co-existence.

The 17-point agreement only extended to central Tibet. By the end of 1954, the implementation of socialist reforms in Kham and Amdo was fomenting resistance to Chinese rule. Sporadic uprisings erupted as attempts were made to re-distribute land, settle nomads and confiscate personal arms. In 1955 a major revolt broke out in Kham. The Chinese responded with aerial bombardment of towns and monasteries. Thousands of refugees fled the fighting, moving into central Tibet and India. What had started as pockets of resistance in Amdo and Kham coalesced into a national resistance movement as groups of rebels congregated in central Tibet and joined forces under the leadership of Gonbo Tashi and his pan-Khampa guerrilla movement 'Four Rivers, Six Ranges.' They were supported by the CIA, which made its first arms drop in 1958.

In 1956, signs of resistance in the form of posters and leaflets appeared in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa. Despite conciliatory efforts to quell dissent by postponing reforms in Lhasa, relations between the Tibetans and Chinese Communists continued to deteriorate. Refugees brought with them news of the Communist reforms and harsh punitive measures in Kham and Amdo and by the beginning of 1959 there was widespread anti-Chinese feeling. At the same time, ‘anti-rightist’ hardliners in China were attacking those Communist leaders who had been in favor of a gradualist approach in Tibet.

**On March 10, 1959**, tensions finally erupted. Thousands of Tibetans gathered outside the Dalai Lama’s summer palace, the Norbulingka, as rumors that the Chinese were planning to abduct him spread throughout Lhasa, which was teeming with pilgrims following the annual Great Prayer Festival (Monlam Chenmo). During the week that followed, demonstrations in support of the Dalai Lama and against Chinese rule escalated into a mass protest throughout the city. **On March 17, 1959** the PLA started sporadic shelling of the city, and that evening the Dalai Lama escaped and began his flight into exile. **On March 20, 1959** the PLA was ordered to re-take the city. After two days of fighting, the Chinese flag was hoisted above the Potala Palace. Both sides renounced the 17-point agreement. By **March 28, 1959**, which the Chinese authorities plan to mark this year as ‘Serf Emancipation Day,’ the Tibetan government was dissolved. Thousands of Tibetans had been killed, and thousands more followed the Dalai Lama into exile.

## Acknowledgments

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## SUMMARY

**M**arch 10, 2009, marks the 50th anniversary of the National Uprising and the first anniversary of an unprecedented wave of overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across the Tibetan plateau, to be met by a brutal crackdown.

In the weeks before the anniversary and Tibetan New Year (Losar, February 25), the Chinese government stepped up levels of intimidation and adopted an increasingly harsh and systematic approach to silencing Tibetans and suppressing dissent, with the authorities calling upon officials, security forces and the general public to 'crush' any signs of support for the Dalai Lama.

State repression and the hardening of the Chinese government's position on the Dalai Lama have created deepening tension in Tibet, the opposite of the 'genuine stability' that President Hu Jintao claims to be seeking. This is the only known period when protests have continued despite the severity of Beijing's response. A key element of dissent has been the 'no Losar' position adopted by many Tibetans, who believe they should mourn the passing of Tibetans killed during the protests despite the Chinese authorities' endeavors to persuade Tibetans to celebrate in order to give the impression of normalcy.

Over the past year, the Chinese government has engaged in a comprehensive cover-up of the torture, disappearances and killings that have taken place across Tibet combined with a virulent propaganda offensive against the exiled Tibetan leader, Nobel Peace Laureate the Dalai Lama. On the international stage, Beijing has subverted and politicized international forums where its human rights record has been challenged and refused to answer legitimate questions from governments about the use of lethal force against unarmed protestors, or the welfare of individual detainees.

The Chinese authorities have sought to represent the unprecedented unrest across the Tibetan plateau over the past year as one 'violent riot,' referring solely to the events of March 14 in Lhasa. The reality is that more than 130 overwhelmingly peaceful protests have occurred across Tibetan areas of the PRC since March 10, 2008, and incidents of dissent are continuing in some areas – for instance in Lithang (Chinese: Litang, in eastern Tibet), where Tibetan monks, laypeople and nomads took to the streets on February 16 to make a bold statement in support of the Dalai Lama and to call for the release of a solitary monk protestor detained the day before.

As the 50th anniversary approaches, Tibetans continue to ‘disappear,’ often being taken from their homes in the middle of the night to face extreme brutality in ‘black jails.’ According to figures given in official statistics, 1200 Tibetans remain unaccounted for since the protests began. The spike in numbers of political prisoners since March 10, 2008, is likely to be the largest increase that has ever occurred in Tibetan areas of the PRC under China’s current Constitution and Criminal Law. A list of more than 600 names and details of prisoners who have been detained since March 2008 are provided with this report; the actual number of Tibetans still in detention is likely to be far higher.

New campaigns directed against Tibetan culture and religion in the last few months mean that virtually any expression of Tibetan identity not directly sanctioned by the state can be branded as ‘reactionary’ or ‘splittist’ and penalized with a long prison sentence, or worse. Pop stars, artists and writers have been detained under a new drive against “cultural products” with suspect ideological content – such as songs referring to the Dalai Lama – and in music bars Tibetan performers are no longer allowed to address the audience as ‘Tibetan brothers and sisters’ because it is considered ‘subversive’ to the ‘unity of the nationalities’.

Despite the risks, insights from inside Tibet on experiences of imprisonment, interrogation and loss, as well as perspectives on a way forward translated in this report indicate an unquenchable spirit and expression of a deeply-felt Tibetan identity. This includes the first translations into English from the only known book to be published in the PRC about the uprising over the past year. This collection of writing, the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’, by Tibetans still in Tibet was banned almost as soon as it appeared. One of the authors writes: “In a year that turned out to be like a raging storm... how could we remain... in fear. [This work is] a sketch of history written in the blood of a generation.”



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A Tibetan school girl, 16-year old Lhundup Tso, was killed when police opened fire on unarmed protestors in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) on March 16, 2008. Sources from the area have identified the body pictured as Lhundup Tso. The protest began when monks at Kirti monastery in Ngaba (the Tibetan area of Amdo) began a spontaneous protest following a morning prayer ceremony, and were joined by monks from other monasteries, laypeople and schoolchildren.

## THE CRISIS IN TIBET AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

*“This year, who does not know that our monks and laypeople, men and women, lost their precious lives? Northern Land of Snows, long accustomed to swallowing tears of grief, fellow countrymen of the three provinces,<sup>1</sup> surviving patiently in the confines of a straitjacket, filled with terror, fear and anguish, on whom is their humble gaze fixed? The great snow mountain thirsting for freedom, democracy and equality is once more streaked red with blood... Is this the ‘fierce red wind’ that we have not yet been able to forget, starting to howl once more? Is this the gloom of the ‘darkness’ which has not yet vanished from the inner recesses of our minds, starting to gather once more? If you have eyes, do you not see that many, many of our fellow countrymen went forth with the dream of our nation in their minds?”*

– by Nyen, ‘The Wild One,’ in the ‘*Eastern Snow Mountain*’

The Tibetan New Year (Losar) on February 25 began in an atmosphere of fear, tension and mourning for those killed during a violent crackdown against dissent that continues today. March 10 marks the one-year anniversary of a wave of overwhelmingly peaceful protests against Chinese rule that swept across the entire Tibetan plateau last year, and it is also the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Tibet’s National Uprising. Its brutal suppression led to the escape of the Dalai Lama from Tibet to India in 1959, where he resides today in exile. In the buildup to the anniversary, China has tightened security and intensified repression still further across the Tibetan plateau.

This is also likely to be linked to the Party’s intention to present a stable image of Tibet at the time of the annual meeting of China’s parliament, the National People’s Congress, in the week prior to the anniversary of the uprising; this session brings together the country’s most senior Party, state and regional leaders, including those from Tibet.

Since the protests began on March 10 last year, state repression of Tibetans’ freedoms of expression, religion and association has intensified to a level not seen in Tibet since the paranoia and Maoist excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese government has hardened its policies against the Dalai Lama and Tibetan culture, and embarked upon an aggressive propaganda offensive against the exiled Tibetan leader. In the week before Tibetan New Year, Beijing called upon support for the Dalai Lama to be ‘crushed’, with the *Tibet Daily* stating that people should: ‘Firmly crush the savage

aggression of the Dalai clique, defeat separatism, and wage people's war to maintain stability." (February 19, 2009).

This hardline position taken by the authorities has derailed the process of dialogue with the Tibetan exiled leader's representatives, increased resentment and led to further unrest in Tibet – the opposite of the 'social stability' that the Beijing government claims to be seeking. It is the only known period when protests have continued despite the severity of Beijing's response.

In the weeks prior to the anniversary, reports emerged of police opening fire on a crowd of angry Tibetans in Nagchu (Chinese: Naqu) in the TAR after a confrontation between Tibetans and Chinese on February 19.<sup>2</sup> A few days earlier, a protest by a Tibetan monk, 39-year-old Lobsang Lhundup, in Lithang (Chinese: Litang) in Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Kham) calling for a boycott of Tibetan New Year (Losar) and in support of the Dalai Lama was followed by a number of Tibetans taking to the streets to demand his release, and to support his call to mark Tibetan New Year by mourning those killed in the protests. Riot police officers broke up the protest and arrested at least 20 people.<sup>3</sup> A month earlier, at least five monks staged a protest close to a monastery in Derge (Chinese: Dege) county in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi TAP), an area known to have a particularly heavy presence of People's Armed Police (PAP), and there were several reports that police opened fire with live ammunition on the protestors, although reports of injuries or fatalities could not be confirmed.<sup>4</sup>

This year the Chinese authorities will also mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, which was followed soon afterwards by their takeover of Tibet. Minister of Public Security Meng Jianzhu called on public security officials in the PRC to acknowledge the "grave challenge of maintaining national security and social stability" ahead of this anniversary.<sup>5</sup> Meng Zianzhu said that Beijing has drawn upon its experience of security measures during the Olympics to deal with possible threats to "social stability" that it believes may occur during the anniversary period.

As part of this strategy, the Chinese government has implemented increasingly rigorous attempts to silence Tibetans, including a new 'Strike Hard' campaign beginning on January 18 in Lhasa. Strike Hard campaigns are typically carried out in various parts of the People's Republic of China prior to major events, including traditional Chinese New Year celebrations and other national holidays, as well as before the main annual government and Party conferences, often with the stated intention of "cleansing the social environment." However, with unprecedented levels of security already in place throughout Tibet, the winter Strike Hard campaign appears to be intended to intimidate Tibetans still further, linked to the 50th anniversary period.

The campaign is also focused around singling out Tibetans from the eastern areas of Kham and Amdo in Lhasa, who were believed by the authorities to have been active in the protests and rioting last March. As part of Strike Hard, authorities were targeting Tibetans without some form of official identification, like a work permit, driving license, or national identity card, and it seemed that targets were Tibetans from outside Lhasa without proper papers. The assistant director of the Dharamsala-based organization the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Jampa Monlam said: “They are asking people where they were during the March 14 incident in Lhasa, whether they have an alibi, and so on. If you can’t prove where you were during that time, you will probably be detained.” The authorities have now announced that migrants who stay in Lhasa for more than 30 days will “soon be required to apply for temporary residence permits.” (China Daily, January 15, 2009.)

Just as pre-emptive detentions of Tibetans occurred prior to March 10, 2008, focusing on individuals already under suspicion, such as former political prisoners and educated monks, there has been a security sweep under the Strike Hard campaign in the weeks building up to March 10. On January 23, the state media announced that nearly 6000 “suspects” had been “thoroughly checked” over a three-day period in a series of dawn raids by police on rented accommodation, hotels and internet cafes. The campaign also included the detention of people for their “reactionary opinions”<sup>7</sup> and for downloading ‘reactionary songs’ onto their cell phones.<sup>7</sup>

Dozens of Tibetans were detained in Lhasa in the first week of February in police raids on teahouses, popular with young Tibetans, and on private homes. Some of those detained were believed to be supportive of a campaign against celebrating the Tibetan New Year on February 25 – many Tibetans declared their intention to mark the New Year by mourning for those lost in the crackdown.<sup>8</sup> Others were reportedly detained for “spreading rumors.” In the PRC, the term “rumors” is typically used to refer to dissenting views and sentiment. In Tibet today, virtually any expression of Tibetan identity not sanctioned by the state is liable to be branded ‘reactionary’, or ‘splittist’ and any comment on current affairs is liable to be treated as ‘rumor-mongering.’

In a disturbing example of this approach, on November 8, 2008, an official newspaper reported extremely harsh sentences (ranging from eight years to life) for seven people detained in connection with the March 2008 uprising and charged with disseminating nationalist CDs and leaflets and providing information “concerning national security and interests to organizations outside China.” Since it is most unlikely that any of the accused were involved in any activity even remotely resembling ‘espionage’ as that term is understood outside the PRC, this case represents an alarming readiness on the part of the Public Security and legal authorities to criminalize even the mildest forms of dissent.

In this case, Wangdu (Chinese transliteration: Wangdui), a monk from the Jokhang Temple and a former project officer for an HIV/AIDS program in Lhasa run by the Australian Burnet Institute, was sentenced to life imprisonment. Migmar Dhondup (Chinese transliteration: Mima Dunzhu), who also worked for an NGO and is known as a passionate conservationist, was sentenced to 14 years in prison for 'espionage'. Both were accused of collecting "intelligence concerning the security and interests of the state and provid[ing] it to the Dalai clique... prior to and following the 'March 14' incident."<sup>9</sup>



Wangdu, 41, a former Project Officer for an HIV/AIDS program in Lhasa run by the Australian Burnet Institute, who is serving life in prison for "espionage". Wangdu, who speaks fluent Chinese and once worked as a guide for Chinese tourists at the Jokhang, is still listed as a member of staff on the website of the Melbourne-based Burnet Institute, one of the leading medical research and public health Institutes in Australia. Wangdu worked on the HIV Prevention in Lhasa Project, which commenced in 2001 with AusAID and Burnet Institute funding, and aimed to develop resources to be used to educate Tibetans about HIV. (Photo: TCHRD)

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Migmar Dhondup, who is in his early thirties, was recently working as a tour guide and has previous experience working for an NGO doing community development work. He is known to be a passionate conservationist. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison for "espionage" along with Wangdu and five other Tibetans. Both Migmar Dhondup and Wangdu were accused of collecting "intelligence concerning the security and interests of the state and provid[ing] it to the Dalai clique... prior to and following the 'March 14' incident".

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As well as targeting ‘rumor-mongering’ and the low-level passing on of information, the authorities have also singled out the ‘cultural goods market’ as a potential threat to “social stability.” A report in the mainstream state media on December 25, 2008 referred to 59 arrests in relation with rumor-mongering, the formation of a Public Security task force to tackle the issue, and another five arrests in relation with the commercial distribution of “reactionary songs.” These are songs that may include references to the Dalai Lama, even in metaphorical form, or a vague allusion to something in Tibetan history or culture that may be interpreted as being out of line with the Chinese state’s position. ‘Cultural goods’ include VCDs or CDs of such pop songs. Parameters of permitted expression shift and are often impossible to be defined at any given period, although at present the particular focus is on attempting to eliminate loyalty to the Dalai Lama.

### **Monks disappear from Lhasa monasteries in buildup to anniversary**

In the weeks prior to March 10, a number of monks were removed from the major monasteries of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden, just as they had been last year after March 10 and before the Olympics. One report received by ICT indicated that a large number of Tibetan monks had “gone for study,” the term used to describe the status of more than 1000 monks who were held in custody from April 2008 until after the Olympics. At this time, many monks were taken by armed troops to Golmud in Qinghai by train and held in military facilities there.

A report from a journalist on an official press trip to Lhasa in February appeared to confirm the absence of monks at both Drepung monastery and the Jokhang Temple in central Lhasa. American NBC network correspondent Adrienne Mong reported: “Apart from [two monks], there were no others to interview. They made apologetic excuses when we asked about the whereabouts of the other 500-odd monks, saying they were scattered around the premises, resting or eating lunch. It had been the same two days earlier at the Jokhang in Lhasa, considered to be the most sacred Tibetan Buddhist temple. There, we spoke to a senior monk who reassured us that all 117 monks at the Jokhang were present. When we referred to recent reports that monks involved in last year’s incidents had been rounded up again in past weeks, he maintained none from the Jokhang had been detained. He also refused to allow us to see any of the monks.”<sup>10</sup>



A heavy presence of troops and armed police were evident in Lhasa on December 12, 2008, a Tibetan Buddhist festival day (Tsongkhapa's paranirvana butter lamp festival, the 25th day of 10 month in Tibetan calendar). An observer said: "The atmosphere was extremely tense. During the entire day from dawn to dusk, there was hardly any room to move with pilgrims circumbulating the Jokhang. The Barkhor square was full of armed Chinese troops in riot helmets, and security personnel were also visible taking photos and video from the rooftops. The PLA were also taking their positions in the outskirts of the city with convoy of APCs [armed personnel carriers]. I estimated 600 uniform police lined up in tight formation just on the Barkhor square in the front of Jokhang".

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## Praising the Party at a time of suppression

The ongoing crackdown since the protests in Tibet began a year ago has been characterized by a high level of disappearances as Tibetans are taken into custody, often in raids on their homes or monasteries in the middle of the night, intensifying the climate of fear and terror. In some cases their families do not know, even weeks or months later, whether they are alive or dead.

At the same time as Tibetans are being subjected to relentless intimidation, they are also being forced to celebrate and praise the Party. The regional government in the TAR has announced that March 28 will be declared as “Serf Emancipation Day” in order to “strengthen Tibetans’ patriotism and expose the Dalai clique.”<sup>11</sup>

March 28, 1959, marked the dissolution of the Dalai Lama’s government 50 years ago, and in association, the departure of the Dalai Lama from Tibet. At a time of heightened Tibetan sensitivity, and given the fact that Tibetans have risked their lives over the past year to demonstrate their loyalty to their exiled leader, the announcement of this holiday is provocative and increases the risk of unrest.

Karma (Chinese transliteration: Gama), Vice Chairman of the TAR People’s Congress Standing Committee, explained at a January 19, 2009 press conference that Premier Zhou Enlai signed the State Council decree on March 28, 1959 “declaring a disbandment” of the Tibetan government after “the reactionary clique at the upper levels of Tibet led by the Dalai launched an all-round armed rebellion on 10 March, 1959, aimed at splitting the motherland.”<sup>12</sup>

A Radio Free Asia (RFA) report cited a TAR official who asked not to be identified, acknowledging that Tibetans are unwilling to celebrate the anniversary. TAR prefectural and county officials have met to “ensure that all people mark the occasion with festivities,” according to the same RFA report.<sup>13</sup>

The well-known and respected Tibetan writer and poet Woesser, who is based in Beijing, commented on her blog: “[The colonist] has always been disdainful and scornful, in just the same way that an armed thief treats those he has robbed. However, the bandit sometimes has a guilty conscience, and is deeply concerned about what others think of him and tries everything he can to rationalize his looting.”<sup>14</sup>

China’s attempts to cover up its repression of Tibetans over the past year included virtually sealing off the Tibetan plateau from the outside world from March 14, 2008,

for several months, despite promising increasing openness in the buildup to the Beijing Olympics in August last year. While groups of mainly Chinese tourists were permitted to travel to the plateau again in June 2008, restrictions on tourism were tightened throughout the year and foreign tourists who visited reported a palpable sense of tension and despair as well as the presence of troops on the streets and snipers on rooftops.

In the buildup to the March 10 anniversary this year, the authorities have again closed some Tibetan areas to foreigners until the end of March, and a Foreign Ministry spokesperson has acknowledged that: "Since the March 14 incident, it's true that foreign journalists find it harder to go to Tibet. I think you all know the reasons. The government has taken some measures."<sup>15</sup>

A tourist visiting eastern Tibet in February reported that tourist groups were being turned back from Labrang monastery, site of one of the most significant protests last March. "Soldiers are stationed at the entrance," the eyewitness said. "The Chinese tour guide went to the control post, and was stopped at a distance of 15 meters from the control post to be told that the place was off-limits and warned to go back immediately."

Tibetans detained during the crackdown over the past year have been treated with extreme brutality, according to numerous reliable and eyewitness reports, some of which are included in this report. Some Tibetans are profoundly psychologically disturbed upon release, with others unable to walk or speak, or with broken or dislocated limbs. ICT has received information of some Tibetans who were beaten to death following protests. One Tibetan eyewitness, a former political prisoner, said that the beatings he witnessed in the streets of Lhasa after the March 14 riots were worse than torture he had experienced in prison: "The Chinese army were terrifying and it was painful to see them beating Tibetans and dragging them through the streets. They did not care if they were involved in the protest or not, they just did not want to see any Tibetans in the streets."

Despite the severity of the crackdown, there has been an unprecedented expression of views and feelings by Tibetan writers, artists and ordinary people via blogs, postings on websites and other means in recent months. Prior to Tibetan New Year (Losar) on February 25, there was an "extraordinary outpouring of emotion" by Tibetan bloggers about how to mark this important and symbolic Tibetan festival this year. A renewed sense of pride and solidarity among Tibetans across the plateau is evident in these views and Tibetans' continued determination to attempt to communicate with the

outside world. Woesser, who visited Lhasa in August 2008, says: “The national consciousness of Tibetans has never been so strong.” She said she found this feeling was noticeable even among farmers and ordinary people, who she said are more conscious of being Tibetan. “I never heard this expressed so strongly before this time,” she said.<sup>16</sup>

While demonstrators in the protests leading to the imposition of martial law in March 1989 were mainly monks and nuns – although many protests were joined by laypeople today – unrest since March 2008 has involved farmers, nomads, university students, school children, laborers, and intellectuals as well as monks and nuns, expressing a unified nationalistic sentiment and a wish for the Dalai Lama to return home. There have been many instances of laypeople trying to protect monks and nuns, and vice versa, from the excesses of the repression. When a group of Sera monks made a peaceful protest in Lhasa on March 10, 2008, local passersby formed a circle of protection around them in silence before security personnel closed in.



Drepung monks encounter armed police in the march to Lhasa on March 10, 2008, beginning a wave of protests that swept the plateau.

## **“Struck by the vapor of the poisonous snake”**

In the immediate aftermath of the protests on March 10, 2008, Drepung monastery was surrounded by armed troops, with some monks being taken into detention almost immediately. A Tibetan woman now in exile who was in Lhasa at the time told ICT: “[After the protests] work committees were sent to the monastery, but I heard that the monks rejected their demands and have instead told them that the protests were not instigated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as claimed by the authorities. The monks also objected to everything they did being labeled as political. Due to their defiance, aside from a few older monks, most monks were taken to Tsethang prison in Lhoka [Chinese: Shannan] prefecture. The locals who saw them taken onto the bus were crying.”<sup>17</sup>

In April 2008, hundreds of armed police raided Lhasa’s three main monasteries, Sera, Drepung and Ganden, already under lockdown and with a high security presence following the beginning of the protests in March. The raids took place in the early hours of the morning over several nights, and according to various reports, hundreds of monks were taken away from the monasteries.

According to one report, at least 600 monks were taken from Drepung at dawn on April 25, with black hoods over some of their heads. Many of them were taken to Golmud (Chinese: Ge’ermu) in Qinghai by train and held in a military prison. Tibetan teachers from Tibet University and the Tibetan Medicine Academy were reportedly also transferred to Qinghai to carry out ‘rule of law education’ classes. Monks from Sera and Drepung were also transferred to the camp. Many of the monks were originally from Qinghai, while others were from Tibetan areas of Sichuan province.

Three months later, monks from different parts of Qinghai were returned to their home towns by cadres and police, but first had to continue with their ‘rule of law education’ in installations surrounded by uniformed PAP and wait until the Olympics were over before they could return to their families. For example, 24 monks from Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) county were held under house arrest at the local Maba Nationality Middle School in Rebkong. However, according to the same report, monks from elsewhere in Tibet were not returned home until the end of August or even later by cadres and police from their home towns.

A Drepung monk held in custody at Golmud at this time composed the following song, based on a folk song popular in Amdo, eastern Tibet. The song was learnt by many monks being held in detention. The lyrics appeared on several blogs in Chinese and English, and are translated from the original Tibetan on the website [www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).

In her description of how the song was written and disseminated by monks in detention, the writer Woesser says, “During the monks’ time in detention, a 22-year-old monk called Jigme Phuntsog who had fallen ill and been seriously misdiagnosed by the military hospital deteriorated suddenly after 20 days and died without being treated. Another monk of around 30 years old simply couldn’t bear it any longer. He started banging his head against the wall and then jumped from the window when he was taken to hospital. He broke several bones and is deaf in one ear.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Vapor of the Poisonous Snake**

*The three seats of Sera, Drepung and Ganden,<sup>19</sup>  
Are struck by the vapor of the poisonous snake,  
Because of this sea of adverse circumstance,  
There’s no right to diligently study the scriptural texts.*

*O Triple Gem! Kindly guide and protect us!  
O Triple Gem! Come forth with speed.<sup>20</sup>*

*Since the chance for the Mandala of the trichiliocosmic Sun,<sup>21</sup>  
Shining through the windows of the prison cell,  
Is well-nigh impossible,  
The weary gloom of anguish has set in.*

*O Sun! Come forth with speed!  
O Sun! We cannot wait much longer!*

*My karmic destiny shaped in past lives,  
Has rendered this youth a victim of circumstance.  
In the Three Seats of learning of the U-Tsang region,  
There’s no freedom of movement.*

*O Karmic Destiny!  
Grant us good fortune!*

*Highlighting the well known state of affairs,  
We await freedom of movement!*

Written in May 2008 in Golmud Military Prison, Qinghai

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- <sup>1</sup> A reference to the three traditional Tibetan areas of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo.
  - <sup>2</sup> Report by a blogger posting on a Chinese language website. ICT report: <http://www.savetibet.org/mediacenter/inside-tibet-reports/emerging-news-armed-response-eve-clinton-visit-chinese-government-vowscrush-tibetan-d>
  - <sup>3</sup> The protestors – including monks, nuns, lay people from the town and nomads from the surrounding area – shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence, for the return of the Dalai Lama, and slogans urging people not to mark the traditional Tibetan New Year – Losar – as an act of mourning and remembrance for those killed, detained or missing after the March 2008 protests. See: “Fifteen Tibetans arrested in Lithang after a peaceful protest,” TCHRD, February 16, 2009; and “More cases of detention and disappearance emerge after Lithang Protest,” TCHRD, February 17, 2009, available at: [www.tchrd.org](http://www.tchrd.org).
  - <sup>4</sup> “Tibetans Report Kardze Shooting,” Radio Free Asia, January 30, 2009, available at: [www.rfa.org](http://www.rfa.org).
  - <sup>5</sup> “Meng Jianzhu: Learn from the experience of maintaining stability in the capital for the Olympics, welcome the 60th anniversary of the founding of the nation” (in Chinese), People’s Daily, January 6, 2009.
  - <sup>6</sup> See: “Authorities launch ‘Strike Hard’ campaign, heightening Lhasa tension,” ICT, January 27, 2009, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org) for a translation of an article in Lhasa’s official press describing the Strike Hard campaign.
  - <sup>7</sup> Lhasa Evening News report.
  - <sup>8</sup> “Police round up dozens in Tibet as New Year boycott looms,” February 3, 2009, The Times, available at: [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk).
  - <sup>9</sup> See: “NGO worker sentenced to life imprisonment: harsh sentences signal harder line on blocking news from Tibet,” ICT, December 22, 2009 for a report on the case of Wangdu, including the translation of an article in the official Chinese media reporting on the case, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>10</sup> “In Tibet, it’s just the facts, ma’am,” Adrienne Mong for MSNBC, February 12, 2009.
  - <sup>11</sup> “Tibet to propose setting of ‘Serfs Emancipation Day’,” Xinhua, January 16, 2009.
  - <sup>12</sup> “TAR Creates March 28 Holiday To Celebrate 1959 Dissolution of Dalai Lama’s Government,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), January 29, 2009.
  - <sup>13</sup> “Tibetans plan ‘subdued’ New Year,” RFA, January 16, 2009.
  - <sup>14</sup> “Why do we need to establish a ‘million Tibetan serfs emancipation memorial day?’” Woesser, January 29, 2009.
  - <sup>15</sup> Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu was quoted by the Associated Press in an article on February 12, 2009. The same article quoted an official at the tourism office of northwestern Gansu province’s Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, which is home to a major monastery and large Tibetan communities, saying that the region was again closed to foreigners and would not be open until late March. The official, who did not identify himself, as is common in China, did not say when the restrictions were put in place.
  - <sup>16</sup> “Chinese Oppression ‘Uniting Tibetans,’” Paul Mooney for The National, October 28, 2008.
  - <sup>17</sup> See: “Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China’s New Crackdown,” ICT, August 2008, p 61, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>18</sup> “Vapor of the Poisonous Snake,” February 3, 2009, an entry on Woesser’s blog in which she adds background information on a song circulating among monks held in detention.

- <sup>19</sup> A reference to the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden, in Lhasa, ancient centers of learning and Tibetan culture. 'U-Tsang' is the Tibetan name for the area of central Tibet that roughly equates to the Chinese-imposed Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).
- <sup>20</sup> 'The Triple Gem' refers to the three things in which Buddhists take refuge: the Buddha ('Awakened One'); the Dharma (the teachings) and the Sangha (community).
- <sup>21</sup> The following definition of Trichiliocosm (Tib. tong sum; Wyl. stong gsum) is given by the Buddhist organization Rigpa (<http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Trichiliocosm>). Following ancient Indian cosmology, the Buddhist Abhidharma literature explains that there is an infinite number of worlds. Each world has at its center a Mount Meru surrounded by seven oceans and seven rings of golden mountains separating them. Outside are the four continents and eight subcontinents (two out at sea, left and right of each of the continents). We humans live on the southern continent called "Jambudvīpa." This entire world is then surrounded by the outer iron mountains. One thousand of such worlds constitute a thousand fold world system. A thousand of these makes up a second-order thousand fold world system. Then, when multiplied a thousand times further, this makes a third-order world system or 'trichiliocosm', a universe of a billion worlds.



Protests near Labrang Tashikyil monastery in Kanlho TAP, Gansu, on March 14-15 2008, were the first major signal that protests were to spread across Tibet, apparently taking the PRC authorities by surprise.

## **"A RAGING STORM" - A YEAR OF DISSENT AND CRACKDOWN**

*"In a year that turned out like a raging storm, in which every activity, coming, staying and going, and when the mountains, rivers and forests and all that is alive therein came under an iron net, with gun barrels trained upon them, who has the stomach to risk their life in a show of brazen defiance? On the other hand, how could we remain cowed in fear like sheep?"*

– The Editors of Shar Dugri ('Eastern Snow Mountain' magazine), published in Amdo, Tibet, 2008

*"No peacetime Chinese government has been confronted by expressions of Tibetan discontent as widely dispersed and sustained since the Chinese Communist Party established the People's Republic of China in 1949."*

– Report by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China in Washington, DC.<sup>1</sup>

The cycle of protests that has transformed the political landscape in Tibet began with an orderly march to Lhasa by several hundred Drepung monks on March 10 last year. Monks at Drepung, one of the 'great three' Gelugpa university monasteries of Tibet, had long been frustrated by intense Patriotic Education campaigns at their monastery, implemented with particular vigor since some of them had attempted to celebrate the Dalai Lama being honored with the US Congressional Gold Medal in October 2007.

The monks were blocked at the main road by armed police, where many of them staged a sit-in protest. Some wept as they recited long-life prayers for the Dalai Lama. After a stand-off, dozens were arrested and the rest obliged to return to the monastery. Although on this occasion the police were clearly under orders to use restraint, this did not last long. Three further days of peaceful protest ensued in Lhasa, and then at around mid-day on March 14 2008, a confrontation between monks at the Ramoche temple near the Jokhang, local people and armed security forces erupted into a riot.

Rioters targeted official premises and vehicles and Chinese and Chinese Muslim-owned shops and businesses in the Tibetan quarter and adjacent areas on Beijing Road and North Lingkor Road, breaking down doors and windows, removing and burning merchandise, and setting cars on fire. There were also reports of mob attacks on ethnic Chinese civilians. By most accounts, it was not until early evening that security forces

closed in on the Tibetan quarter with armored personnel carriers, shooting and arresting those demonstrators who had not already fled.

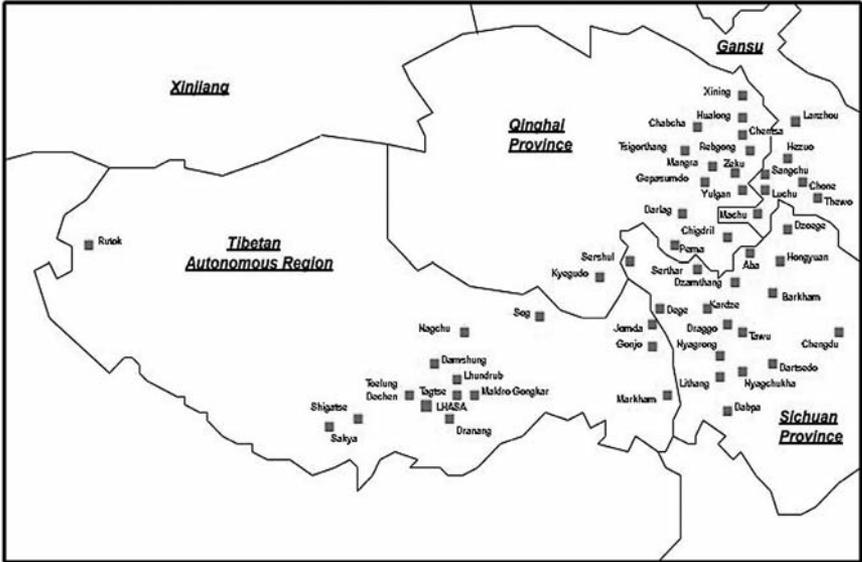
A participant in the rioting who has now escaped into exile told ICT: “Suddenly an army truck came at high speed from the west side of Jianguo road. Behind the truck there were a few tanks [armed personnel carriers], and they fired into the crowd and killed one man and two girls next to me. Me and a few other Tibetans managed to drag the man’s body to the side of the road and poured some water in his mouth, but he could not swallow water. He was bleeding a lot from his head and when we looked, there was a huge hole in the back of his head and it was impossible to live even a minute longer. He was in his late twenties, we did not know his name or where he lived. Two girls were also killed right there at the same time, both of them in their twenties and wearing trousers and jackets, like city girls [as opposed to traditional Tibetan women’s dress]. Me and many other Tibetans dragged their bodies from just in front of Lho Rigsum Gonpo and took their bodies into the Sharlho courtyard a few minutes away from Lho Rigsum Gonpo temple. There were another two dead bodies already there, and we left the three bodies there with the other two. We just left the bodies in the corner of Sharlho courtyard and didn’t even have time to find anything to cover them because army tanks were coming up the street.”

Tibetans in many other areas of the plateau chose to express their dissent on the significant 49th anniversary of the March 10 uprising, as well as those in Lhasa. Protests also took place on March 10 in Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) county in Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan TAP), a Tibetan area of Gansu province; in Mangra (Chinese: Guinan) county in Tsolho (Chinese: Hainan TAP), and Bayan (Chinese: Hualong Hui Autonomous County) in Tsoshar (Chinese: Haidong TAP) in Qinghai province; and in Dzoge (Chinese: Ruo’ergai) county in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba TAP) in Sichuan province. A key characteristic of the protests over the past year has been the geographical spread of dissent across the entire Tibetan plateau, with protests occurring in 52 counties across Tibet.<sup>2</sup>

ICT has monitored more than 130 protests in Tibet since March 10, 2008, and this is likely to be a conservative estimate – a minimal number of reliably reported incidents of dissent.<sup>3</sup> The overwhelming majority of the protests have been peaceful, with Tibetans taking considerable risk to express their dissent through non-violent means in a clear expression of support for their exiled leader’s stance, while the crackdown upon them in response has been brutal.

According to ICT’s information, only the riots in Lhasa on March 14, and protests in Machu (Chinese: Maqu) on March 16-17 escalated to serious violence against Chinese civilians, although there may be incidents that are not known yet. At least 15 other

### Map of Tibetan Protests



Map depicting the spread of protests across the Tibetan plateau from March 10, 2008. Squares on the map indicate counties or cities in Tibetan areas of the PRC where protests took place. Within a county there may have been numerous protests in different villages or monasteries. With thanks to Tashi D.Lek.

incidents included damage to government property such as police stations or police cars, or confrontations with police, with several of these also including damage to Chinese civilians' property, but not as far as ICT knows to Chinese civilians themselves.

Over the past 50 years, China has instituted increasingly hard-line policies that undermine Tibetan culture and religion; the Tibetan people have been denied freedom of expression; their language has been downgraded; and their economic resources have been appropriated by the Chinese state, with increasing numbers of Chinese migrants moving to the Tibetan plateau.<sup>4</sup> The Tibetan people had reached a breaking point. In risking their lives to make their feelings clear, from March 10, 2008 onwards, they propelled Tibet to the top of the international news agenda and forced the international community to view Tibet as a more serious issue than before, resolvable only through political means. Tibetans have risked their lives to convey the message that the Dalai Lama represents their interests, not the Chinese state.

## Deaths of Tibetans following the protests

*“Let us light butter-lamps in memory of the deceased”*

– Woesser, Tibetan writer, on her blog

*“Prayers for those dead people as well as those tortured who still live very painful lives and then some of them are being missing. So, we must pray for them.”*

– The Dalai Lama, February 7, 2009

A full accounting of Tibetans who died in protests since March 2008 is not yet possible due to the intense climate of fear in the region and China’s increasingly rigorous attempts to prevent news from the plateau reaching the outside world.

The March 14 protests and rioting resulted in the largest number of fatalities reported for a single incident, although the exact number of people who died is still not known. ICT has received eyewitness accounts of deaths after troops opened fire on the streets and also reports of Tibetans who died afterwards of their wounds, or of torture. News spread quickly among Tibetans of the risks of going to government hospitals for treatment after some Tibetans were detained on admission instead of receiving medical care.

Chinese officials have not acknowledged the killing or torture of Tibetans by security forces, although they have emphasized the deaths of Chinese civilians in Lhasa on March 14, and the destruction of government property by Tibetans in some incidents. On March 16, 2008, Commander of the People’s Armed Police Wu Shuangzhan was quoted by Reuters as saying: “I can honestly tell you that none of the means we have adopted [in Tibet] have exceeded the constitutional rights of the armed forces or international law [...] I can also very clearly assure you that not a single person has exceeded their mandate.”<sup>5</sup>

Various reports refer to hearing about, or seeing, at least 60–80 bodies of Tibetans apparently killed on or after March 14 being cremated. An unnamed Tibetan caller to RFA on March 15, 2008, gave the following account: “I am in the Lhasa area. There was shooting today. Many Tibetans who were dead and barely alive were collected at the TAR Security Office area, and I heard from a reliable source that there were 67 bodies. Some were alive and most were dead when they were brought in. [...] This included male and female, and I don’t have the details. Right now I can hear shooting. We saw many tanks [these are likely to be armored personnel carriers]. Sometimes they fire in the air to threaten the Tibetans. At some places, like the Karma Kunsang

area, they are firing right now.” The Tibetan government in exile reported that Chinese security forces cremated “around 83 corpses” believed to have been killed on or after March 14.<sup>6</sup>

In other areas of the TAR, and Tibetan areas outside the TAR, security forces fired on, killed or wounded unarmed Tibetan protestors, and there are numerous reports of Tibetans being tortured to death, or leaving prison barely alive.<sup>7</sup> Police fired on unarmed demonstrators in Phenpo Lhundrub (Chinese: Linzhi) in Lhasa Municipality in the TAR on March 10 or 15 (reports vary) and Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county in Ngaba TAP in Sichuan province on March 16. A 14-year-old boy was shot dead during a protest at Jomda (Chinese: Jiangda) county in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) prefecture in the TAR on April 8, 2008, according to the Tibetan exile newspaper, the Tibet Express. Security forces also fired upon protestors in Drango (Chinese: Luhuo) county in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi TAP) prefecture in Sichuan province on March 24, according to the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy, and also in Tawu (Chinese: Daofu) county in Kardze TAP on April 5, where police opened fire on people who had gathered to protest the detention of people detained in earlier protests. On April 3, 2008, troops fired upon protestors from Tongkor (Chinese: Donggu) monastery, 60 kilometers from Kardze town, killing at least 10 people. The protests were sparked by a raid on the monastery by police, the detention of a senior monk, and resentment over intensified Patriotic Education.

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<sup>1</sup> “CECC Annual Report,” CECC, October 2008, p. 183, available at: [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov).

<sup>2</sup> For a list of protest locations throughout Tibet from March 10 until late June, see “Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China’s New Crackdown,” ICT, August 2008, pp. 19–23, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).

<sup>3</sup> Tibet was traditionally comprised of three main regions: Amdo (north-eastern Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet) and U-Tsang (central and western Tibet). The Tibet Autonomous Region was established by the Chinese government in 1965 and covers the area of Tibet west of the Yangtse River (Tibetan: Drichu), including part of Kham. The rest of Amdo and Kham have been incorporated into Chinese provinces, and designated as Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and Tibetan Autonomous Counties. As a result, most of Qinghai and parts of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces are acknowledged by the Chinese authorities to be “Tibet autonomous”. The term “Tibet” is used to refer to all of these Tibetan areas of the PRC.

<sup>4</sup> See ICT’s report, “Tracking the Steel Dragon: How China’s Economic Policies and the Railway are Transforming Tibet”, available for free downloading as a pdf at <http://www.savetibet.org/documents/reports/tracking-steel-dragon>.

<sup>5</sup> “China military forces defend Tibet crackdown,” Reuters, March 16, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> “Update on Tibet,” Tibetan Government in Exile, May 1, 2008, available at: [www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net).

<sup>7</sup> For an account of the deaths of Tibetans following the protests, see ICT report “Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China’s New Crackdown,” August 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).



[tw.myblog.yahoo.com/tibet-girl314](http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/tibet-girl314)

After four days of peaceful protests, rioting broke out in Lhasa on March 14, 2008. This image was taken by an eyewitness, believed to be Chinese, and uploaded online. The Chinese authorities have sought to represent the unprecedented wave of protests across the Tibetan plateau as one violent riot, but the reality is that more than 130 overwhelmingly peaceful protests have occurred across Tibetan areas of the PRC since March 10, 2008.

## COVERING UP THE CRACKDOWN - BEIJING'S PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE

*“We do not like to use the word ‘crackdown’”*

– Chinese diplomat to member of ICT staff, in conversation on the fringes of the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva, February 2009

*“Firmly crush the savage aggression of the Dalai clique, defeat separatism, and wage people’s war to maintain stability.”*

– Editorial in the *Tibet Daily*, February 19, 2009

The Chinese government has sought to represent the unprecedented unrest across the Tibetan plateau over the past year as one ‘violent riot,’ referring solely to the events of March 14. For weeks after March 14, state-run television showed selective footage of monks apparently hurling rocks at police, protesters destroying shop fronts and plumes of black smoke from burned-out cars in Lhasa. A DVD of the ‘3/14’ incident was even produced and disseminated by Chinese embassies, including at the U.N. Universal Periodic Review in Geneva in February. State-run media focused on the deaths of 18 Chinese civilians and one policeman in the March 14 Lhasa riot,<sup>1</sup> while it sought to suppress the news of Tibetans who were shot dead or tortured to death during the subsequent crackdown.

Similarly, while the official media reported extensively on property damage caused by Tibetan rioters various areas from March 14–19 in Lhasa, Ngaba county, and Kanlho TAP in Gansu, they provided few details on the thousands of Tibetans they acknowledge detaining as a result of these incidents.

Following the outbreak of the protests last year, the Chinese leadership immediately blamed the Dalai Lama and the “Dalai clique” without acknowledging Tibetans’ genuine grievances with Chinese policies depriving Tibetans of rights and freedoms. A Chinese Party official even characterized the Dalai Lama as someone who is directly engaged “in the evil deeds of separating the motherland by means of beating, smashing, looting, and burning under the disguise of a lama and under the signboard of Buddhism.”<sup>2</sup>

The Party hardened policy towards the Dalai Lama following the protests last year, with a hard-line propaganda offensive that caused deep distress among Tibetans, using

increasingly extreme rhetoric. The official Party newspaper *Tibet Daily* stated: “Even the Lord Buddha will definitely not tolerate this honey-mouthed and dagger-hearted Dalai Lama, the scum of Buddhism, an insane ruffian and a beast in human shape!”<sup>3</sup>

A writer from the eastern Tibetan area of Amdo referred to this selective representation in an essay published in the collection the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ (Shar Dugri) – reproduced in this report – as follows: “On the evening of March 14 China’s CCTV news channels hastily announced to the world the outbreak of ‘beating, smashing, looting and burning’ by Tibetans in Lhasa, saying that it was an organized conspiracy by the Dalai Clique, and so on. Rather than presenting the people of the world with an even marginally honest account in accord with the actual situation, the top CCTV news channels tried to put as much blame as they could on ‘a few wicked troublemakers,’ making various allegations in an extremely bullying tone... The Tibetans, whose lifeblood has been constantly drained and whose life-force is struggling for breath after 50 years under the dictators, have now begun a spontaneous movement by reviving the nearly exhausted desire for democracy, freedom and equality. And when terrifying suffering, unimaginable and impossible to recount, came down once more on the black-headed Tibetans, the value of the lifeblood and life-force of those great people who gave their lives for the sake of happiness and truth became visible.”

At a time when media outlets globally are making serious cutbacks due to the economic downturn, Beijing is embarking upon a multi-billion dollar media expansion overseas, including the establishment of a 24-hour English language all-news channel modeled after CNN and the opening of more Xinhua offices across the world. Xinhua, the official news agency, describes its work as “conducted from start to finish under the direct leadership of the central Party authorities.”

The Chinese government refers to media work abroad as *wai xuan*, or “external propaganda.” Nicholas Becquelin of Human Rights Watch says: “In recent years China Central Television (CCTV) and even the *People’s Daily* look slicker, more contemporary and less political than in the past. But this has not changed the fundamental premise that all information on state-run channels must reflect the government’s views. For the Party, propaganda is not a degraded form of information – it is information.”<sup>4</sup>

China’s propaganda on Tibet can be contradictory, as evidenced by the new website to commemorate the PRC’s “50 years in Tibet.”<sup>5</sup> The concept of the website appears to counter the official position that Tibet has always been a part of China, and that Tibet is not a country but a region of the PRC. The website has a strapline in the style of a Buddhist paradox: “Changed & Unchanged” and includes updates on the situation intended to give an impression of normalcy in Tibet despite the current levels of political repression.

## Detention of Labrang Jigme

Senior monk Jigme Guri (or Gyatso), whose account of a period in detention following the March protests in his monastery, Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) was videoed and uploaded on Youtube, was seized by armed police on November 4 last year and is being held in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu province. There are fears for his welfare, particularly as he was beaten unconscious during a 42-day period of imprisonment from March 22 last year; he is pictured in hospital following torture.



Jigme Guri (also known under the honorifics 'Akhu' Jigme and Lama Jigme), deputy director of his monastery's 'Democratic Management Committee' and Director of Labrang's Vocational School, was taken from his monk's quarters at Labrang last Tuesday (November 4) by around 70 police and is now being held in Lanzhou, the provincial capital of Gansu province. It is Jigme Guri's third detention.

Labrang monk Jigme Guri gave an authoritative account of his earlier detention on a video in which he shows his face and gives his full identity. Jigme Guri had not taken part in the protests at Labrang on March 14 and 15, but the authorities suspected him of being a ring-leader. In a video account later posted onto Youtube, which is now subtitled in English, Jigme described how on March 22, while he was waiting on the street near his monastery for his shoes to be mended, he was dragged into a white van by four uniformed guards. He was taken to a guest-house run by local paramilitary police near Labrang, in Sangchu county, Kanlho prefecture, Gansu province. Jigme's account of his ordeal was broadcast on Voice of America after they obtained a copy of the video, and is available as an English transcript at: <http://www.highpeakspureearth.com/2008/09/voa-video-testimony-of-labrang-monk.html>.

Jigme's testimony included details on prison conditions for monks from Labrang monastery that protested in front of a delegation of foreign journalists on April 10, 2008: "Monks who spoke to some reporters were beaten with batons and had their legs broken; on some, they used electric batons on their heads and in their mouths - the electric baton affected their brains and some have become driven to a type of insanity."

After the video was released, Jigme went into hiding. It was only when he returned to Labrang that he was again detained from his monk's quarters on November 4, 2008. A source told the London Times: "We don't believe they gave any reason for his arrest. They came at lunchtime when most of the monks were in their rooms and there were fewer people around."

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- <sup>1</sup> See: "CECC Annual Report," CECC, October 31, 2008, p. 284, end note number 146, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
- <sup>2</sup> "Hao Peng: Patriotic Education should be reinforced among Buddhist monks at monasteries," China Tibet News, April 5, 2008, cited in "CECC Annual Report 2008," CECC, p. 278, endnote 20, available at: [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov).
- <sup>3</sup> "Dalai Lama, Wolf in Human Shape," China Tibet News, 21 March 2008, cited in "CECC Annual Report 2008," CECC, p. 276, endnote 23.
- <sup>4</sup> "China's New Propaganda Machine," Wall Street Journal, January 30, 2009
- <sup>5</sup> See: [http://english.chinatibetnews.com/SpecialCoverage/node\\_2714.htm](http://english.chinatibetnews.com/SpecialCoverage/node_2714.htm))



Tibetans arrested in connection with the protests that swept across the plateau since March 10, 2008 at a public sentencing rally in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, and broadcast on state-run television. The left side of the screen reads: "Hold high the banner of maintaining stability". The identity of the Tibetan prisoners is unknown, with the placards hanging around their necks illegible in this image. It is a scene reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution.

## FEAR AND BETRAYAL: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES OF INTERROGATION

*“They constantly tried to use various methods to make me betray others... Each interrogation session aroused a different kind of fear in me. One day in the middle of an interrogation, I thought instead of enduring this, it would be better to be killed by a single bullet.”*

Jamyang Kyi, a Tibetan writer, singer and broadcaster, was detained by the Public Security Bureau in Xining, capital of Qinghai, on April 1, 2008, and accused of sending text messages to friends. Jamyang Kyi, who is in her early forties and worked for 22 years as a news presenter and journalist at the Tibetan language section of Qinghai Provincial Television Station, is one of the best-known and most influential figures to be detained in the aftermath of the protests from March 2008. The website High Peaks Pure Earth reported: “Since the 1990s, Jamyang Kyi devoted more time to her true passion – music. She became a popular singer and produced a CD entitled Prayer and two VCDs, Distant Lover, Karma and her latest VCD, Fortunate Events. Even during her incarceration one of the interrogators confessed to liking her music.” Jamyang Kyi was released after payment of a large fine, and began to post accounts of her experience on her blog. The following powerful account of her experience under interrogation was translated from Tibetan by High Peaks Pure Earth.<sup>1</sup>

### “They” by Jamyang Kyi

They constantly tried to use various methods to make me betray others. During that time, one scene from *The Lives of Others* occurred to me from time to time.<sup>2</sup> The woman in the film, after endlessly suffering unimaginable degrees of intimidation and atrocity, loses herself and turns her back on her beloved man. When the man stares at her with a sense of disbelief, unable to bear her feelings, she runs onto the road in front of an oncoming vehicle. There, she ends her blooming beauty and precious life. Though it has been over two years since I saw the film, I cannot forget the depth of frustration in the man's stare and the aggrieved look on the woman's face. Today, these images from the film appear even more real in my mind.



My heart cracked like a dried out riverbank with feelings of sadness, hopelessness, frustration and anger. And I longed for the moisture of light rain. One evening when I was tied to that chair again, I heard the sound of religious songs of a melancholic nature. I realized that this was the first time I was hearing the sound of a living being. This was soothing medicine for my bleeding heart. Since then, I began paying attention to this prayer-tune and awaiting it with hope each day. At that mosque, the devout practitioner prayed 4 to 5 times every day. Normally that prayer-tune could have been perceived as being unpleasant but during those days, it became the best medicine to revive my spirit. For that, I'm deeply grateful to the mosque and practitioner.<sup>3</sup> If ever a day comes for me to get out, I swore to myself that I would pay a visit to the mosque. Even today, that wish hasn't disappeared from my heart.

In a magazine there is an oil painting of a landscape that I have looked at countless times. In the painting there is a lone cottage of European style that stands by the lake. That was the only home in the wide hilly grassland. It afforded me a sense of tranquility and peace. Imagining that house to be my own family home, I began to visualize my two daughters playing chase in the grassy meadow near the house; my husband cutting grass beside the lake and I myself, busily cooking dinner awaiting the return of the cattle. That, too, became a means to console and revive my shattered spirit.

One day, as soon as the protests first began, my husband said with a sigh, "Those who have died are already gone. But those who have been arrested are certain to be cast into the eighteen realms of hell and bound to suffer immeasurably." On the other hand, empathizing with those who had died and their bereaved and loved ones, I was deeply touched and moved to endless tears of sympathy. And at the time, I could not fully comprehend the implications of the incident in which three Tibetans had leapt to their death from the top of a house.

Each interrogation session aroused a different kind of fear in me. One day in the middle of an interrogation, I thought instead of enduring this, it would be better to be killed by a single bullet. My family and relatives would grieve but as for me, but I would have to suffer the pain only once. One day when I was in the washroom, out of nowhere, I found myself thinking about the means or methods of taking my own life. Those days I remembered the small knife that was confiscated at Zhihu Hotel. They hadn't seen another small knife that was in my handbag during the search. When the chief interrogator asked why I kept a small knife, I replied that it was for eating fruit. But on the other hand there is a small story about this small knife.

Ever since the Chinese-Tibetan conflict had flared up, and as a result of the government's deliberate propaganda, the Chinese would stare at Tibetans with hatred, whether it be

in a bus, the market place or on any public road. Once, when I was walking down the road with my daughter who was wearing the traditional chuba that my friend Walza Norzin Wangmo<sup>4</sup> had bought her as a gift, a Chinese kid of about six or seven years old came yelling in front of my daughter and stood blocking her way. This kind of Chinese attitude wasn't an isolated incident that we experienced but rather the common experience of other Tibetans too. So, for self-defence I had bought another small knife. Later, on reflection, I felt relief that I hadn't had the chance to get hold of those two knives. Otherwise, during an interrogation session, under unbearable torture, I frantically searched my pouch and then stared at the blue veins of my left wrist. Were I to get hold of the knife then, I would surely have cut the veins of my wrist.

During those days, Wang Lixiong's essay on the stages of suicide came to mind from time to time.<sup>5</sup> And it was a completely different feeling from when I had first read it. I realized for the first time how difficult and harsh it is to betray and deceive someone. I felt that I could understand him now that I could understand it myself.

During those days when I was thrown in front of the six gates of hell, the person I thought of most was my kind and dear mother. Although it has been nearly three years since she passed away, she is very much alive in my heart. What is comforting is the realization that my dear mother has already left me. Otherwise, if she were alive and to witness my incarceration in prison, I know she would go insane.

At the height of unbearable torture, usually I invoked the name of my mother and Goddess Tara for protection. One afternoon when I was tied to a stool, everyone left for lunch except for one female secret police officer. For many days, I had suppressed my tears of suffering silently. But at that moment of weakness, I could not bear it any longer and cried out "Mother, Mother." The longing for my mother grew more intense and the suffering worsened, and I sobbed. As I was sobbing with pain, all my limbs went numb. At that time the fat man came and said, "You're crying intentionally because you know I'm here." Pressing his finger to my forehead, he warned, "If you continue to wail, I will stop this interrogation."

Shouting in a loud voice, "Are you this stubborn because you think we are making a false accusations?" he left the room. Although it was not something that I was doing, being aware of his presence there, I still couldn't stop crying. At the time, the nerves in both my hands turned stiff and I could unclench my fist when I tried to force them open. A long time passed sobbing, with my entire body drenched in sweat...

- <sup>1</sup> See: [www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).
- <sup>2</sup> *The Lives of Others* (German: *Das Leben der Anderen*) is a 2006 German film, involving the monitoring of the cultural scene of East Berlin by agents of the Stasi, the GDR's secret police.
- <sup>3</sup> There is a large population of ethnic Chinese Hui Muslims in Xining, where Jamyang Kyi was being held.
- <sup>4</sup> Norzin Wangmu, a personal friend of Jamyang Kyi, was sentenced to five years imprisonment on November 3, 2008 on charges thought to relate to sending information abroad. Jamyang Kyi here uses a term 'Walza' meaning 'courageous' to describe her friend. Norzin Wangmo, who is also described by a Tibetan friend as 'Walza', meaning 'courageous', underwent torture following her detention in April. In a letter to her written upon receiving the news about her imprisonment, Jamyang Kyi wrote: "In your thirties, the prime of life, the critical juncture when your child needs educating, you and other heroes and heroines like you parted ways with your parents, split up with your spouses, and made orphans of your children for the sake of truth, and had to take the path alone. Five years is 1,825 days. It is 43,800 hours. To have to spend the best years of your life in a dark prison cell, what misery!"
- <sup>5</sup> Wang Lixiong is Woesser's husband and a prolific and controversial writer on a number of topics, including the plight of Tibetans and Uyghurs in the PRC.





Armed police seen cleaning their weapons in a monastery courtyard in Lithang, western Kardze, Sichuan, in August 2008. The officers were reportedly positioned in a prominent location behind a row of prayer wheels on a pilgrimage route around the monastery, where their presence would have been impossible for local Tibetans to miss. The overt nature of the soldier's actions may have been intended to intimidate local people, who would generally have carried out circumambulations (kora) around the monastery's precincts. Taiwanese-American tourist Wen-Yan King, who was detained shortly after taking this image and expelled from China, wrote in her account of her travels given to ICT: "Here in Lithang, fear and paranoia lingers in the air to a palpable degree. I've never seen so many police and military personnel in one town in my life. Nor have I experienced this kind of heart-pounding fear before." Tension is still high in the area following further protests in February and a continued strong military presence.

## THE ENEMY WITHIN? POLICING THOUGHT, CULTURE AND SPEECH IN TIBET

*“The main responsibility of the TAR Propaganda Bureau is to persuade and guide all Tibetans in the right political direction and to provide correct information to outsiders. Furthermore, to use state power to ensure that outsiders do not get access to state secrets, and to more effectively convince all Tibetans to accept the government’s authority unconditionally. ...Through effective and suitable programs, the media can turn all Tibetans against the Dalai Lama.”*

– TAR Party Secretary, Zhang Qingli, June 2, 2008

*“Terror still hangs like a black cloud over the heads of Tibetans. A week ago, the Deputy Director of Lhasa Municipality Public Security Bureau declared at a press conference the detention of 59 ‘rumor mongers’ who had “incited racist sentiment.” The so-called rumors referred to ‘illegally downloading reactionary songs from the Internet’... A journalist with the foreign media asked me ‘What kind of song is ‘reactionary’?’ For a moment, I really didn’t know how to answer. If I said that these ‘reactionary songs’ were songs of yearning and praise for the Dalai Lama, then surely this would sound ridiculous to a westerner who had never experienced such extreme repression.”*

– Woesser, January 1, 2009 blog posting

A few months after protests began in March 2008, the authorities began to convey warnings of penalties for “spreading rumors,” presaging the wave of detentions in Lhasa in December, 2008, and signaling a more systematic and hard-line approach to Beijing’s cover-up of the crackdown. The official press announced that a Public Security Bureau task force has been established specifically targeted at the fabrication and spread of rumors, with 108 People’s Armed Police personnel deployed in 14 units.<sup>1</sup>

On June 2, 2008, the official channel Xizang TV (XZTV) reported that five Tibetans had been arrested by the Public Security Bureau in Lhasa for “spreading rumors,” an offence described as “a major cause of instability in the current situation.” The report did not give the names or identities of the suspects, but said that they would be “punished according to law in the coming days.” The report added that the government would act on the problem immediately by launching a campaign against rumor-mongering.

The term 'rumors' is typically used to refer to dissenting views and sentiment in the PRC or simply sharing information. On this occasion, the warnings about rumors were likely to refer to symbolic acts of resistance among the Tibetan community such as refusing to re-open shops or visit temples as usual, as required by the authorities in their attempt to enforce the appearance of normalcy after the suppression of the March uprising. Last year too, it was linked to the Party's concern to ensure the Olympic torch relay through Tibet went smoothly. The authorities were also seeking to prevent unrest as a result of officially organized mourning for victims of the Sichuan earthquake last May, and resentment because no mourning was allowed for those killed in the uprising.

This year, the 'rumor-mongering' charge has reportedly been used to detain people in Lhasa suspected of joining or merely sympathizing with the popular movement not to celebrate Tibetan New Year in 2009 as a mark of respect for those killed in the 2008 protests and in protest against the suppression of the uprising. This has not been acknowledged in the official media so far.

Hand-made posters were pasted on walls in different parts of Tibet urging people not to celebrate Losar this year. One text message received in Chinese by ICT read: "To mourn those Tibetans who died in 2008, those many heroes who gave their lives, to show sympathy for all Tibetans, we should have no New Year and join hands to show our solidarity." According to a report in *The Times* in the UK, one poster read: "One thousand people have been arrested, 1000 people have disappeared. We others, Tibetans who are living safely, if you have a good heart please do these two things. Do not sing, dance or play and do not set off fireworks. These two actions only. Let us remember the dead and pray for the living."<sup>2</sup> The same article quoted a source as saying: "Lhasa hasn't been this tense since the arrests in March and April last year," adding that "The atmosphere in the streets is almost as frightening."

The TAR Propaganda Bureau in Lhasa announced a second wave of 'propaganda work' against 'separatist activity' in the region on June 2, 2008. The first phase had been carried out from March 14, the day the protests in Lhasa turned violent, until May 31, according to XZTV. Zhang Qingli, TAR Party chief, who led the meeting, said: "This is the time to draw conclusions from what we have learned from the '3.14' incident and from the first phase of suppression of the disturbances. We have to encourage every level of TAR Propaganda Bureau to do their duty. The main responsibility of the TAR Propaganda Bureau is to persuade and guide all Tibetans in the right political direction and to provide correct information to outsiders. Furthermore, [it is the TAR Propaganda Bureau's responsibility] to use state power to ensure that outsiders do not get access to state secrets, and to more effectively convince all Tibetans to accept the

government's authority unconditionally. Everyone in TAR Propaganda Bureau must be fully aware of the importance of state confidentiality and its value. The state media is a key tool in terms of rebuilding Lhasa security and has the power of absolute control of information."

Zhang Qingli concluded by saying: "Through effective and suitable programs, the media can turn all Tibetans against the Dalai Lama."

TAR Propaganda Bureau Chief Cai Yuying made it clear that it was not only an offence to spread 'rumors' but also to listen to what people say: "Without any hesitation, we must prevent rumor-mongering and stop people listening to rumors." (XZTV, June 2, 2008).

The next day, XZTV reported that a meeting to launch a crackdown on 'rumor-mongering' in the city had been attended by more than 80 representatives from the neighborhood committees under Lhasa Municipality and officials from the city Public Security Bureau. They were issued documents for public dissemination requiring city residents not to spread or listen to rumors, which were described as undermining "social stability" in the city in the current situation.

At the end of the year, Deputy Director of the Lhasa Municipal Public Security Bureau, Xin Yuanming, announced that since March 14, "Some elements harboring perverse tendencies, under the influence and at the instigation of the Dalai clique forces' conspiracy, have been endangering the security of the state and the people by fabricating rumors and contradictions between nationalities." (December 23, 2008). He went onto say: "The manufacture and spread of rumors has seriously harmed the image of the Party and government, and seriously harmed the people's sense of security."<sup>3</sup>

### **Targeting subversive 'cultural products'**

On November 3, 2008, XZTV reported the existence of a new region-wide campaign again on the theme of people talking about events called "Smash mischievous rumors and correct wrong views." As became clear from a parallel report on the official [www.chinatibetnews.com](http://www.chinatibetnews.com) website, this is an adaptation of a current nationwide campaign against pornography with a link to the 'anti-rumors' drive. The primary target is 'cultural products' with 'reactionary' ideological content, which are described as a form of 'separatist infiltration,' but the report indicates that personal views and telephone conversations also fall within the purview of the campaign.

TAR Party secretary Zhang Qingli appeared to acknowledge the monitoring of phone

calls as an important element of this campaign when he said at the same meeting that there was a need to focus “on people’s political stand, to investigate telephone communication, and to investigate and control markets, we must firmly crack down on published materials containing the weeds of political separatist thinking, and other forms of reactionary propaganda materials as a whole.”

A Tibetan female cadre in her thirties, Norzin Wangmo (Chinese name: Longzhen Wangmu), was sentenced last year to five years in prison for passing on news over the phone and internet about the situation in Tibet to the outside world. Norzin Wangmo, from Ngaba Trochu county of Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan province, was convicted on November 3.<sup>4</sup>

Possession of literature and audiovisual materials directly associated with the Dalai Lama and the exile community has been treated as a criminal offence for the last decade or more in the TAR, so the ‘cultural goods market’ targeted by this campaign is a reference to items such as music videos containing implicitly nationalist messages and themes, Tibetan language blogs and other publications which push the narrow limits of permissible expression.



**Norzin Wangmo, serving five years in prison for speaking on the phone or internet about the situation in Tibet.**

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Many of these ‘cultural products’ come from eastern Tibet, especially Qinghai province, where political mores have been slightly more relaxed and cultural life more vibrant than in the TAR. Recent examples of the policing of ‘cultural goods’ in Lhasa include the banning of a VCD of a concert held in Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) county in Qinghai province, and featuring the famous Khampa singers Yadong and Kunga, and the banning of a sentimental exile pop song dedicated to Jetsun Pema, the Dalai Lama’s sister, and head of the Tibetan Children’s Village in Dharamsala. There are recent reports that popular traditional Tibetan dance halls are obliged to submit regular lists of songs to the police for approval, and singers are no longer allowed to address the audience as ‘Tibetan brothers and sisters’ since this is considered ‘subversive’ of the ‘unity of nationalities’.



Lobsang Kirti, 27, from Kirti monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, was detained on January 15 at a printing house in Ngaba county. It is believed that the local authorities accused him of printing and distributing leaflets opposing Monlam and Losar celebrations this year in memory of those who have died or been detained since demonstrations swept across Tibet beginning last March. Lobsang Kirti is a student at the Buddhist Dialectics Institute for Youth at Kirti monastery, where he has previously published newspaper and magazine articles. He is also an editor for *Khangtse Metok*, a magazine published annually by the monastery.

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Under present circumstances, any expression of Tibetan identity not sanctioned by the state is liable to be branded ‘reactionary’ or ‘splittist’ under present circumstances, and any comment on current affairs is liable to be treated as ‘rumor-mongering.’

At the meeting on November 3, organized by the national level working group on “Smash mischievous rumors and correct wrong views”,<sup>5</sup> Director of the TAR Propaganda Bureau Cai Yuying made it clear that the focus was to undermine the Dalai Lama’s influence: “Unlike other provinces, the focus of the campaign in our region is the struggle against infiltration by the Dalai clique in the ideological sphere, by eliminating and cracking down on nationality cultural products with the nature of politically separatist reactionary views which mislead the public and incite the separation of nationalities, and developing effective ways of guaranteeing long-term ideological security at the same time as the cultural market flourishes.”

On December 23, 2008, Deputy Director of the Lhasa Public Security Bureau Xin Yuanming said that ‘a few criminals’ had downloaded reactionary songs from the Internet, copied them on various electronic media and sold them within the region for ‘illicit’ profits, thus “obstructing and destroying political stability in Lhasa city.”

## The Very Last Note from Tsawa Danyuk

The following note by a Tibetan called Tsawa Danyuk was posted on the blog of Tibetan writer and singer Jamyang Kyi on January 2. Tsawa Danyuk's identity is not revealed by Jamyang Kyi; it appears that he has either died, gone missing, or fled Tibet. According to the website High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)), which prepared the following translation, it is apparent from the note that Tsawa Danyuk had been accused of unknown crimes relating to something he wrote or said.

*By a tormented soul*

*Because of a few words I had said three years ago, I had to leave my beloved parents, teachers and friends. I even had to depart the land, where my umbilical cord is buried and be tossed away like sacrificial cake (gtor ma) from my native land.*

*Now I endure pain and suffering beyond worldly imagination inflicted by an army equipped with modern technology. What do I have to sacrifice? Where do I escape? Am I not allowed to remain on this earth? What crime have I committed? I begin to think that even the gods are not being fair. I cannot comprehend! I am confused! I am laughing!*

Note: The above short note was written by Tsawa Danyuk on April 29, 2008

## "What are 'reactionary' songs?"

Woeser is an unusually prominent and outspoken Tibetan writer and poet based in Beijing who has come to be regarded as one of the most authoritative and respected voices on Tibet. This analysis of how to define a reactionary song appeared on her blog in Chinese and was translated by the blog High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)). An excerpt of the posting is included below.

Which songs are included in the list of 'reactionary songs'? I cannot even count them. When I think this over, it seems that there are quite a lot of 'reactionary songs' we have either listened to or know how to sing. For example, in 1987 the song about Tibetan compatriots was rather popular. Its lyrics are as follows: "We Tibetan compatriots are ones who are of the same descent. Tibetans from Amdo, U-tsang and Kham and Tibetans of the five religious schools. Let's unite together, we go back to Tibet together. Tibetan compatriots from Amdo, U-tsang and Kham, let's unite together. Though the religious schools are different, yet the goal is the same. Let's

unite together, and let's go back to Tibet together..." It is said when Tibetans who were arrested during the riots at that time were paraded through streets in trucks, Tibetan men and women defiantly sung this song with spirit, holding their heads high. In 1989 the lyrics of another popular song are "Lhasa was not sold, and India was not bought. It is not that the Dalai Lama, the Wish Fulfilling Jewel, does not have a home, there is his dharma throne in the high Potala Palace..." It is said that at a gathering of the TAR Academy of Social Sciences, Tibetan cadres were drunk and were singing this song, choking back their sobs. At the beginning of the 1990s, the popular song was Chorten Karpo, whose lyrics are "no matter when the sky is filled with dark clouds, your pure white figure illuminates the devoted hearts..."; what was popular at the end of 1990s was "Younger Brother with Deep Feeling," the lyrics are "who dispelled your sheep flock, and left you to guard the last home..." I heard the popular song last year was "Sadness" (which is also translated as "Moved"): "In Amdo and Kham the Lama's teachings spread continuously. I who lie alone can not listen to your teachings. I am sad because I cannot see my Lama. Oh, my Lama, how sad I am for not being able to see you..."<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the special collection of songs entitled "Return of the Tsangpo",<sup>7</sup> produced by Tibetans in Amdo and Kham, were labeled as 'reactionary songs' and were seized and destroyed. The song writer and composer were arrested because of this and some of them are still in prison. Dolma Kyi,<sup>8</sup> a Golok Tibetan, was arrested at the end of March in 2008 because she herself sang songs longing for the Dalai Lama in the Nangma singing hall and had allowed other singers to sing such songs. Lhundrup, another singer who was arrested together with Dolma Kyi, sang the following lyrics on the record he produced: "The sun and the moon are not here any more, our hope has gone afar. Is this the karma of we Tibetans?" The 'sun' and the 'moon' are concealed analogies for the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. Apart from the song entitled "Going back to Tibet" in 1987, the rest of them were songs written in Tibet.

## **Intensification of Patriotic Education sparks further dissent**

Following the suppression of the March protests by the security forces, the state responded with an intensification of compulsory 'Patriotic Education' as a means of imposing political order in Tibetan areas. The campaign launched in mid-April 2008 under the title "Oppose Separatism, Maintain Stability, Promote Development" was conducted on three main fronts: in the monasteries, where Patriotic Education has been conducted more or less continuously in most Tibetan areas since the mid 1990s; in government offices, schools and work units; and among the general public,

particularly in areas where protest was widespread. It was supposed to be carried out for two months, and the main themes were denunciation of the Dalai Lama and his 'reactionary clique,' education in the evils of the 'old society' and the benefits of socialism, and education in 'Scientific Development.' The extension of this campaign to ordinary citizens is remarkable in that they have been exempt, at least from demands that they denounce the Dalai Lama and present their political opinions to official scrutiny, since the introduction of post-Maoist reforms in the early 1980s.

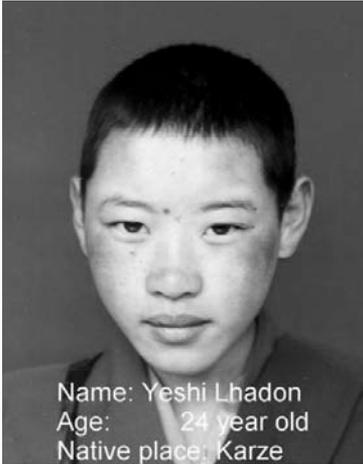
## **Patriotic Education in monasteries and nunneries**

Monasteries and nunneries are regarded by the Party as being at the frontline of the anti-splittist struggle, but the confrontation over re-education and denunciation of the Dalai Lama following the March uprising was unprecedented. In over a dozen reported instances monastic communities directly refused to participate, or even allow the work teams to enter their monasteries, resulting in serious clashes and large numbers of arrests.



Sangye Lhamo, a 26 year old nun from Serchuteng township, Kardze county, was detained on May 28 along with two other nuns from Dragkar nunnery in Kardze, Tsewang Kando, 38, also from Serchuteng township, and Yeshi Lhadon, 24, from Tsozhi village, Kardze county. According to sources now in exile, the three were detained following a peaceful demonstration in the town market square where they distributed leaflets. The three nuns were last known to be held in Kardze town, although they may now have been transferred. The recent intensification of restrictions on religious expression, and the requirement to denounce the Dalai

Lama, have compounded frustration in the region and appear to have increased the likelihood of Tibetans taking risks to express their discontent. A relative of Sangye Lhamo's in exile told ICT: "[She] is both very strong and also incredibly gentle, and we are deeply concerned about her. The nunneries in Kardze are places of joy and strength of character, and now I am so afraid for them."



Yeshe Lhadon, 24, a nun at Dragkar nunnery in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) county, Kardze TAP, Sichuan province, was detained together with Sangye Lhamo and Tsewang Kando, 38, following a peaceful demonstration in Kardze's town market square where they distributed leaflets. Her whereabouts is currently unknown.

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This happened at monasteries and nunneries across the plateau, including: Shiwa Gonpa in Nyarong (Chinese: Xinlong) county Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi TAP) in Sichuan on March 29; in Woenpo Gon in Sershul (Chinese: Shiqu) county in Kardze on March 31; in Gyelmo Gon in Tsoe (Chinese: Hezuo) county in Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan TAP) in Gansu province from March 21 onwards; in Tongkor Gon in Kardze county, Kardze in Sichuan on April 3; in Wara Gon in Jomda (Chinese: Jiangda) county in Chamdo (Chinese: Changdu) prefecture in the TAR on April 3; in Drepung monastery in Lhasa in the TAR on April 11; in Woesser Gon in Markham (Chinese: Mangkang) county in Chamdo in the TAR on April 14; in Sibda Gon in Jomda county in Chamdo in the TAR on April 15; in Dza Gonsar in Derge (Chinese: Dege) county in Chamdo in the TAR on April 28; and in several monasteries in the Drakok region of Tawu (Chinese: Daofu) and Nyakchuka (Chinese: Yajiang) counties in Kardze on May 5, and in Khenpa Lungpa Gon in Markham county in Chamdo May 12.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most notable acts of dissent was the refusal by senior religious figures in Kardze prefecture to cooperate with the campaign, as reportedly occurred at a prefecture level meeting in the prefectural capital Dartsedo (Chinese: Kangding) on April 12, 2008. The official response to this extraordinary show of defiance can be seen from the June 28 disciplinary measures for religious institutions in Kardze, which called for closing down uncooperative monasteries and subjecting monastic officials considered lax in prosecuting the re-education campaign to Maoist-style 'struggle' or public humiliation.

These sweeping new measures to purge monasteries of monks and restrict religious practice in the wake of protests across the plateau revealed a systematic attack on

Tibetan Buddhism that is reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution. The new regulations, which apply to hundreds of monasteries in the area, strike at the heart of Tibetan religious identity at a time of unprecedented tension on the plateau and are creating deeper resentment among Tibetans.<sup>10</sup>

More generally, the state responded by putting monasteries under military blockade, and detaining or otherwise intimidating monks and nuns considered to be organizers or instigators of protest. Monastery schools and institutes of higher studies have mostly been closed down, regardless of whether they participated directly in the uprising.

The Tibetan official Ragdi (Chinese transliteration: Raidi), one of a generation of Tibetan leaders who served in the TAR in the 1950s and who is now based in Beijing and known for his loyalty to the Party, recommended in a meeting last year that officials “study the example of the ‘old Tibet’ cadres’ spirit [a reference to Chinese cadres who worked in Tibet in the 1950s] and be ready to take risks and to abandon personal benefit in the battle of defeating the splittists.” In the same speech, given on an official tour of Drepung monastery in Lhasa on September 11, 2008, Ragdi said that the Patriotic Education campaign “Is also a very important political strategy of the central government, which has learnt from historical experience in Tibet and in the current political situation. The re-education campaign is not only for the monasteries; it is also a priority at all levels of Tibetan society. The work-teams in the monasteries have a most difficult and problematic job in this critical stage under the current political situation. However, all members of the work- team must follow and be respectful towards the Party and its leaders’ political direction under any circumstances. The battle of fighting splittism still remains serious and the situation is still intense.”<sup>11</sup>

Implementation of state religious policy has been particularly harsh in Tibet because of the close link between religion and Tibetan identity. Tibetan Buddhism continues to be an integral element of Tibetan identity and Tibetan nationalism, and is therefore perceived as a potential threat to the authority of the state and “unity” of the People’s Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Party, which promotes atheism, requires its citizens to “love the country,” in other words, to respect the authority of the Party, above all other would-be competing loyalties. Political allegiance is an official prerequisite for registration at monastic institutions and to be considered by the state as a “religious person.” This is an inversion of the priorities of a Buddhist practitioner, whose focus would naturally be to their spiritual path and religion first; and one of the reasons for the frustration of the Drepung monks who took to the streets on March 10 last year.

In the same meeting at Drepung, Ragdi also referred to these priorities, saying that work teams must: “Make sure that all monks are patriots, that they obey laws and regulations, and that they respect their religious vows and do good things for the people and society. By contributing to social stability, they will enable Tibetan Buddhism to flourish in a socialist system.”

The authorities state that Patriotic Education has been carried out at a ‘deeper’ level since the March protests. An official report on the campaign at monasteries in Lhodrag (Chinese: Luozha) county in Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) prefecture in the TAR stated that instructions had been given to all monks to reinforce four points as follows: “To implement the instructions of the Party organization and its leaders, to put cadres into action, to implement good use of time and to implement the Party’s political message.”<sup>12</sup> The same report says that the work teams carrying out the re-education are permanently based in various monasteries, and that: “During the campaign, Lhodrag county has organized monks and nuns to study the meaning of the Party and government documents [party leaders’ speeches and so on] and constitution, criminal law and basic rules and regulations. The monks and nuns understand clearly the reactionary nature of the Dalai clique after they have been taught the facts of the 14/3 Lhasa riot and the Dalai clique’s deliberately deceptive role in religious terms and misleading position in political terms.”

## **Losing one’s soul: Patriotic Education for government employees**

*“To become distanced from the masses is like cutting the root of a tree, and if leaders and officials forget that, it is like losing their own soul”*

– Zhang Qingli, addressing a conference in Lhasa, reported by *Tibet Daily*, August 28, 2008

The need for ‘reliable’ grass-roots cadres and the charge that officials ‘losing touch’ with the masses and failing to make the benefits of socialism tangible for them had contributed to the outbreak of protest, have been discernible themes in the official media since March 2008. This appears to be a reiteration of the longstanding distrust of Tibetan officials by the Party, and the threat of replacing them with more Chinese personnel at township and village level, although this is rarely stated directly in public.

One recent example was a short report on reeducation in Chushul (Chinese: Qushui) county in Lhasa Municipality in the *Tibet Daily* on October 24, 2008, which mentioned training Chinese cadres in the Tibetan language.

It has been reported widely that even the most low-level government work units were being put through almost daily political meetings after March, including demands for individual denunciations of the Dalai Lama and separatism. The demand that government workers at all levels withdraw their children from exile schools was reinforced in all Tibetan areas,<sup>13</sup> and the reinforcement of political reeducation in schools is mentioned as a priority in official statements.

Some of the most obvious examples of more demanding loyalty tests for Tibetan cadres came from Kanlho prefecture in Gansu and Ngaba prefecture in Sichuan, which were in the forefront of the uprising last year. The following announcement appeared on the Ngaba prefecture government website on April 18, 2008:

“Ngaba prefecture personnel department has issued a notice concerning all newly appointed officials in the legal and executive sections, valid from 2008 onwards:

Those involved in conduct destructive of the unity of nationalities, like ‘Tibet Independence’, those who support it or give any assistance, those who indulge in illegal activity such as beating, smashing, looting and burning, or support it, those who give sanctuary or free reign to perpetrators of various illegal activities, those who spread lies and falsifications destructive of social stability, and those involved in illegal activities like demonstrations and meetings destructive of the unity of nationalities are not eligible to sit examinations for government service. Those sitting exams must produce a written guarantee from their school and Public Security bureau that they have no involvement with such activities.”

Officials in Machu (Chinese: Maqu) county in Kanlho in Gansu province were directly threatened with dismissal if they failed to cooperate fully with the suppression of the uprising at an emergency meeting in the county on March 18, according to a Tibetan source. These tensions were illustrated by an incident in Tsoe (Chinese: Hezuo), the prefectural capital, on October 11, 2008, when a group of local Tibetan officials were arrested after clashing with armed police who had been in control of the town since the March protests. The Washington DC-based Radio Free Asia reported that the conflict occurred after a group of around 20 young Tibetans gathered for dinner, to be confronted as they left the restaurant by a group of police and soldiers. “The Tibetans argued with the police and soldiers and declared that they would not be intimidated as other Tibetans in the area had been,” the source said.<sup>14</sup>

## Under the Patronage of the Party: Patriotic Education among laypeople

*“I have been asked to write down my opinions about the riots and to write a condemnation of the Dalai Lama. Many other businessmen have been told to do the same. Of course you cannot write down whatever you want.”*

– Resident Chikdril county, Golok Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province, speaking to RFA’s Mandarin service, March 30, 2008

The TAR Party Secretary Zhang Qingli has emphasized the importance of Patriotic Education in the lay community, including among children. At a meeting on “political thought education work” in the school curriculum, he said: “Making thought education in anti-splittism, unity of the motherland and defending the unity of



This image from the state media shows children at Kardze County’s Sidatong Township Central Elementary School on April 16, 2008, being “coached by PAP officers and men on how to enjoy the national flag.” The text in Chinese reads: “A certain unit of PAP stationed in Kardze county, Kardze prefecture in Sichuan province take advantage of a break in training to carry out such good deeds in Tibetan areas such as delivering medicines, mending roads and mending buildings. They also gave Patriotic Education classes to the students.”

nationalities actually [must] become the way of thinking of the broad masses of young people and schoolchildren, we must strive to cultivate constructors (of a new society) equal to the standards of Socialist (construction).” (*Tibet Daily*, November 11, 2008).

ICT has received accounts of punitive re-education campaigns in protest-affected areas across the plateau, including in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), Dzoerge (Ruo'ergai) and Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) counties in Sichuan and in Lhundrup (Chinese: Linzhou) and Medro Gongkar (Chinese: Mozhu Gongka) counties in Lhasa Municipality in the TAR, in which ordinary people were obliged to sign statements of opposition to the Dalai Lama and separatism.<sup>15</sup>

County governments in all Tibetan areas appear to have been given quotas for conducting reeducation in socialist ideology and law, the evils of the old society and the benefits of socialism and 'Scientific Development' at township and village level public meetings, which are ongoing.

A two-month Patriotic Education campaign launched in Sangri (Chinese: Zangri) county in Lhoka (Chinese: Shannan) prefecture in the – TAR for government employees, peasants, retired government employees and party members across all townships under the county was typical. According to the *Tibet Daily*, the Zangri County People's Armed Police (PAP) and security forces were told that it was the right time to struggle and protest against 'splittist' forces, while heads of townships and PAP under those townships were 'educated' about securing stability and further improving state security. In various educational institutions, students were indoctrinated with communist ideology and taught how Tibet has flourished under Party rule, and the 'old and backward' Tibetan society was denounced by showing films from the period of the Cultural Revolution. Peasants, nomads and private entrepreneurs were lectured about the economic development achieved and the happy life enjoyed by the Tibetans under the patronage and policy of the Party. For monastic institutes, monks and nuns under this campaign are 'educated' to be patriotic, to love one's religion, oppose 'splittist' forces, help maintain social stability and social legal institutes, and to restore religious order (*Tibet Daily*, April 18, 2008).<sup>6</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> *Tibet Daily*, December 26, 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> “Police round up dozens in Tibet as New Year boycott looms,” *The Times*, February 3, 2009, available at: [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk).
- <sup>3</sup> *Tibet Daily*, December 26, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> See: “Disappearances continue across Tibet: Tibetan woman sentenced for talking on telephone,” ICT, November 17, 2008.
- <sup>5</sup> The meeting was also coordinated by the TAR organizing committee of the “Smash mischievous rumors and correct wrong views.”
- <sup>6</sup> A reference to the Dalai Lama.
- <sup>7</sup> The Yarlung Tsangpo river, one of the major rivers of Asia, has its source in Tibet and flows into the Brahmaputra.
- <sup>8</sup> Dolma Kyi has been released, but remains vulnerable, like all Tibetans released from custody in the current climate.
- <sup>9</sup> Full details given in ICT’s report “Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China’s New Crackdown,” August 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
- <sup>10</sup> A full English translation of the measures is included in ICT’s report: “New Measures Reveal Government Plan to Purge Monasteries and Restrict Buddhist Practice,” ICT, July 30, 2008, available at [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
- <sup>11</sup> XZTV report on TAR government delegation tour of Drepung, September 11, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> *Tibet Daily*, September 9, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> See: “Tibetan children due to face forced confessions, punishment for studying in India,” ICT, 22 September, 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
- <sup>14</sup> “Tibetan Government Workers in Clash,” RFA, October 20, 2008, available at: [www.rfa.org](http://www.rfa.org).
- <sup>15</sup> See: “Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China’s New Crackdown,” ICT, August 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
- <sup>16</sup> See also: “China launches renewed Patriotic Education Campaign across all sections in Tibet,” TCHRD, April 24, 2008, available at: [www.tchrd.org](http://www.tchrd.org).



Tongkor (Chinese: Donggu) monastery 60 kilometers from Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) town, a Tibetan area of western Sichuan (Kham). A police raid on Tongkor in April, 2008, led to peaceful protestors being shot dead by security personnel.

## A RAID ON TONGKOR MONASTERY LEADS TO DISSENT AND DEATHS

*“They took His Holiness’ photo from the wall and smashed it on the floor. They kicked it and broke the glass and frame.”*

A young Tibetan monk who is now in exile gave ICT a rare and comprehensive eyewitness account of a protest following a police raid and detention of a senior monk on April 3, 2008, at Tongkor (Chinese: Donggu) monastery, an ancient and important religious center in Tongkor township, Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) county, Sichuan.

“Monks at Tongkor monastery did not take any action in March when unrest broke out in Lhasa and other Tibetan areas. However, the county’s cadres and police came to the monastery many times to check what monks were doing and they had a meeting with members of the Democratic Management Committee (DMC).<sup>1</sup> The cadres told the DMC that there would be a Patriotic Education campaign soon in the monastery against the ‘Dalai clique’ and that DMC members had to lead the campaign and tell the monks to participate.

On April 3, we were going to have prayers in the evening as usual but the day began in an unusual way. It was about 4:30 am; there was a lot of noise in monastery. The noise woke me up. I looked outside from my room to find out what was going on there. I could see the monastery was surrounded by hundreds of Chinese soldiers and a Tibetan interpreter was saying with a loud voice: ‘If any monks come out from their room they will get killed. All monks must remain where they are and do not lock your doors from the inside as the army will be searching every room.’ It was still dark outside. I had a few photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and I hid them, but I could not find a place to hide the biggest photo which was framed and hanging on the wall. It was about 5:00 am, the army arrived in my courtyard, and I heard the Tibetan interpreter shouting ‘Open the door!’

I was terrified. I heard soldiers kicking the door next to me. I opened the door and five soldiers came in. They pointed a gun at me while I was sitting on the bed and told me not to move. They started to search my room, they knocked all my books and religious texts on floor and trod on them. They took His Holiness’ photo from the wall and smashed it on the floor. They kicked it and broke the glass and frame. One soldier put the photo in his bag and took it with him. The Tibetan interpreter told me to stay quietly in my room. I could still hear a lot of noise and some monks were calling for help.

The search finished at about 2:30 pm. Later I learnt that 98 army trucks came to the monastery. During the search, soldiers had gone to all the temples, the prayer hall, and monks' rooms, door by door, to search for weapons and any political objects such as DVDs and VCDs and His Holiness' photos. They searched monks' mobile phones and their friends' numbers in them. Some monks had land-line phones but the army cut off all the telephone lines in the monastery. Many monks' mobile phones and money was confiscated and some monks were beaten up. The Chinese army also took money from temples because they took the temples' keys from the temple caretaker. They arrested Tsultrim Tenzin, a 70-year old monk because soldiers found an old Tibetan homemade gun in his room. The gun was actually not in use at all because it was hundreds of years old and it was just for displaying in the Gonkang (chapel of protective deities) normally. [Chinese state media has repeatedly alleged that caches of weapons have been hidden in various monasteries, in a clear attempt to portray all Tibetans as plotting to engage in violent protest. As this monk's testimony makes clear, these items are generally kept as ancient traditional offerings to the protector deities, symbolizing the overcoming of obstacles and negative emotions. Also, hunters and other gun owners sometimes hand their weapons into the monastery as an act of renunciation with a pledge not to use them anymore.]

After the Chinese army left, all the monks gathered together at prayer hell for prayers. Everybody was very shocked by what happened. We realized that Tsultrim Tenzin was missing and many others monks had been beaten. [A senior monk whose name has been withheld] came to see us. He said: "I have been told by Chinese cadres to [speak] against His Holiness the Dalai Lama four times in the last few weeks but I told them clearly that I will choose to kill myself instead of say anything against His Holiness. I have nothing to say to you about whether you should do the same, you have to make your own decision." Then many monks were crying and started shouting "Release Tsultrim Tenzin," and "We need more freedom!" and "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama!" and "Free Tibet!" Then we decided to protest in front of the township building. We marched from the monastery to the township because there is a government office there with county cadres and a Public Security Bureau office there.

There were about 70 monks in Tongkor monastery and all of them joined in. Between the monastery and the building we had to pass through other villages. Many local people decided to march with the monks. There were hundreds of people from around 20 villages. The army and township [shang] police were taking a lot of photos of protesters and said: "If anyone comes closer to the township building, we will shoot them". Some Tibetans knew that there was a very important Chinese cadre from Kardze prefecture in this building and Tsultrim Tenzin was also being held in the police station in the same building. At around 8:00 pm after about three hours it was

getting dark and we went closer to the building while shouting slogans. Then suddenly hundreds of soldiers came out from behind the building towards us. We were just shouting slogans, no one was throwing stones or even holding a knife. We were just simply doing a peaceful demonstration. Then I heard repeated gunfire and Tibetans started to run away. Some people behind me said it was fireworks. But I saw the army were shooting into the crowd. The moment was absolutely chaotic. In a few minutes, some Tibetans were shot dead and many more injured. I saw some people were lying on the ground and some of were being carried by their friends. The army arrested everyone who was left behind or could not run away.

I went to the monastery with a group of monks. There were many monks missing, we did know whether they have been killed or arrested. We were so worried about them because other monks also have seen many people were been shot but we could not go to near the township to find them. The Chinese army did not sleep all night and searching all the villages in the township and making many more arrests. Soldiers came again to the monastery at night, and so many of us fled to caves in the hills.

Later I heard that a 23-year-old woman called Tseyang Kyi, from Zda-Ngan village in Tongkor Shang, was shot dead by a single bullet in the head. A 45-year-old man, Gelek, was also shot in the head. Gelek was with his nephew at the protest. Gelek's nephew carried him on his back and tried to take his body home with other Tibetans' help, but he had to abandon the body because the soldiers were chasing him and shooting all the time.

Fifty-three-year old Tsering Thondrup from Kasum village in Tongkor and 48-year-old Therlho have been missing since April 3. Their families and relatives have not received any messages from the government about what happened to them. But local Tibetans believe that both of them were killed by the army at night and their bodies disposed of.<sup>2</sup> Seven monks from Tongkor monastery have been missing since April 3. No one knows where they are and what happened to them.”

### **Armed police ‘maintaining social stability’ in climate of fear**

An anonymous Tibetan blogger posted the following comment on a Chinese-language, Tibetan-run website on January 25, 2009:

*“The 2009 Losar [Tibetan New Year] was always going to be unusual because so many people have been killed. In our family, our father can never come back, our mother has visibly aged, uncles and brothers have been detained – some of whom we still don’t know whether they’re dead or alive. Last night, the eldest brother in the neighbor’s family was*

*taken away. There's a guy from a village nearby who used to roam all over the place doing business who was locked up for a few months and recently released. But his body is so fragile now that he has to stay in bed with his wife and children looking after him. When you go out, although the police on the streets aren't as evident as they were a few months ago, there are still a lot. There are armed PAP [People's Armed Police] guys on the roofs 'maintaining social stability.' Leaders on television are going round paying their respects and urging people to have a good year... I myself will not be celebrating the New Year because those who died were my compatriots, and I knew several of those who died – they were shot dead. I haven't dared call home since March of last year because I don't want to cause them any trouble. And so I don't know how they are. I've had no information on them, and just hope they're okay."*

## **Death of a Tibetan demonstrator**

Despite the severe restrictions and dangers of communicating to the outside world, Tibetans still take the risk of breaking the silence. Sometimes it can take months for information about a Tibetan who was killed or imprisoned to reach the outside world. ICT received the following note in Tibetan from a source in exile in February, 2009, about the death of a young Tibetan man in March, 2008, and the detention of another Tibetan wounded during the protests.

"I would like to report that Ati, aged 26 from the hilltop of Ya-gyal Ngoshul, Ngaba county in Amdo, lost his life under the Chinese bullets during the demonstrations in Tibet on 16th March 2008. The living condition of his family is very poor as the female members of his family run their family. And the family was hit hard by his death.

"Another happening I have to report is that on the same day of the demonstrations, Gonpo Namko, son of Tshodu family of Nga-toe Ngoshul, Ngaba, Amdo was immediately rushed to hospital in Barkham after he sustained a shot by Chinese military on his abdomen. But at the hospital instead of giving him the necessary medical treatment, all his helpers were arrested and imprisoned for several weeks. Gonpo Namko was tortured gravely and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment."

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<sup>1</sup> An official body appointed to manage the monastery.

<sup>2</sup> Details of detainees following the Tongkor protest are included in ICT's prisoner list, a separate attachment to this report, and available for downloading at [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org) or by contacting [press@savetibet.org](mailto:press@savetibet.org).





Soldier and monk in Machu (Chinese: Maqu), Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province. Since protests broke out in Machu on March 16 and 17 last year the military presence in the area has been stepped up and hundreds arrested.

## POLITICAL PRISONERS IN TIBET TODAY

*“The resulting surge in the number of Tibetan political prisoners may prove to be the largest increase in such prisoners that has occurred under China’s current Constitution and Criminal Law.”*

– Congressional-Executive Commission on China annual report 2008  
(www.cecc.gov)

*“Because of this oppression, I wouldn’t be able to close my eyes even if I were dying.”*

– Comment by an unnamed Tibetan on the Tibetan writer and singer  
Jamyang Kyi’s blog<sup>1</sup>

*“Not only was there March, April and May with wanted notices being broadcast every night; not only was there June, July and August with armed police patrolling the streets; and not only was there September, October and November when cameras were installed everywhere; there was also last night in Tibet, where friends are telling me that every night you can hear dogs suddenly start barking incessantly and you can’t help being terrified, terrified that your door will be kicked down by state security, terrified that you’ll be locked away in the night for some unknown crime, terrified that your loved ones or you yourself will disappear like vapor... I have heard this told to me again and again in a whisper, and it saddens me so deeply.”*

– Woesser, January 1, 2009 blog post

Since March 10, 2008, the Chinese authorities have resorted to harsher measures in their attempts to subdue and silence the Tibetan people. A list of names and details of more than 600 Tibetans detained in the past year, many now serving long prison terms, is included with this report, although the actual number of Tibetans still in detention is undoubtedly far higher. Details of all Tibetans detained since March 2008 are not known as a result of the stringent measures to prevent information leaving Tibet and the climate of fear in Tibet.<sup>2</sup>

As the wave of protests swept across the Tibetan plateau from March 10 last year, thousands of Tibetans were detained and treated with extreme brutality in custody. Two official reports on April 9, 2008, and June 21, 2008, reported the release of a total of 3,027 of the 4,434 people who had reportedly “surrendered” or were detained. Based

on these reports, the status of more than 1,200 people who had surrendered or been detained therefore remains unknown.<sup>3</sup>

From March 10, 2008, onwards, thousands of Tibetans across the plateau were detained first in connection with the wave of protests and sometimes rioting, and also as Tibetans then responded to the aggressive implementation of intensified Patriotic Education campaigns as well in protest at the detention of their friends and family.

A report in the state media in July last year stated that courts had not yet sentenced anyone to death in connection with alleged rioting, but that 116 people were 'on trial' and Chinese law would determine whether some of the people tried would be sentenced to execution.<sup>4</sup> Legal process information has been provided for only a few dozen cases that have reached trial in the Lhasa area in the state media.



Seventeen year old Chonga Dolma from Thamay Sarshul village in Kardze joined the demonstration in Kardze town in March. According to a Tibet source, she was beaten by security personnel, lost consciousness, and was detained. Her current whereabouts is unknown by her family.

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Chinese official information generally characterizes all protestors as 'rioters.' The only official acknowledgement of arrests resulting from peaceful protests appeared in the official Tibet Daily towards the end of March, which reported 13 arrests stemming from a crowd yelling "reactionary slogans and [holding] a self-made banner of snow mountain lions [a reference to the banned Tibetan flag] to gather a crowd and stir up trouble." This was a reference to the peaceful protest of Sera monks outside the Jokhang temple in Lhasa on March 10.

A key characteristic of the crackdown has been the unprecedented level of disappearances. Tibetans are still being taken from their homes or monasteries, frequently in the middle of the night. This has happened on a mass scale across the

plateau since March 14, 2008. It is continuing today, in contravention to notification procedures required under China's Criminal Procedure Law. In the weeks prior to the March anniversaries, ICT has received numerous reports detailing detentions of Tibetans across the plateau.

In Lhasa, one year on from the initial protests, some Tibetans still sleep in their clothes, fearful of being taken from their beds in the middle of the night. Many Tibetans have been taken to prisons far from their homes, and their families often have no idea whether they are alive or dead. Often when Tibetans locate their relatives in detention, they are not allowed to visit, nor are they informed of whether the prisoners have been charged and sentenced.

Many Tibetans who have disappeared since March 2008 were not involved in protests at all. Artists, writers, and pop singers, whose reflections on Tibetan identity and culture often inspire others, have been singled out, and so have senior Buddhist lamas who have influential roles in the local community, like Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche, one of the senior Kardze lamas and head of Pangri nunnery, on May 18.<sup>5</sup>



Phurbu Rinpoche, an incarnate lama of Trehor Kardze monastery and head of Pangri nunnery was detained on May 18 or 19, 2008. His current whereabouts and welfare are currently unknown. Phurbu Rinpoche is a deeply respected local figure known for his work in the community, including the building of a center for elderly people, and two clinics.

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Large numbers of troops were deployed across the Tibetan plateau as soon as the protests broke out; military analysts have reported that the Chinese authorities' handling of the Lhasa riots was very similar to the way they dealt with the 1989 demonstrations in Tiananmen Square.<sup>6</sup> This was followed by mass detentions and disappearances, and torture of those in custody. A number of the detainees have then been released after days or weeks, some suffering severe trauma, or broken limbs, or worse, with a core of detainees remaining to face charges or longer periods in prison.

A Tibetan source from Lhasa who is now in exile told ICT: “Tibetans are being displaced to prisons far from home – in many cases, their families have had no idea where they are, nor whether they are still alive. For many of us, it is a chilling pattern. It reminds us of being in the 1950s or the Cultural Revolution, when Tibetans were transported to the gulags of Qinghai.”<sup>7</sup>

After March 10, 2008, the new Qinghai-Tibet railway, the centerpiece of China’s ambitious strategic and economic objectives in Tibet, was used for a grim new purpose. Troops were observed herding hundreds of monks and laypeople onto the new train in Lhasa for transport to prisons in Qinghai. Other eyewitnesses observed prisoners disembarking at Xining, the capital of the province. One Tibetan source told ICT: “Every prisoner seemed to be hurt badly and some had blood on their faces. Most were not wearing shoes. There was an old lady in the group with heavy shackles on her feet, and no shoes. She was being beaten by police.”<sup>8</sup>

The new Lhasa railway station was also used as a holding facility for prisoners post March 2008. A Chinese visitor to Lhasa wrote on February 5, 2009, on a blog that she had wanted to go to the station to have a photo taken, but that the area was surrounded by People’s Armed Police: “We wanted to go in front of the station to take some pictures but we hadn’t realized that because of the March 14 incident, the entire station is under the control of the army, and there are fully armed PAP everywhere who absolutely do not allow pictures.”

### **Concerns for welfare of two Tibetan teenagers thought to be in custody**

The whereabouts of two 15-year old Tibetans is unknown after they were picked up by security police after protests in their area, and there is concern for their safety. Fifteen year old Tashi Wangyal (pictured) from Thamay village in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) was reportedly detained after the demonstration in Kardze town on March 18, 2008. It is not known if he participated in the demonstration; according to a report from a Tibetan source prior to the demonstration he had visited the monastery for prayers. A friend of Tashi Wangyal, Dhamtsik Gyaltzen, is believed to have been sentenced to two years.

Dorje Yudron, a 15-year old nun from Chukha Nang, also in Kardze (pictured), was detained in May or June 2008 and her current whereabouts is unknown. A report from one Tibetan source indicated that there were initially fears for her death after troops opened fire at the March 18 demonstration in Kardze. The same source said:



“[After the demonstration] officials from the village went to each house warning the people that in the case of any demonstration, they will not hesitate to shoot. Although the village was surrounded by the military, Dorje Yudron shouted some slogans, and [it is thought] the military shot her with a hunting gun. For a while the villagers thought she was killed, but it seems she was not, the military took her.”

### **Prisons and detention facilities**

Despite the Chinese government’s attempts to block information on Tibetan prisoners, details are now reaching ICT of where many Tibetans are being held in custody since March 2008.

Many Tibetans detained in the eastern Tibetan area of Kham, including Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi TAP) in Sichuan province, have been taken to prisons in or outside the provincial capital of Chengdu. According to sources from Kardze, 44 Tibetan nuns who are being held in a prison near Chengdu are “forced to work on the manufacturing of match boxes and all sorts of small children’s toys.” A Tibetan source said: “It seems that whoever finishes the quota assigned to them first is allowed to make a five-minute phone call as a reward. All the nuns are forced to grow their hair long. The family members of those who were not given an open and fair trial went to the police station to inquire after them and were told that they were kept in a prison somewhere near Chengdu.”

It is not known whether any Tibetan protestors were among the victims of the partial destruction of Maowun (Chinese: Maoxian) Prison in Wenchuan in Ngaba during the earthquake in May 2008. The official Chinese press reported that in other prisons in the area, prisoners and staff were killed in the earthquake.<sup>9</sup> While it could not be confirmed whether Tibetans imprisoned following the protests in Ngaba were among the victims, Tibetan protestors are understood to have been imprisoned in the area, including in detention facilities at Wenchuan, Maoxian and Dujiangyan – all of which are close to the epicenter of the earthquake.

In Lhasa, Chushur (Chinese: Qushui) Prison has been the main detention facility for political and other prisoners since mid-2005.



Chushur Prison is visible from the main road leading to Shigatse, 120 km southwest of Lhasa. Signs posted at the entrance read 'Seek truth from facts' (left) and 'Progress with the times' (right).

Chushur prison is in a rural area south-west of Lhasa and although there has been a detention facility there since the 1960s, it was not known to foreign observers until the end of 2005. Since the protests broke out in March, political prisoners at Chushur have been singled out for particularly harsh treatment, according to a report from a Tibetan source. When unrest occurs, political detainees and former political prisoners often come under suspicion and are singled out for reprisals. It is not known whether any prisoners sentenced after involvement in the March protests in Lhasa are serving their sentences in Chushur, although it is likely.

Conditions at the high security facility at Chushur are known to be more stringent for political prisoners even than TAR Prison in the western suburbs of Lhasa, known as Drapchi, where most political prisoners were held before their transfer to Chushur in 2005.

A political prisoner who is familiar with the new prison told ICT: “On the outside the prison looks very modern and many of the facilities are new. But inside it is very tough and hard for prisoners, even compared to Drapchi prison.” A second former political prisoner at Chushur told ICT that the “interrogation and torture all the political prisoners receive is definitely worse than in Drapchi.” Commenting on security measures, the former prisoner, interviewed in exile in India, said: “In every political prisoner’s cell there are two criminal prisoners, one Chinese and one Tibetan, to watch what the political prisoners are doing and talking about. Every week those two criminal prisoners would attend a meeting with the prison authorities and would report what they saw and heard in the cell... Sometimes they would even report our dreams, as we might have said something relating to a political event.”

Because of the sheer number of detentions since March 2008, other detention facilities have been used to accommodate prisoners, particularly in Lhasa. A military camp known as Pating has a particularly bad reputation as a ‘black’ jail, where torture and intimidation is especially severe.

A Tibetan woman who was an eyewitness to events in March 2008, and who spoke to others who witnessed the protests and rioting, told ICT: “I have heard that all major prisons in Lhasa area – Gutsa [Detention Center], Sangyib, Nyithang, Tsalgunthang, and Toelung – were filled to maximum capacity, so other detained Tibetans were kept in the garage of the military station (Chinese: Jun Chu) on South Lingkor road in Lhasa. Detainees were subjected to harsh beating and their major body joints – hands and legs – were [often] dislocated as soon as they were brought into custody. Then they were forced into kneeling position for days, as blood dripped from their body. They were questioned everyday [from] the first day [onwards]. During the interrogation, they were forced to kneel and lower their heads. Beatings, including stomping on their entire body, and electrocution by electric prods. [Sometimes] when detainees fell unconscious, they were woken up by coldwater being splashed upon them. Furthermore, detainees were beaten with sacks over their head. [...] Detainees, regardless of whether they have committed any crime or not, were treated in such brutal and inhumane ways. Those who have been charged were in for a more brutal torture, including inserting bamboo through their nails and fingers tied tight and beaten.

“Detainees were fed one small and dry steamed bun [Tibetan: Tingmo] and a small mug of water once a day. The lack of sufficient food to eat and water to drink forced them to drink their own urine, even though some were urinating blood [after this treatment]. I heard these accounts from a few people who have been released. They say they were not fed and were beaten severely. They were ordered not to tell anybody anything or face arrest. Those released were fined 2000 yuan (US \$293).”<sup>10</sup>

## **Imprisonment of a master printer in his eighties: Paljor Norbu**

Eighty-one year old Paljor Norbu, pictured, who ran a family printing business in Lhasa, was tried in secret in November and sentenced to seven years in prison. Norbu, whose Chinese name is Panjue Nuobu, was taken by the police from his home in Lhasa on October 31, 2008, possibly on suspicion that he had printed "prohibited material," including the banned Tibetan flag. During his detention, judicial authorities refused to inform his relatives that he was being detained, or to reveal the charges against him. His current whereabouts are unknown. Paljor Norbu is a renowned master printer, and his family printing business in the Barkhor had printed and published Buddhist texts for monasteries for some generations. He used both modern and traditional woodblock printing techniques in his workshop, which employed several dozen workers. In addition to religious texts, the shop printed prayer flags, folk reproductions, books, leaflets, and traditional literature. The business has now been shut down by the Public Security Bureau, which also took many of the wooden printing blocks. This indicates that he is not accused of involvement in any protests from March 10 onwards in Lhasa, but possibly in providing publications.



Paljor Norbu is known to be a “very modest, quiet person”. He is widely considered as an elder by other printers in Lhasa, and so widely respected. According to High Peaks Pure Earth, before 1959, he traveled to various important monasteries such as Tashilhunpo, seat of the Panchen Lama, and Narthang in order to supervise printing of Buddhist texts. In Narthang, he supervised the printing of one set of the 224-volumes of the famous Narthang Tengyur (Snar thang Bstan 'gyur), an order from the Fifth Jamyang Shepa

(1916-1947), the famous head of Labrang Monastery and book collector. It took him ten trips from Lhasa to Narthang to supervise the process.<sup>11</sup>

Human Rights Watch reported that Norbu was not granted even the minimal rights that are supposed to be provided under Chinese criminal procedures. Violations included the failure to notify his family of his formal arrest or of the trial date; the refusal to reveal where he was detained; the failure to allow him defense representation of his choice in court; the failure to communicate the full verdict of the trial; and, the refusal to inform the family of his current whereabouts and of where he will serve his prison term.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published and translated by High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)).

<sup>2</sup> The list is available for downloading and will be updated regularly at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org). To request copies contact [press@savetibet.org](mailto:press@savetibet.org).

<sup>3</sup> For a full analysis of official figures on the numbers of people detained in the wake of the protests in Tibet, see: "Officials Report Release of More Than 3,000 of the More Than 4,400 Detained Tibetan 'Rioters,'" CECC, July 9, 2008, available at: [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov).

<sup>4</sup> "No Death Penalty Handed Down So Far Over Lhasa Violence," Xinhua, 11 July, 2008, cited in "CECC Annual Report 2008," CECC, October 31, 2008, p. 285, endnote 167, available at: [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov).

<sup>5</sup> Tibetans in the Kardze TAP (the Tibetan area of Kham) are known for their strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism. Kardze, one of 18 counties in the prefecture, has been the site of more known political detentions of Tibetans by Chinese authorities than any other county outside the TAR since the current period of Tibetan political activism began in 1987, based on data available in the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) Political Prisoner Database ([cecc.gov](http://cecc.gov))

<sup>6</sup> "Analysis: controlling Tibet - part I," Andrei Chung, Kanwa Defense Review Monthly in UPI, July 2, 2008, available at: [www.upi.com](http://www.upi.com).

<sup>7</sup> Qinghai used to be known as 'China's Siberia', due to the large number of labor camps in the province.

<sup>8</sup> See: "Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown," ICT, August 2008, [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).

<sup>9</sup> "Sichuan prison system puts full effort into organizing earthquake disaster relief" (in Chinese), Legal Daily, May 14, 2008, available at: [www.sina.com.cn](http://www.sina.com.cn).

<sup>10</sup> For a full account by this witness, see ICT report, "Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown," ICT, August 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.highpeakspureearth.com/2008/12/paljor-norbu-81-sentenced-to-7-years.html>

<sup>12</sup> Human Rights Watch report, December 5, 2008, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/12/05/china-free-prominent-tibetan-cultural-figure>.



Armed police stationed at an intersection in central Lhasa in December 2008. Eyewitnesses report there are officers stationed at all intersections in the city, and snipers positioned on rooftops. Photo: Ryan Gauvin.

## **"A SKETCH OF HISTORY WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD OF A GENERATION"**

### **BANNED WRITINGS FROM AMDO**

*"Whoever tries to cover up the loss of the precious lives of our people, lay and monastic, men and women, it cannot be hidden from history"*

– by 'Nyen' (the 'Wild One'), in the 'Eastern Snow Mountain'

*"[This magazine] has come into your hands out of a determination to vindicate the many who succumbed to the tribulations of 2008."*

– 'The case for lifeblood and life-force' by Garmi, 'the blacksmith', in the 'Eastern Snow Mountain'

This collection of writings is the only known material in Tibetan on the 2008 protests to have been published in the PRC. The magazine was quickly banned, but not before copies had circulated in areas of Qinghai and Gansu provinces and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

In the afterword of the first English translations of excerpts of the magazine that are published below, the publishers say that they knew the risks of publishing such outspoken criticism of the Chinese authorities' handling and representations of the protests, but felt they had no choice but to do so. "The magazine staff and associates did not commit to the foolishness of smashing this egg against a rock and knowingly leaping into an abyss out of rashness or for the sake of reputation. We did so out of the pain of separation from the tens of thousands of souls caught up in this deplorable violence, and the tormenting thirst for freedom, democracy and equality for those who should have them but do not."

The writings give personal and deeply moving accounts of loss and bereavement in the crackdown following the protests, including the story of a man beaten to death, two young monks who were driven to suicide, and the chilling consequences of a student protest in Sichuan on March 17, 2008 (A Spontaneous Diary, by Torlung, Sichuan), written just a few days later.

An introduction to the essays explains that local businesspeople helped to fund the writers' work so that they could undertake some "meaningful cultural activity for

this extraordinary year.” The writers, from the Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) area of Sichuan province, say in their introduction, “This was also the attitude of people in general to 2008. If even most ordinary traders were taking such an interest in the cultural affairs of the Tibetan people and the critical situation in 2008, intellectuals could not remain silent.”

The magazine is a forum for a group of Tibetan intellectuals associated with the Northwest Minorities University in Lanzhou, known for their progressive and secularist views. Contributions to this 2008 edition appear to be mostly taken from a conference held in Lanzhou on Tibetan futures in a time of crisis, which was the cultural event sponsored by the local businesspeople. The first half of the issue includes papers from the conference, while the essays about the protests were added later.

All of the essays were originally written in the Amdo dialect of Tibetan, which is renowned in Tibet for its lyricism and eloquent turns of phrase. In this collection, the poetic language is matched by the substance and analytical nature of the prose, grounded in an understanding of the political framework of Chinese policies and law as well as knowledge about both Chinese and Tibetan culture. The ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ writers frequently frame their arguments with compassionate insights into the sufferings of ordinary Chinese people and their own struggles against the state.

Although the writers are largely anonymous in this collection, many of them are likely to be educated in Chinese as well as in the Tibetan language, and representative of a new generation of bilingual and bicultural Tibetans. Unlike the older generation of Tibetan elites, young intellectuals did not experience the trauma of Tibet’s takeover by China or the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. They were brought up in a Chinese-ruled Tibet, with many educated in Chinese cities from middle school onward, and are aware of both the political struggle being waged and of something of a renaissance of Tibetan cultural identity.

A sense of urgency and a need for political change infuses many of the essays by these writers, who are all from the Tibetan area of Amdo. A common theme is the solidarity of Tibetans across the plateau and a pride in their unique cultural and religious identity. In nearly every aspect of social, political, and economic life, the various Tibetan autonomous areas of the PRC share far more in common with each other than with the Chinese provinces to which they have been assigned.

***“These avid sellers of their own souls”***

One of the strongest themes of the collection is anger against Tibetan officials, lamas and other public figures for betraying their people and misleading the central government. One writer refers to comments from some Tibetan leaders and scholars praising the government for its strong actions following the protests: “How deplorable are the ‘correct words and correct views’ of today’s high lamas, senior leaders and great scholars, yes-men eager for personal gain, power and reputation? ...Those who defile our image can be considered guilty of historic crimes... The scholar (who is named in the article) said: ‘It was really excellent that measures were taken immediately to bring the situation under control (on March 14).’ Do you actually know what ‘measures were taken’ immediately? Do you mean coming in with tanks and guns, or do you mean that surrounding and shooting into crowds of civilians with guns was ‘excellent’?...Getting into ‘an inexpressible rage’ because a few shops got burned down while shrugging off the intimidation of masses of your fellow countrymen by armed forces, is that the reaction of a great mind? These betrayers of those who stand for the common cause, ready to hang their own mother out to dry, these avid sellers of their own souls who value nothing higher than their own positions, has the time not come to unmask these opportunists?”

Some of the writers challenge the very basis of the Chinese authorities’ system in Tibet, saying that the policies themselves are flawed and lead to inherent discrimination against Tibetans. Several use Marxist terminology and ideas to attack the Party itself as ‘reactionary’ as opposed to the Tibetans it depicts in this way. The writer Garmi says: “...Have the dictators ever heard of Lenin’s statement that ‘Anyone who does not support or respect the equality of the nationalities and languages, who does not oppose the oppression of nationalities and fight against inequality is not a Marxist, and can not even be considered a Socialist?’ Aren’t those people who have fallen into your hands the real Socialists, the real heroes and heroines? In particular, those who say “The instigators of the riots are pulling their nationality down by the leg’ are not only not Socialists but even anti-Socialist.”

A theme of some writers in ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ is frustration at the Party’s biased media misrepresentation of the nature of the protests and the Tibetan protestors and the refusal by the Chinese authorities to even consider the possibility that the protestors had credible and deep-rooted grievances. Garmi, ‘the blacksmith’, writes: “Rather than presenting the people of the world with an even marginally honest account in accord with the actual situation, the top CCTV news channels tried to put as much blame as they could on ‘a few wicked troublemakers,’ making various allegations in an extremely bullying tone... Unable to bear this, and in accord with the saying ‘The weight of a single letter imbued with truth is heavier than the whole

world', I would like to make things clear to the dictatorship through an honest account of my own experiences and perceptions, and to present a short discussion respectful of the truth, in so far as I am able."

The political landscape in Tibet has been transformed by the events of the past year. At a time when the Chinese authorities are seeking to silence Tibetans and suppress any views that may run counter to those of the state, the 'Eastern Snow Mountain' writers offer a unique and critical perspective from inside Tibet reflecting a prevailing despair, loss, and darkness, but also a way forward.

Excerpts from the magazine, the 'Eastern Snow Mountain', follow below.

## **The living heart of the new generation**

*First conference of Tibetans in higher education with new thinking, compelled to speak*

2008 was an extraordinary year, so we are presenting you (the Tibetan-medium writers of Ngaba in Amdo) with a grant of 10,000 yuan [US \$1463]. Please do some meaningful cultural activity for this extraordinary year." This was said by the traders of Amdo Ngaba as a whole, and this was also the attitude of people in general to 2008. If even most ordinary traders were taking such an interest in the cultural affairs of the Tibetan people and the critical situation in 2008, intellectuals could not remain silent, and in particular, there was no way for the Tibetan-medium writers of Amdo Ngaba to pocket the 10,000 yuan and disregard the sincere concerns and aspirations of the traders.

Stirred into action by the horsewhip of these sincere pleas from traders, the Amdo Ngaba Tibetan-medium writers group decided to spend 4000 yuan of the sum on the publication of "The self of the age" and the remaining 6000 yuan on arranging another cultural event of urgent relevance.

So, with the view that a cultural event of urgent relevance of whatever kind was appropriate, however it could be arranged, dismissing all difficult questions in the inner minds of individuals, and considering that a nationality whose intellectuals have no inclination to speak looks like a most unprogressive nationality, and that in such a critical situation the intellectuals should by all means have something to say, the "Living heart of the new generation: the first conference of Tibetans in higher education with new thinking, compelled to speak" was held in Lanzhou, Gansu province in late January of this year.

Those invited and those who actually participated were intellectuals from each profession interested in new ways of thinking, students representing all the Tibetan universities, editors of the university journals, as well as monks from the major monasteries, about 60 people in all. Notice was also sent to individuals concerned in any way with the time and convenience to attend, and it is a matter of great regret that they were unable to attend.

The two-day conference addressed various issues including old and new thinking, threats to spoken and written language, women's rights, future prospects for production of journals in educational institutions, the atmosphere of current education in these institutions, urgent nationality issues, and so on, with presentations and somewhat elaborate discussions conducted in a suitably open, equal and frank way.

(Conference program included.)

July 10, 2008

## **That is a lie**

*by Sonpo, 'the survivor'*

(Sichuan)

A.

"The minority must accommodate themselves to the majority" is a phrase readily professed by modernists, such as the shining stars among Chinese thinkers comrades Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, and seems to be very rational, and indeed indivisible from the Communist idea of 'peaceful evolution of nationalities.' But for anyone who checks more rigorously, this is an outdated idea from 20th century Communism that was also one of the main foundation stones of Big Nationality chauvinism. In this day and age, it can clearly be seen to be a political illusion. Nonetheless, let us apply it to the actual society we see and feel in China today.

As for the relative size of the different nationalities under the rule of the Communist Party, 98% of the total population of 1.3 billion is Han Chinese, and the 55 minority nationalities make up no more than about 2%. If the minority must accommodate themselves to the majority, the minority nationalities accommodate themselves to the Han Chinese having no provision whatsoever to do otherwise. Or to put it the other way around, the Han Chinese do not have to accommodate themselves at all to the minority

nationalities. What would be an illustration of this situation? The fact that the New China led by the Communist Party instituted the fundamentals of majoritarianism (*Mang gtsö*), but did away with democracy (*dMangs gtsö*) altogether. It would not be unreasonable to say that majoritarianism is the worst of all systems. What is the nature of majoritarianism? It is the dominance over and bullying of the minority by the majority. If that were not so, how could there be talk of mutual equality between nationalities? (The word majoritarianism here is applied only to this country, not to others).

Equality means equality of living standards, equality of spoken and written language, equality of rights, equality of opportunity, equality in all aspects of social life. Is there any such equality for the 56 nationalities in this country? I dare to say in a loud voice that there is not. Why? For a start, there is no equality of spoken and written language. The official language of government in a minority nationality region is not the language of that minority, so the minority people have less chance of work and official positions than Han Chinese. With less opportunity, their rights are diminished, and with this inequality of rights, equality disappears. So in the final analysis, all of these rights are the ultimate outcomes of practicing majoritarian system.

Under these circumstances, the claim that ‘The national minorities are inseparable from the Han [Chinese], the Han are inseparable from the national minorities’ is nothing but a fable. If the national minorities separate from the Han, they will be liberating themselves from domination, and if the Han separate from the national minorities, deserted by their slaves, their strength would be reduced like a dying butter lamp. Some will say that this is not so, but it is common knowledge that the territories where the national minorities live make up one third of the entire People’s Republic of China, and most of the natural resources are also there, as anyone who takes a cursory look at the topography of the country will see. If there is no transition to a democratic system, there can be no ‘democracy’ and absolutely no equality. And even with a democratic system, there is no way of getting beyond the relationship of exploiters and exploited. If a multinational state has majoritarianism as its political system, any talk of individual equality and self-determination for the minority nationalities within is just fantasy.

B.

After the establishment of New China (ie, the 1978 reforms), comrade Deng Xiaoping said that once one group of people had generated wealth (through economic development), they would help other regions to develop, and eventually the whole country would become wealthy. The words themselves make perfect sense, but the merest examination of their application to social reality reveals a grand political game, as I will briefly explain.

Supposing what he said came to pass, it is guaranteed that the first to enrich themselves would be the coastal provinces. They would justify this by talking up all the advantages of being positioned to take advantage of foreign trade and so on, and go right ahead. The coastal regions of this country are populated exclusively by Han Chinese unmixed with any minority people. If one asks whether, as he said, there are no other regions in this country with similar advantages, it is not so: Mongolia, very close to highly developed Russia, the Uyghur region, close to both the Islamic countries and Afghanistan, and Tibet, very close to the biggest developing country India surely have better conditions and opportunities than most. Why shouldn't they be among the first to develop? First, because they are minority nationality territories, and secondly, because in today's world, economics drives politics.

To clarify the above two points, consider what it is that makes the whole world acknowledge America [as superpower]. It is nothing other than great economic development, as is universally acknowledged. Some might say, understandably, that it is a military matter, but here is an objection: how is it that Japan is automatically respected in the world when it was restricted from any military activity following the Second World War? What can we learn from these comparisons? If the Chinese are to consolidate their power over the minorities, economic matters will unquestionably be central. One other thing: if the regions that get to develop first depend solely on other (countries), the result will be the same as China's reliance on the Soviet Union (in the 1950s). It is only common sense that if you can assemble sufficient resources internally, you can withstand such bad outcomes, and even develop at a faster pace. By comparison with the coastal areas, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and so on have hundreds and thousands of times more natural resources and raw materials. So what he said was not honest. It was a political mirage.

C.

In the central government's news summaries, they say that America accepts the One China principle and also accepts that Taiwan is part of China. That is a deceit of the politicians, intended to keep the masses in the dark. To clarify the above statement, America's recognition of the unity of China is true and in accord with reality. Since ancient times, all Chinese have been subjects of one line of rulers. At that time, Taiwan was also part of China. That is ultimately what America recognizes. It does not and could not recognize that China is the unique dominion of the Communist Party. According to Chinese history, the founding fathers of China's position in Asia and development were not the Communists but the Nationalists. America's recognition does not endorse either party as the ruler of China. To put it simply, the CCP wants the return of Taiwan, but the KMT does not.<sup>2</sup> The KMT would return only on condition of equality of rank between the two parties, something unfeasible given the dictatorial

character of the CCP. And since the KMT will not submit to CCP rule on unequal terms, Taiwan will never return to the Motherland peacefully.

Does the CCP or the KMT have a stronger reputation internationally? In all respects, whether in terms of the extent of corruption in the Party, the degree of democracy, respect for human rights and so on, the KMT is unchallenged, as is clear to all with a basic understanding of the world situation.

Friends! What we need to know is not whether Taiwan and the mainland should be unified or not. What interests us is the opposition between the two parties. Will the contradictions between them allow for a unified state, or will one be able to occupy the territory and establish a new state? Doesn't a glance at the history of each party overthrowing the other tell us the answer? For those reasons, the above statement can be established as unconvincing and unreliable.

## **The force of truth spreads its wings**

*“The constitution of the Peoples Republic of China accords our nationality autonomous powers in spoken and written language, and this is guaranteed by the nationality autonomy law, but many Utopians or reactionary brigades at the local level holding the views of nationality dictatorialism do not implement the nationality autonomy laws, which is why today we red-faced Tibetans have become the catalyst for shaking heaven and earth.”*

by Lunpo Nyuktok, ‘the fool with a pen’

(Sichuan)

Today I am going to speak for truth and actuality. If you think I have no right to do so, I hand you my life as a pledge to be redeemed.

I

We red-faced Tibetans who have been living in the southern stretch of the Eurasian continent for thousands of years have once again been forced to spread our wings under heaven. You are saying that the power of these wings have clashed together the sky and earth of 21st century China like cymbals, and in my view, in the mirror of truth and actuality, this is most justified. Ever since human beings stood up on two legs and learned to walk, they have known constant conflict and war. Since the formation of human society, there has not been a single day when the mouth would not go dry from saying ‘peace,’ and how many days have there been on which flying the flag

of peace brought an end to bloodshed? Today, it is we red-faced Tibetans among all humanity who are upholding human rights, but for the sake of freedom and respect for each and every human being, which is why we have not yet become orphans in this world. This is why I tend to think that one reason for the present clashing of China's earth and sky like cymbals is that the great invisible wings have unfolded high in the sky. In the following, I would like to tell you how it is that a great lake gets dried up by heat and a great mountain burned by fire.

2

Marxism says "Since strict equality between nationalities is necessary, the oppression of nationalities can be absolutely opposed. Where there is no such equality and a nationality feels oppressed, popular aspiration even for secession is legitimate."

In the report of the 6th session of the 6th plenary conference, Mao Zedong wrote "The culture, religion and customs of minority nationalities must be respected. They must not be forced to learn Chinese, but helped to develop education in their own languages." And the Russian revolutionary leader Lenin said that "Anyone who does not support or respect the equality of nationalities and languages, who does not oppose the oppression of nationalities and fight against inequality is not a Marxist, and can not even be considered a Socialist." In any particular country, class struggle to bring about the restoration of eroded freedoms may be weak and the cultural level of the masses may decline, leading to a corresponding increase of Utopianism in politics.

3

In the case of our present situation, we have a lot of political Utopians, whom I call "the reactionary brigade." People in the rural areas say "When children go to school they really must learn Chinese, because if they learn Tibetan they will not be able to keep up in society and will not get into official employment," and in present Tibetan society it really is difficult to get official work with spoken and written Tibetan. But why is it difficult? It is the result of local government not implementing nationality autonomy laws and nationality autonomy policies. It is the result of local government controlling the powers of national minority linguistic autonomy and development. This is another reason for China's earth and sky clashing like cymbals now.

That is why I say that today every aspect of the Tibetan community has been occupied by political Utopians. They always talk about a Utopian 'development' of Tibetan society, but they are actually standing in the way of 'development,' or even throwing away the key to development. When I say this, many Chinese and Tibetans will respond that there is development, and doesn't urban construction and all the new aspects of our living environment count as development? Yes, they do. But what is

altering the outer world and living environment if we do not alter the inner world of our minds? A pig sty may be a palace of gold and jewels, but what meaning does that have for its inhabitants, the pigs?

4

Stalin once said “Why is it that any nationality whatsoever must use its own spoken and written language? Because one’s own speech and writing is precisely the means through which cultural, political and economic development is pursued.” In human history, where is there a people who have not moved on from slavery and feudal society? These days you are in the habit of comparing 21st century society with society from 60 or 70 years ago, but isn’t this something that would make even a child laugh? Since you always cover up the truth and the real situation, it is the ownerless products of Utopianism that appear on the political stage.

5

In the past, the Guomindang, bound by the ideology of nationality dictatorialism and the unification of nationalities, are said to have subscribed to the idea of Chinese replacing all minority nationality languages. But this now is the age of Socialism. According to Socialist and Communist nationality theory, in the case of a multinational state, the unification of many different nationalities, like, nationality A, nationality B and nationality C means changing them into Socialist nationalities, not forcing nationalities B, C and D to become like nationality A with the arrogance of nationality dictatorialism.

6

The constitution of the People’s Republic of China affords our nationality autonomous powers in spoken and written language, and this is guaranteed by nationality autonomy law, but many Utopians or reactionary brigades at the local level holding the views of nationality dictatorialism do not implement the nationality autonomy laws, which is why today we red-faced Tibetans have become the catalyst for shaking heaven and earth. Our task and objective is to combat Utopianism and nationality dictatorialism and drive out the forces of Utopianism. The task of our generation is to overturn the reactionary brigades who suppress nationality languages and safeguard democratic rights. As comrade Mao Zedong said, “Why do we need a revolutionary party? Because in this world there are opposing forces who oppress the masses and the people must destroy this oppression.”

7

In the case of minority nationality government officials, the people are all you have. You are servants upholding the palm respectfully offered by the people. Your positions and

the rice bowls (salaries) that fatten your stomachs were ultimately given by whom, if not the people? If you continually mislead and abuse the people, and the people lose sympathy with you, it is only natural that you might be ousted. At that time, you may come to realize that basically you alone are the architects of your own demise.

8

In 2006, it was said that the head of a county in a pastoral area in Ngaba prefecture was performing the life-story of king Songtsen Gampo in a bar at night.<sup>3</sup> It was said that this drunken Songtsen Gampo demanded an equally drunken princess Wench'eng and many 'ministers' bow down and prostrate to him. The local officials and inhabitants tell the life stories of this county leader, sometimes as a king, sometimes a general, sometimes an emperor. Such are the rotten officials indulging in corruption and reactionary behavior, playing with the future of the Tibetan people and with Karmic cause and effect as if they were toys. Do you not see that the entire habitat of we Tibetan people has been overwhelmed by this society of ruler and ruled, powerful and powerless, the rich and the destitute, man exploiting man? If it was to destroy such a society that the masses spread the wings under heaven that clashed heaven and earth like cymbals, how are they wrong? It seems to me that in any society, from the day there are rulers and ruled, the prospects for a gradual emergence of 'exploitation and oppression' are there. Thus, as far as government officials and leaders in minority nationality prefectures are concerned, it is their duty to protect democratic rights by implementing the autonomy laws for that nationality, and if they put on the hat of nationality dictators and fail to restrain the hand of corruption, let them know that clashing the cymbals of heaven and earth is part of human nature.

9

Do you know how the mighty Roman empire fell? If you don't, it was initially the mentality of exploitation and corruption that shook its foundations. For example, in 106 CE, the emperor Trajan held a feast lasting for 123 consecutive days to celebrate victory in the Dacia campaign, which drained the treasury. One leading official held a seven-day party for his son which cost the treasury 1000 kg of gold. The corruption and waste in the emperor's court was terrible. So great was the damage to Rome's economic and political might that the 50 years after 234 CE saw a sad procession of no less than 10 emperors removed from the throne.

10

For officials and especially intellectuals in minority nationality prefectures, it is your god-given duty to gather experiences from among the masses and do practical work among the masses. Tied to the masses by the umbilical cord of revolutionary struggle, you must combat corruption and exploitation. The group which is in the habit of

fattening themselves on tea and beer, meat and fleece, behind the peoples' backs and lecturing us on Utopianism are the common enemy of we Tibetans. We may not be able to eradicate this enemy through our own strength, nonetheless it is our duty to confront them. "There is no democracy that is not fought for, none that comes just by waiting," and if we are to destroy the reactionary forces, we must start by destroying the tools in their grasp. Their tools are the way of doing things associated with the reactionary forces, and the worthless mentality of corruption.

The Party and state say that the reins of nationality autonomy are firmly in our hands, but the corrupt and the reactionaries are driving us into the ditch of nationality autonomy. Faced with those carrying the banner of overlordism, what democracy, what freedom is there to speak of? Those leaders, who go against the laws of the nation and fly the banner of "might is right," think "I am the law!", "I make policy!" They and those like them still drone on about the objectives and programs of the government in what they say, what they write in their documents and on the chairman's podium in meeting halls, and this too is one of the hands clashing the cymbals of heaven and earth in today's China.

Thus, today I would just like to urge the Utopians and reactionaries, chiefly the officials who are squatting by the hearth [unwanted visitors] of we Tibetans, that when you disregard those responsibilities and programs which you go on about from the platforms of meetings, you are opponents of the government and butchers of Tibetan history.

Like the saying "Appearing to be a religious practitioner when the sun warms your belly, but reverting to the worst of rogues when misfortune strikes," you thinkers and writers of the three provinces of Tibet, the "Deftly wagging tongues who fall as silent as Buddha statues when there is practical work to be done," hear me now. Are you not the voice of the joys and sorrows of we black-headed Tibetans? If your behavior is "as changeable as a shiny owl's feather" and you act as "the saw-blade of impermanence" isn't this like hitting the leg of the reverend old father of we red-faced Tibetans against a rock?<sup>4</sup>

## Hindsight and reflection

*“Life is a precious jewel hard to obtain and of inestimable value, so we feel no end of grief when one is lost, whoever they are. But why is the government of a large and populous nation unable to accept valid actions of dissent?”*

by ‘Buddha’

(Sichuan)

*“Fearlessness is the most praiseworthy attitude”* – Nyitse

### 1. The painful memory of March

March 2008 was an extraordinary moment which made the whole world watch wide-eyed. On March 14, the public and mostly ordinary people in the great city of Lhasa in upper Tibet rose up and demonstrated. Following that one after another, like the ripples sent by a stone thrown into a lake, many more demonstrations of similar nature and aspect took place in many other places in Tibet.

In the case of my homeland, Ngaba in Amdo, for days before March 16 there were lots of soldiers carrying guns, and indeed weapons the names of which are unknown to me, putting on an intimidating show of military force, rows of them filing up and down through the marketplace, day and night, shouting slogans in loud voices, supposedly keeping watch on security threats.

On March 16, a group of monks and laymen started a protest march from the main road in front of Kirti monastery (the junction of the south market street and Chatang road), and made a circuit of the town centre. But the government took this as nothing other than beating, smashing, looting and burning, and the attempt to tag Tibet, the land of snows, with this negative label is a grave mistake. For example, the aim behind attaching such a damning label to the 3–14 incident of beating, smashing, looting and burning in Lhasa, and the 3–16 incident of beating, smashing, looting and burning in Ngaba and so on, which attributes a different nature to these protests is unambiguous. If it is inappropriate or forbidden, in the course of revolt against a government, to smash and burn the things it produces, what about the many revolts in Chinese history when student-led mobs piled up goods made in foreign countries in heaps like mountains and set fire to them, to arouse passion for their cause? Many people with unforgettable wounds from the founding of the New China, when

relations between our country and Japan became dangerous, at times went and attacked Japanese shops and diplomatic missions, so why the condemnation and fault-finding this time? And if the main objective of the demonstrations this time was to beat, smash, loot and burn, that would be powerful testimony on the extremely poor living standards of the Tibetan people. If that were so, wouldn't the claim that the living standards of Tibetans had undergone dramatic development comparable with the reversal of earth and sky be a lie?

Following the 3–16 protests, a huge number of soldiers came, established checkpoints at each intersection and monitored the public. The military turned every room in the Kirti Ganden Lekshe Ling monastery inside out, and the official media reported that they had found significant quantities of arms in the temples, which they said was contrary to Buddhist teaching, and made a big deal out of it. In fact this is saddening, but also something to be angry about. What is sad is that the Chinese and Tibetan peoples have been neighbors throughout history, and since the foundation of the New China half a century ago, the Tibetans have been constituted as one of the 56 nationalities. After such a long history as neighbors up to today, did they not realize that Tibet is a land of religion and the Tibetan people are devoted to religion? Monasteries are places devoted to the study and contemplation of the teachings of the great saints of the past like Buddha Shakyamuni and Shenrab Miwo, the peaceful luminaries of humanity, the keys to the search for human happiness and ultimate deliverance, and the sinister activities conducted by the military inside the monastery shows nothing more than a mind entirely uninspired by peace and a despicable attitude lacking in mutual respect. What makes one angry is that sending soldiers into a monastery, claiming to have found lethal weapons in the temples, and misrepresenting things just as they please, isn't that intended to crush our nationality under the heel with no respect for our beliefs and values?

Guns and other weapons are left in temples as a signifier of the power and wrath of the worldly spirits and as a pledge not to use them again by some people who have taken the lives of wild animals or people, after recognizing their sin and repenting, and this is something known even to small children.

This keeping of weapons in the shrines of the mundane deities is not exclusive to Tibetans and was even traditional among the Chinese. Doesn't the protector they call Kuan Yu carry a long-handled knife? If the mere presence of weapons in a protector chapel signifies sinister violence, even Kuan Yu is liable to prosecution. In Chinese monasteries the monks even teach martial arts and keep weapons, so isn't that contrary to the teachings of Buddhism?



Photos of the Dalai Lama and other senior religious leaders at Kirti monastery in Ngaba county, Sichuan, were stamped upon, torn, or shot at by armed police following a raid on the monastery in early April 2008. Kirti monastery was at the center of the wave of protests in eastern Tibet when monks were joined by laypeople and schoolchildren in a major protest on March 16, calling for a free Tibet, with pictures of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan flags on display.

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In short, such talk is without the slightest justification for anyone who checks reality and is aware of cause and effect, and even for someone from the opposite way, the two are so similar that your criticism rebounds on yourself.

On TV and in the newspapers they say that the demonstrations were intended to obstruct and oppose China's emergence as a great power and the improvement of the living standards of the Tibetan nationality. Supposing that such things were true, some questions must be asked. If the living standards of Tibetans had really improved so much, why would they feel so unhappy as to try to stop this? If Tibetan living standards are so developed, and the demonstrators were exclusively Tibetan, why should their not enjoying a "decent standard of living" be greeted with such dismay?

If development means even the slightest difference between today's standards and the living conditions of half a century ago, why the disparity between the pace of construction and progress in Tibet and in mainland China?<sup>5</sup>

During the war of resistance to the Japanese, under the general circumstances of a world united in opposition to Nazism and Fascism, and through the particular efforts of the Chinese people, the Japanese were defeated. But when Japanese forces occupied most of the Chinese territory, called it the "East Asian Commonwealth" and propagandized about the Japanese and Chinese peoples sharing weal and woe, didn't the Chinese rise up in revolt, unprepared to live a miserable life and unable to bear the mental suffering of occupation? Under the Manchu empire, the long history of Manchu military control over the territories of the Zhongyuan, the living standards of the Han nationality are said to have been excellent, as is confirmed by the writings of many Chinese historians. But if living standards were so great, what was the need of a concerted revolt against the Manchu state? The motivation in all of these cases was love and loyalty for one's people, patriotism and the quest for happiness.

During the 3–16 period in Amdo Ngaba, there were many things which gave one shivers to witness and made one disturbed to hear about. For many reasons, there is no way to get clear information, but these things were not reported even partially on TV or in the newspapers. On the other hand, they did record how the People's Liberation Army and other security forces did not hesitate to risk their own lives in the face of the violent and dreadful actions of the Tibetans, for the sake of the nation and the lives and property of the masses, sacrificing their lives and suffering injury, and played it over and over again.

Life is a precious jewel hard to obtain and of inestimable value, so we feel no end of grief when one is lost, whoever they are. But why is the government of a large and populous nation unable to accept valid actions of dissent?

I recently read a thought-provoking article in the widely-known Chinese periodical Reader about a group of more than ten illegal Chinese migrants being smuggled into the European Union (EU) and dying of suffocation in the truck on the way. Instead of ignoring it, those EU authorities interrupted what they were doing to discuss how to stop these activities. There was no other reason for doing so than that these people, although not its citizens, were nonetheless human beings, and since it is the way of those foreigners to regard everyone as equal and to operate on the terms of mutual respect, they treated the matter with concern. However, in the case of the Tibetans, one cannot say they are not PRC citizens since they are counted among the 56 nationalities, and yet one cannot say that they are since they lack even the basic rights of citizens.

Are Tibetans excluded from the over six billion members of humanity? If Tibet's mountains, rocks and rivers, the vast grasslands, the forest mountains, holy mountains and mountains of precious mineral deposits figure on the map as a part of the nation's territory, their erstwhile masters, the Tibetan people, surely require similar recognition. Sadly, the real situation is not like that, and their attitude even less so. Labeling Tibetan demonstrators as terrorists and violent barbarians, they claim to 'punish' them accordingly. This unpalatable 'punishment' would cause any reasonable observer to sigh in despair and shed tears.

As children, we were taught that the Socialist system is superior to all others. It is a system in which people have great affection and respect for each other. They enjoy a good standard of living with bright prospects for the future. More recently, the great wave called 'harmonious society' has washed over the whole of China, enveloping the rural areas which lack even transport facilities. One might respond that if one wishes to meaningfully implement Socialism, the primary condition is to take the attitude and outlook of equality for all as fundamental. Otherwise, continuing to put on the performance of current practice is dictatorialism. Even the 'harmonious society' is nothing other than this. Thus, to speak in actual terms, if one calmly and collectedly adopts the attitude of mutual equality and observes from that high vantage point, then one can clearly see what is there. If the awareness of one's own faults at all times and in all aspects is a most important awareness for any individual to have, what need is there to add that such awareness is also indispensable for the government of a nation?

Material endowment is a crucial matter for anyone, and likewise spiritual / intellectual endowment is also crucial. For a government, material endowment is not the only sphere to be supported and encouraged through policy and regulation, and if significant attention is paid to spiritual and intellectual endowment, people could not remain half-alive and oblivious to reality. Thus we do not only want our living environment to be enriched by the material benefits of modernity, for if higher thinking and behavior naturally reside in the minds of each of us, that is something beautiful. There is no one who does not wish to be happy, and no one who would knowingly jump into a pit of fire. However, to apply the example of others to ourselves, carrying on calmly despite a host of constraining factors is the overwhelming norm, and most people seem to forget about this reality, or not to be concerned about it. In the history of peoples in this world, through the accumulation of countless defeats and historical experience, people become wise and reach towards freedom. Whoever clings on to the mentality of "punishment" and has no intention of renouncing it would return us to the dark ages and reverse the spiritual and intellectual progress won through ten thousandfold human sufferings.

I say to all fraternal Snow Mountain dwellers: we have been struck by unimaginable suffering and torment, but if we get nothing more than hatred and resentment from this suffering and torment, we might earn the reproach of many of those whose precious lives have been lost. In fact, with the truth and core principles of humanity behind us, undaunted we can set alight the embers of freedom.

## 2. How can the dust-cloud settle?

*Dedicated to the weeping spirits of the thousands caught up in the great May 12 earthquake in the foothills of Rido (Chinese: Wenchuan)*<sup>6</sup>

On May 12, an earthquake measuring 8 points (on the Richter scale, earlier reported as 7.8) struck the foothills region of Ngaba prefecture with its epicentre in Wenchuan, also known as Rido or Lungu in Tibetan. It was followed by many aftershocks, also affecting places including Chundo [Chinese: Dujiangyan], Chengdu, Dakpo [Chinese: Beichuan], Mao Xian, Zungchu [Chinese: Songpan], Tashiling [Chinese: Li Xian], Yaknga [Chinese: Ya'an] and Qinchuan, causing grievous loss of life and property.

When the media reports news of the earthquake, one involuntarily pays attention with all five senses. We may not be able to avert natural disasters through human effort, but they can be anticipated. This earthquake raised a great many issues for us.

a) the practice of ignoring warnings

Before the May 12 earthquake struck, people were going about their business as usual, unaware of the disaster that was about to befall them. It came suddenly, carrying off many precious lives in the space of a few minutes. Ruined buildings, broken highways and cities filled with rubble resounded with tears and curses. How depressing that in the midst of a serious natural disaster, tears and cries are the only consolation there is. But on further reflection, the thought that the government's response was not all that it might have been arises irrepressibly.

The 2008 calendar published by the TAR Mentsikhang includes the following warning: "Due to the interaction of Drangsong Göngönchen with the Chu and Dre constellations from the 3rd lunar month until the end of the year, and because it remains in the same house all year long, be warned of the danger of dust storms, earthquakes and other natural disasters in the southeast."

If those in charge had paid due attention to this warning, if they had immediately informed the public, if those with the titles of “expert” and “leader” had given the matter thought, if...

In general, this is a case of relegating the benefits of a science capable of saving tens and thousands of lives to the surplus stock corner of a bookshop as if it were rubbish. This situation also helps us to understand that all these conferences on Tibetology research and Tibet Research Centers and those holding high qualifications in Tibetan studies are of no more practical use than bags full of wind. In real terms, what a disappointment, but ultimately, mustn't any undertaking that can save even a single life be something filled with a thousand joys?

#### b) Paper-thin buildings and the poor school children

What is so unforgettable about the earthquake are the school buildings and school dormitories that collapsed so easily. What is so saddening are the many schoolchildren like budding flowers taken away from us forever.

It is no exaggeration to say that in all the earthquake-hit areas, the first buildings to collapse were schools and school dormitories. Seeing the terror and incomprehension of those children on TV, one cannot help but curse from the depths of one's mind the rotten leaders who brought them into such miserably constructed buildings. Let's give an example: suppose there is a family with one son and one daughter. If the parents do not take good care of them so that they die or feel neglected, that family will have no future legacy or will not know happiness.

The crucial nature of education and the importance of schoolchildren's welfare is something known to all, from government level down to family level, which does not need to be proven by research. But to know it and not act upon it is surely as bad as not knowing. When one recalls the “nine-year compulsory education campaign” that was spread in our region with such fervor last year and the year before, one wonders whether in reality it was just an empty exercise.

Why were the buildings in which children study and sleep built to collapse as easily as if they were made of paper? Could nothing better be built with the many tens of thousands of yuan available? If it could, then where did the money go? Virtually none of those schools were undamaged by the earthquake, so why was it that very few of the government buildings in those areas collapsed? Of course, state offices are like the hands of government administrative work, and thus important, but schools are the

hope for the future, are all that there is, so if one makes no effort and takes no care of them, why regard the rest as anything more than rainbows in the sky?

It might make one sad, or angry, or could be taken as black humor, but the People's Government building in the Sichuan provincial capital Chengdu was built with a budget of about 1.2 billion yuan. It is said to be the costliest government building anywhere in the world. It is an inexplicable contrast, like that between sky and earth, that in a province and a city with a world-famous government complex, the schools are built as flimsily as if they were made of paper. One is the office of city administration, and one is a school for the continuation of knowledge. How to explain...? How to account for this...?

Whichever way one looks at it, the government is an organization in the service of society, where a few words will suffice, not a place of elaborate discourse requiring a fancy and well-appointed mansion. The degree of care taken with school construction shows the level of understanding and caliber of a state.

The parents of children who did not escape this tragedy are surely thinking: "If the quality of school buildings could be taken for granted, my dear child would be here with me now."

Those poor departed children have not only cast shame on society, their precious lives have brought many issues to light.

In any case, in the context of our future life and direction, other than praying that no unwanted or unhappy circumstances befall the people of the world, there seems to be nothing that any of us can do. (In general, if state laws and regulations were thorough, tears and wailing would not be the sole means of consoling people's mental anguish, and there would also be no need to resort to praying out of desperation.) Are such desperate thoughts circulating in the minds of so many of us? What a sad state of affairs.

June 25, 2008

## Spontaneous diary

by Torlung (Sichuan)

Now is the year 2008. Today, March 17. Morning time, before the sun's rays have touched the earth. The sky is slightly overcast.

In the narrow forecourt of the Barkham Nationalities Teacher Training College and Ngaba Prefecture Nationalities Upper Middle school a lot of students are jostling, crying. "Don't kill our fellow students! Don't arrest our people!" they shout, their faces drenched in the fumes of sorrow, sparks of fury glitter in their eyes.

Two days later, the family name, home address, class number and body size of more than 20 people are recorded on forms, and they are removed one by one like hairs from a wound, and taken outside the school. Fourteen of them do not return, and one can only imagine the dark cell in which they are imprisoned and the fearsome torture to which they are being subjected.<sup>7</sup>

They are young people of between 15 and 21 years old, and when hats too large for their age are put on them, my dream says: "If your mind is free of guilt, there is no reason to fear even the gates of hell." Speaking the truth with head upheld... hearing the grinding of teeth, I come out of that hazy dream and float.

In the space between sky and earth, in this 21st century, is it that we cannot even lament?

Whichever way I think, whichever way I lie in bed, however I submit with bowed head, dear children, each of your darkened faces, each cry of our spirit, all the love in your hearts, those days when you changed from schoolchildren into prisoners, when I look, openly or covertly, at the 'aristocratic lords' sending each of you like lambs to slaughter, I cannot but record each one.

Dear children, this is the 21st century. It is not the 'new age' of a 'cultural revolution' era of which the elders spoke, but the agile elasticity of the flower of our youth will be nurtured by the truth of history.

This event is a historic one, it cannot vanish from the mirror of the collective memory of our age, nor be forgotten by human history.

Written on March 25, 2008, revised on April 24

## What human rights do we have over our bodies?

*“Now that the minds of our people, monastics and laypeople, men and women, are like snowflakes in the wind, in the face of gun-barrels and horsewhips, will we not call on the truthful eyes of the world to look our way for a moment?”*

by Nyen, ‘the wild one’

(Sichuan)

1.

Have you ever heard that our land does not have the benefit of human rights? Because our human rights over our own bodies is dead. Even this year, who does not know that our monks and laypeople, men and women, each lost their precious lives? Northern land of snows, long accustomed to swallowing tears of grief, fellow countrymen of the three provinces, surviving patiently in the confines of a straitjacket, filled with terror, fear and anguish, on whom is their humble gaze fixed? The great snow mountain thirsting for freedom, democracy and equality is once more streaked red with blood. The long binding rope of non-fulfillment of the perennial aspirations for livelihood and prosperity has again pulled each of them back into the lap of mother earth. Is this the ‘fierce red wind’ that we have not yet been able to forget, starting to howl once more? Is this the gloom of the ‘darkness’ which has not yet vanished from the inner recesses of our minds, starting to gather once more?<sup>9</sup> If you have eyes, do you not see that many, many of our fellow countrymen went forth with the dream of our nation in their minds? How is it that in this land we have absolutely no ground to plead even for the dear lives of our countrymen? This darkness and cruelty, occupation and oppression will surely spill every drop of blood in our homeland down to the last dewdrop on a blade of grass. Likewise, now that the minds of our people, monastics and laypeople, men and women, are like snowflakes in the wind, in the face of gun-barrels and horsewhips, will we not call on the truthful eyes of the world to look our way for a moment?

2.

The smoke that filled the sky over Lhasa on March 14 was the smoke from 50 years of patient endurance. It was the smoke that the fraternal inhabitants had persistently held inside for 50 years. If that smoke is held inside for exactly 50 years, isn't it bound to be let out? Our homeland is saddled with a burden of sorrow. There is definitely a relation between myself and those fellow countrymen and women I have never met. There is definitely a firm relation between myself and those fellow countrymen of the three provinces of Tibet. Have the many, many years of bullying and abuse in every

town and village, examples of which are endless, the spiteful games, visible and invisible, of “pretending to kiss someone then smearing snot on them,” the many, many years of resentment of the systematic brutality meted out using the law as a pretext, within a system ostensibly governed by law, the many, many years of “digging the earth and upturning rocks” and “cutting, chopping and whittling,” blurring distinctions between public and private, constantly revolving on the spear-tip of false accusations, eloquent trickery, bias and face-saving, falsehood propping up falsehood, blaming the innocent and alternating rough with smooth, has all this incited rage in the Tibetan people? The Tibetan people, without refuge or protector, without forces or allies, have risen up out of desperation, for the cause of human rights, without even thinking of bringing Communist rule to an end. They are undeniably ‘rebels’ against the system of a government blind to Karmic cause and effect, unwilling and unable to spare the lives of those at its mercy.

Those who trampled on the precious lives of my countrymen for all to see were again well-armed Red Army soldiers, the fearsome “men dispatched and arrow fired” by the central government, playing with human rights before discarding them, although investigation of guilt and liability finds none. On closer consideration, even if this current disturbance can be quelled with armed force, the wounds thereby inflicted and stench of the blood spilled have filled the minds of the coming generation. A government that responds only with shows of armed force does not have even a sesame seed’s-worth of prestige in the minds of ordinary people. One might say that the prospect of a government that uses displays of armed force to intimidate the people is a great tragedy for humankind.

3. Swift to cover up an incident, skilled in ‘spinning’ an incident, ready to cover up and dress up the protruding backside of falsity, habituated to shifting the blame for one’s own faults onto others, practiced at talking crooked and acting crooked in full knowledge, fond of reversing the order of things, with eyes open to lying and fakery, trickery and deception, committing wholesale slaughter at the scene of an incident, but making it look as if not a single drop of blood was shed afterwards. The widespread contagion of blaming any and all incidents on the meek is a special game played by those in power, but those with eyes, like sheep that will not graze in the presence of a wolf, surely see. In a society where ideals like freedom, democracy and equality are never even heard of, confronting arms directly before one’s eyes is a choice-less choice. The greatest mental suffering of Tibetans is not that there is no place to complain about their sufferings but that they are not allowed to complain. To the extent that this mental suffering can be suppressed inside, there will be compliance with Communist ideology.

4-

The present contradiction between Chinese and Tibetans in their respective territories is directly related to the Communist state. Not only have the delayed consequences of the state's failure to resolve 'old issues' become the principal cause of instability in Tibetan society generally, an unthinkable calamity has been inflicted on the precious lives of ordinary people on both sides. The so-called unity of nationalities constantly proclaimed by the state has now reached the point of a 'you die, I live'. The attitude of the Red faction, which values individual lives in the case of the big nationality but crushes under heel the valuation of the lives and rights of others, is always going to provoke opposition, and the incredibly violent suppression, beating and killing of the fellow countrymen of a nationality swallowing back tears of grief is an episode that can never be forgotten. A society habituated to strangling the voices of the humble is one constantly filled with terror, fear and anguish. However, urged on by the prospect that by striving for human rights and freedom like a thirsty person seeking water, an unintimidated survivor may emerge in the wake of death, we fellow countrymen and women, sharing each others' joys and sorrows, with the trauma of a first-hand encounter with hell in our minds, must apply ourselves to all the tasks before us as the responsibility has fallen unavoidably on our shoulders.

5-

After Lhasa, the beating and killing was carried out perfectly through Kham and up to the nomads of Amdo – so grateful! – and once the sorrowful lips of the people of the snow mountain realm were sealed, not one word of truth was allowed to reach the rest of the planet. We must also not forget to be grateful to the spiritual teachers and incarnate lamas of we ordinary folk who have been appointed to nominal positions in Tibet and who collectively bear on their shoulders the large and weighty responsibility for leadership and research into Tibetan studies, and who on behalf of the Tibetan people on TV and in the newspapers, distinguishing black from white and bearing witness to the truth, rubbed salt into the wounds of their fellow countrymen.

At the same time, it seems to me that they should be recalled here, as recorded on the Xinhua news website:

“On the afternoon of March 21, the officials responsible for Tibetan Buddhist affairs in Kanlho [Chinese: Gannan] prefecture assembled for a meeting in Sangchu [Chinese: Xiahe] county. In his speech, member of the National People's Congress (NPC) standing committee, vice-chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association, principal of the China Tibetan Buddhist higher studies college, vice-chair of the standing committee of the

provincial people's congress and chairman of the provincial Buddhist Association, the current incarnation of Jamyang Zhepa<sup>10</sup> stated "We are aware in all respects that the current wave of violence is a direct conspiracy by the Dalai clique. In actual fact, nationality and religion is the flag they fly to deceive people, to destroy stability and progress inside Tibet, and to wreck discipline within Tibet's monasteries, and the present situation proves that this is their real objective." (Xinhuanet, March 22, 2008.)<sup>11</sup>

On March 23, vice chairman of the national CPPCC Ngabo Ngawang Jigme spoke about the recent disturbances in Lhasa in an interview with a Xinhua journalist, saying "It is a necessity for the concerned departments to deal with the situation in a timely and appropriate manner using legal means." (Xinhuanet, March 23, 2008.)

Director of the China Tibetology Research Centre Lhakpa Phuntsog said that: "It is really excellent how after the outbreak of the March 14 incident the government responded immediately to bring the situation under control." (Xinhuanet, March 24, 2008.)

TAR CPPCC member, head of the research unit at the Tibet Academy of Social Science and famous Tibetologist Drongbu Tsering Dorje said that "Having just arrived in Lhasa from Beijing, being in the street and taking in the shops, vehicles and public facilities smashed and burned by the criminals, a barely expressible rage grew in my mind." (Xinhuanet, March 26, 2008.)

Doesn't looking back at these short speeches and writings explain everything? Those short speeches and writings are now excellent tools. They are the ones who defend the fundamental interests of the people. They are the ones who go on TV and in the newspapers as representatives of the Tibetan people to give the "correct view." They are actually speaking out "with growing rage" on many things in tune with the sentiments of our fellow countrymen. When the going gets rough, those who will speak truthfully about the dear lives and welfare of their fellow countrymen are rare as stars in daylight, but now our leaders, Lamas and incarnates, and Tibetologists are speaking the "undistorted truth."

Listening to these speeches makes me think of the 10th Panchen Lama, whom the central government commended for "loving the nation and loving religion." It makes me think of something he said. In the conclusion of the "70,000 character petition,"<sup>12</sup> he wrote: "I vow not to leave any legacy in my personal career which will tarnish even slightly the good name of the brave and dedicated Tibetan people." And it makes me think of the loyal sons of the Tibetan nation in recent history, those who, at a consultative meeting of high Lamas called in Beijing before the selection of the 11th

Panchen Lama, raised their hands in front of the concerned departments of the central government in defense of our rights and viewpoint, including the likes of Alak<sup>13</sup> Gungtang-tsang, Baba Phuntsok Wangyal<sup>14</sup> who suffered 18 years of hardship in prison, and the iron-willed Yidam Tsering,<sup>15</sup> who has never allowed anyone to tread on his neck. What they loved was the land under our feet. Our country may be a barren desert, but they loved it. What they loved dearly was our spoken and written language.

How deplorable are the “correct words and correct views” of today’s high Lamas, senior leaders and great scholars, yes-men eager for personal gain, power and reputation? They who “bang the gong while their fathers are put to death” should not be forgotten by future generations. Those who defile our image can be considered guilty of historic crimes. These well-fed ‘tools’ have made the charge that “Destruction is now their real objective,” and “Dealing with them appropriately in a timely way is essential.” What is so essential? Was it essential for ordinary religious and laypeople, men and women, to lose their lives? Or was it essential to beat and kill them? The scholar said “It was really excellent that measures were taken immediately to bring the situation under control.” Do you actually know what “measures were taken” immediately? Do you mean coming in with tanks and guns, or do you mean that surrounding and shooting into crowds of civilians with guns was “excellent”? It is extraordinary that Drongbu Tsering Dorje, an exponent of Buddhist philosophy could be made so “angry.” Getting into “an inexpressible rage” because a few shops got burned down while shrugging off the intimidation of masses of your fellow countrymen by armed forces, is that the reaction of a great mind? These betrayers of those who stand for the common cause, ready to hang their own mother out to dry, these avid sellers of their own souls who value nothing higher than their own positions, has the time not come to unmask these opportunists? Finally, what I want to say is simple: the connection between the consciousness of a people and the consciousness of individuals is a firm one.

6.

Whoever tries to cover up the loss of the precious lives of our people, lay and monastic, men and women, it cannot be hidden from history. Why is it that the Tibetans must undergo such unthinkable bullying, abuse, misery and torture on the soil of their ancestral land? The many households and couples who have been separated will ultimately not be excluded from the reckoning of our people’s suffering, and those who gave their lives for the land trodden by their ancestors, religious and lay, men and women, should not be forgotten. Everyone cherishes their own life and values nothing higher, so in which eventuality have they been obliged to go so far as to renounce it? Is it not the misery of being unable to bear seeing the excessive cruelty of those in power? If those who trample on human lives always disregard people’s

rights, that is a crisis bound to affect us. When the sweet lives of monks, students and ordinary people are dragged from this world into darkness, when those sweet lives which have prayed so hard for the swift fulfillment of their aspirations are confiscated by the state, I for one cannot remain silent, and the connection between their sad fates and my pen is a profound one.

Shikalo, a man in his forties from Charo Xiang in Ngaba county, was beaten to death on false charges. His precious life has fizzled out. This father and cornerstone of his household leaves behind him a widow and three orphans, weeping inside. This life-demeaning disaster has ruined life for one household. To say that someone has been beaten to death, isn't this something that should never have to be said in this day and age? To say that someone has been beaten to death is something that recalls the terror of the "Democratic Reform" era (of the late 1950s and early 1960s). Generally speaking, no one enjoys "vengeance" or continuing "old feuds." But for the young generation, the murderer of their father leaves an impression that cannot be forgotten as long as they live. That is the certain outcome of repression, beating and killing. We have no wish for 'revenge' or 'feuds.' We call for reaching a time in which the younger generation will have no "revenge" to seek or 'feuds' to settle. The young generation has not come into this world for revenge or to settle feuds, but to see the spectacle of a brighter tomorrow, to seek refuge in a place enjoying the bright spring of freedom, democracy and equality.

Then there was the story of two monks from Kirti monastery in Ngaba, Toesam and Jinpa, who were driven by the present desperate situation to take their own lives in prison. Why should we have to witness such a depressing event? When one thinks carefully, they are not at all to blame. Who would not be traumatized? Who would not be traumatized by the unimaginable pain of torture not grounded in humanity?

Unable to bear the pain and terror of torture, that unthinkable Karmic fruition, those two monks came to the point of ending their own young lives while still wishing to live. Those two monks as living human beings found themselves compelled to take their own lives. For a person to find the determination to take his own life is by no means easily done, yet in the face of incredible suffering, it must have seemed the only option. Who could put up with the kind of physical threat to life suffered by these Tibetans? Who are the ones who would invite the darkness of such suffering on the humble minds of a defenseless people?

May the young men and women of the future become smart enough not to be misled by others into accepting defeat and contempt. I am confident that having recalled and reflected on the wounds and sorrows of the present, those men and women will find another 'open road.'

7.

If one just sat watching the official TV news, it would scrub your brain clean. That news channel sullied our image so much that Tibetans watching it would be depressed by its oblivious attitude. That is precisely its power and its effect. Those displays of falsehood propping up falsehood are confident of presenting that “distortion of history” as truth. Saying “The actual nature of the incident was this,” they are seeing whether they can establish that perception in your mind, easily or by force of repetition, and through the intoxicating effect of these broadcasts, end up with us wearing the most unthinkable of hats. One or two violent incidents occurring in the course of a popular uprising are normal events in such disturbances in any other country. Like the Tibetan proverb “Getting angry with the Yak but whipping the horse,” although it was by no means a contradiction between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples, opposition to the state soon became a fight between the two peoples. In any case, those who came to know about the incidents from the TV and newspapers and those who witnessed them at first hand differ in many respects. The TV, newspapers and so on have just become tools for the power-holders to defend themselves, and anyone who thinks that they tell the truth or distinguish black from white must be out of their mind. That the media can produce a big effect in a short time through supporting in endless ways the leveling of all the accusations and labels one can think of goes without saying. (The attribution of virtue to the state is done in the same way.) Relying on the power and influence of these broadcasts to perpetrate an unimaginable defamation of the reputation of this nationality is something we absolutely cannot accept. If stability is to be restored to Tibetan society through force alone, that means a society stabilized by the same oppression, exploitation and contempt, and it means that we will not see the real light of day.

8.

Human rights apply to the political, economic, social and cultural spheres; their essential characteristic is freedom and equality, and their basic nature and concern is human life and progress. Since people cannot live or progress as humans without freedom and equality, it is hardly worth saying that this is even more true of human rights. The present situation in our society is that people are hiding indoors with pain in their hearts. Our pleas for freedom, equality and a happy life are considered illegal and criminal. Those who strive for freedom, equality and happiness are in for so much physical degradation and trauma. What is our real reason for living? Isn't this place where we live the place where the ancestors turned the cosmic wheel of joy and sorrow? And even in the present time, it seems to me that the desperate thirst of our beloved people, monastic and lay, men and women, for a brighter future, supported by an extraordinary “consciousness,” is indeed a premonition of the future realization of our hopes. We should recognize not only that human rights always and in all aspects are something we ourselves strive for, but that this struggle is for the benefit

of tomorrow's generation, and that it is ensuring that tomorrow's generation can live a life dignified with human rights, freedom, equality and happiness that gives meaning to our present lives. If they can live a life without oppression, exploitation and brutalization, they will be free of the hardship and dictatorial control of the present, they will enjoy vitalized human rights.

From this point of view too, what human rights do we presently have over our bodies?

Responsibility for this article lies solely with the author, and not the editorial office of the 'Eastern Snow Mountain' (Shar Dungri) or any individual editor (although it is in keeping with the magazine's long-standing aims). May the 'Eastern Snow Mountain' be more popular than ever before! (July 2008).

## **The case for lifeblood and life-force**

*This title is copied from the political news section on the Qinghai Tibetan language radio website*

by Garmi, 'the blacksmith'

(Sichuan)

On the evening of March 14 China's CCTV news channels hastily announced to the world the outbreak of "beating, smashing, looting and burning" by Tibetans in Lhasa, saying that it was an organized conspiracy by the Dalai clique. Rather than presenting the people of the world with an even marginally honest account in accord with the actual situation, the top CCTV news channels tried to put as much blame as they could on "a few wicked troublemakers," making various allegations in an extremely bullying tone. Unable to bear this, and in accord with the saying "The weight of a single letter imbued with truth is heavier than the whole world," I would like to make things clear to the dictatorship through an honest account of my own experiences and perceptions, and to present a short discussion respectful of the truth, in so far as I am able.

The Tibetans, whose lifeblood has been constantly drained and whose life force is struggling for breath after 50 years under the dictators, have now begun a spontaneous movement by reviving the nearly exhausted desire for democracy, freedom and equality. And when terrifying suffering, unimaginable and uncountable, came down once more on the black-headed Tibetans, the value of the lifeblood and life-force of those great people who gave their lives for the sake of happiness and truth became visible.

On March 16, this movement began in Ngaba county in Amdo. At that point, it was clear that to the dictators, there was no difference between a peaceful demonstration and “beating, smashing, looting and burning.” The 16-year-old schoolgirl Lhundrup Kyi (just one example among many) lost her life that day: on her way to school, she became a target for the policemen’s guns.<sup>16</sup> How could a girl like this still growing up under her parents’ care be so suddenly extinguished? The mainstay of her parents in old age, how are her poor parents to accept that she will not be coming home? Dear girl, now that you have been plucked from the comfortable surroundings of your parents, siblings, relatives and friends like a hair from a lump of butter, and the warmth of proximity to your friends and loved ones fades like a mirage, it is so sad that your life can neither be bought back with any amount of wealth, nor commanded to return by the most powerful of rulers.

Likewise, the monks who took their own lives under the oppression of an armed force permitting no freedom of movement (as I heard from Ngaba county, two monks committed suicide at that time), the students imprisoned in dark cells (Konchok and others from the Barkham Teacher Training college), and the ordinary farmers and nomads imprisoned for life (such sentences have been passed on ordinary citizens in Ngaba county), these lives at the mercy of a cynical dictatorship which does not regard them as human, how pathetic and expendable they are.

From what I heard, Tashi, one of the 20 or more young people shot dead on 3-16 – boys and girls, whose lives appeared to be no more than a worm to be crushed underfoot – said that with the evidence of Tibet’s history presented to the world, the wings of truth can fly. If one thinks about these people ending their lives not for their own sake but in solidarity with the community, throwing themselves in front of armed troops for the cause of truth, one may recall the principles of Marxism-Leninism that “Marxism-Leninism requires strict equality between nationalities, and absolutely opposes the oppression of nationalities. Where there is no such equality, Marxism-Leninism regards it as legitimate for minority nationalities even to seek secession.” When the Tibetan people, under the oppression of the dictators and with no strict equality, show some signs of dissent, why must it be branded political subversion and subject to crackdown and inquisition? Why must stories of bloodshed be written on the clean white sheet of paper known as “World Peace”? Why? Why?

Similarly, have the dictators ever heard of Lenin’s statement that “Anyone who does not support or respect the equality of nationalities and languages, who does not oppose the oppression of nationalities and fight against inequality is not a Marxist, and can not even be considered a Socialist”? Aren’t those people who have fallen into your hands the real Socialists, the real heroes and heroines? In particular, those who say

“The instigators of the riots are pulling their nationality down by the leg” are not only not Socialists but even anti-Socialist.

At the moment, when Tibetans receiving a government salary (officials with university degrees who comment on nationality affairs) and writers (the writers of Qinghai and Kanlho, etc) concerned with nationality and humanity are not incapable of telling how things are but have retreated from telling the true account and gone as silent as a broken needle buried underground, they are rendered into a position of reflecting in sorrow and hopelessness.

The clubs and truncheons which are always awaiting us in the prisons of the dictators have come down on the heads of the monks and laypeople. At the entrance of the People’s Court which pays only lip service to legality and rights, these people (the three said to be tortured to death in Ngaba prison) became toys of dictators who have no belief in cause and effect relations, are permanently separated from us. Would not each of the blows that turned their whole bodies to a bloody pulp make you flinch, dear reader?

Similarly, those who went through horrific beatings and the considerable number who lost their lives in the midst of the present uprising, mainly in Lhasa, and then in Kardze in Kham, Ngaba in Amdo, Kanlho, Qinghai and so on (I apologize to the reader for not being able to specify the county and local designations of each place right now), were they not saying to you, if you are Tibetan, “Loyal son!”, dear reader?

Does the government not claim that “The human rights situation is in the best period ever known in the history of the Tibetan nationality”? Does it not claim that “You (the nationality) have the legal right to self-protection”?

However, in this civilized era when world governments voluntarily respect human rights, the improvement of human rights under the Socialist system may have happened somewhat for the Chinese people, but Tibetans living under constant bullying and oppression never get to even hear the words “human rights,” and ultimately legal rights are only written on paper, and although we have tongues in our heads we do not have the power to speak out, indeed it is before the law that misfortune usually strikes us.

So the saying “One does not have to listen to what is said, one has to look at what is achieved” is really true. Looking at what the dictatorship has achieved for Tibetans, and in which way, that is correct. For instance, during the current uprising, without having to listen to what the dictators had to say, we saw what they did, heard, and the entirety of it all impressed itself painfully and terrifyingly on our minds.

And the crooked statement that “While dealing with this incident according to law, the public security and armed police always exercised restraint, upheld the law, enforced the law in a civilized way, and throughout the decision process they have never carried or used lethal weapons,” isn’t that even harder to take? Similarly, each time the dictatorship gives a false account, at odds with the actual situation, for the ears of the world public, and similarly, each time the dictatorship denigrates and violates the standard of individual rights, I wish Mao Zedong’s statement that “If one has not examined the actual condition of any matter, or its historical background and has not thoroughly understood it, whatever one says about it will be blind talk. That such blind talk has no meaning, everyone knows” would hit you on the head like a stone. Anyway, no matter how much deceit and cunning you use to give a false account and vilify the truth, “White and black cannot be interchanged. The facts can be hidden but not removed. Falsehood cannot become truth Truth,” is in the human heart, and I propose that these words of the dictators are applicable to the dictators themselves.

Basically, just as all that an individual is ultimately looking for from the time he or she is born is nothing other than happiness, and such terms as democracy, freedom, and equality have themselves become synonymous with human happiness. And the ultimate aim of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was to become the fundamental principle promoting the wellbeing of all humans living on the planet.

However, in the invasions and persecutions seen in human history, wasn’t the end result of breaking down people’s ability to think, and their hope, just the suffering of becoming subject to a dictatorial power? For instance, in the Chinese students May 4 movement [of 1919], wasn’t it because the dictators trampled on democracy, freedom and equality that those young students lost their lives for the common cause? And thus, who would not put the case for these sufferings of lifeblood and life-force before the ears of those who favor honesty and actuality?

## **Afterword**

Dear readers, fellow countrymen with altruistic concern for the cause of the black-headed Tibetans and especially those concerned with the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ magazine’s contribution:

For a long time we have consistently made great efforts to launch this year’s the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ with style and dignity for the three provinces of the Land of Snows, but in a year that turned out like a raging storm, in which every activity, coming,

staying and going, when the mountains, rivers and forests and all that is alive therein came under an iron net, with gun barrels trained upon them, who has the stomach to risk their life in a show of brazen defiance? On the other hand, how could we remain cowed in fear like sheep? Under this fear and alert, our hearts were jumping like lambs many times, but hearing the constant cries of “loyal son!” from the spirits of those departed for the cause, and appeal of the mountains, rivers and forests that “You belong to me!”, we could not remain idle.

It was under those circumstances that this year’s the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ had to be put before you. There was a lot of thinking and discussion about whether the magazine would be rejected, and if so how. There were those who said that to ensure the long-term survival of the ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ we should target the “internal enemy” rather than the “external enemy,” those who said that “smashing the egg against a rock” is foolishness, those who said that leaping into an abyss even when one knows that it is there is most regrettable, and even those who questioned its usefulness to our people. But to be clear, the magazine staff and associates did not commit to the foolishness of smashing this egg against a rock and knowingly leaping into an abyss out of rashness or for the sake of reputation. We did so out of the pain of separation from the tens of thousands of souls caught up in this deplorable violence, and the tormenting thirst for freedom, democracy and equality for those who should have them but do not.

Although constantly burdened with the prospect of rejection, in the face of the dictatorialism of the dark forces and the deceitful cunning of those ready to sell their own souls, the publishing work was fortunately accomplished without difficulty (this year the printing cost went up and the editorial team was smaller, so the “students’ supplement” and some articles could not be included), but under the financial pressure of preparations to release the magazine we were once more obliged to request friends here and there to help. So our sincere thanks go out to those dependable friends, especially many of the good people of Machu county and our generous supporters, monks and laypeople, in Dzoerge Tangkor.

In this way, it has come into your hands out of a determination to vindicate the many who succumbed to the tribulations of 2008.

In this way, it has appeared as a sketch of the history written in the blood of a generation.

In this way, now that it is finally appearing, we are relieved of a great weight, but are bound by a mental burden from which there is no release – that is bringing the next ‘Eastern Snow Mountain’ to you next year and the year after.

If 'Eastern Snow Mountain' survives, it must do so with integrity, and if it dies, it must do so with glory!

## The Editors

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- <sup>1</sup> A copy of the magazine has been reprinted in exile by [www.tibetwrites.org](http://www.tibetwrites.org). ICT plans to make the complete English translation available as soon as possible.
- <sup>2</sup> The Kuomintang of China (abbreviation KMT) (Hanyu Pinyin: Guómíndǒng, GMD), also often translated as the Chinese Nationalist Party, is the founding and the ruling political party of the Republic of China (ROC). The headquarters of KMT is located in Taiwan, and KMT is currently the majority party in terms of seats in the Legislative Yuan, and the oldest political party in the Republic of China.
- <sup>3</sup> Songtsen Gampo (Wylie: Srong-btsans Gam-po) was the founder of the Tibetan Empire (Tibetan: Bod; Chinese: Tubo/Tufan), and is considered to be the first of the three Dharma Kings who established Buddhism in Tibet. This writer is outraged at the idea that a senior local leader could have mocked Songtsen Gampo while drunk in a bar, taking it as a sign of disrespect to Tibetan traditions and people. In the Chinese records Songtsen Gampo's name is given as Qizonglongzan. Songtsen Gampo is also said to have built many Buddhist temples, including the Jokhang in Lhasa and Changzhug in Nêdong. Songtsen Gampo is said to have had five wives with Nepalese princess Bhrikuti Devi and the Chinese Princess Wencheng, being the best-known.
- <sup>4</sup> The writer is implying that these officials are breaking the continuity of the Tibetan tradition.
- <sup>5</sup> According to official statistics, rural-urban inequality in Tibetan areas rose to be the highest in the entire PRC by 2003 or 2004. The total disposable income of Tibetan farmers and nomads is considerably less than half of the average income for China's peasants, and the level of illiteracy in the TAR—close to half the population—is higher than anywhere else in the PRC. For further information and sources, see the ICT report, 'Tracking the Steel Dragon: How China's economic policies and the railway are transforming Tibet', available for downloading as a pdf file: <http://www.savetibet.org/documents/reports/tracking-steel-dragon>
- <sup>6</sup> Monks at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, where at least 10 Tibetans were shot dead during protests, applied for special permission to hold prayers for the Chinese quake victims. They also sent a moving and bold message from inside the monastery expressing compassion for those who died, and explaining that their protests had not been aimed at the Chinese people, but at the government. See ICT report, <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-newsreports/tibetans-monasteries-under-crackdown-hold-prayer-ceremonies-earthquake>
- <sup>7</sup> Following the news of the crackdown after the March protests, Tibetan students in many colleges in Tibetan areas of the PRC were moved to hold vigils and demonstrations in sympathy with those killed in the uprising, as well as appeals for clemency. On March 17, 2008, Tibetan students even held a silent vigil in Beijing to honor the courage of Tibetan protestors in Tibet. The protest ended peacefully when they were begged to stop. This writer is referring to a protest at Barkham that resulted in the detention of at least four young Tibetan students, Chentung (Tib: sPyn Dungs; aka: Ajam), Mogdra (Tib: Mog dGr; aka: Rindor), Rinchen, and Bhuchung. According to a blog report in Tibetan, posted on September 28, 2009, the students were released after several months in custody. It is not known whether one student, Kunchok, is still in detention; another account in this collection of writings suggests that this may be the case.
- <sup>8</sup> The three traditional Tibetan provinces of U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo.
- <sup>9</sup> A reference to the Chinese Communist Party's takeover of Tibet.

- <sup>10</sup> Jamyang Zhepa, or Jamyang Rinpoche, the 6th incarnation of the Jamyang Zhepa of Labrang monastery, has held a number of official positions from the 1950's onwards.
- <sup>11</sup> Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, who is in his nineties and lives in Beijing, is a senior Tibetan official and controversial figure in Tibetan politics. As the Governor of Kham when the Chinese invaded Tibet, he was captured by Communist troops as they entered Chamdo. In 1951 he was the Tibetan signatory of the '17-Point Agreement on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet'.
- <sup>12</sup> The '70,000 character petition' of 1962, which has been described as the most important text in modern Tibetan history, was written by the 10th Panchen Lama, at the time the most senior religious leader remaining in Tibet. Believed to be the most extensive internal criticism of Chinese Communist policies ever submitted to the Chinese leadership, it remained secret for 34 years until it was translated into English and published by the Tibet Information Network (now closed) as 'A Poisoned Arrow: The Secret Report of the 10th Panchen Lama'.
- <sup>13</sup> 'Alak' is a term of respect for a Rinpoche or high lama.
- <sup>14</sup> Bapa Phuntsok Wangyal or Phunwang, who was born in Kham, founded the Tibetan Communist Party and is a major figure in modern Sino-Tibetan relations. He was arrested by the Chinese authorities in 1960 and subsequently spent 18 years in the Chinese maximum security prison Qincheng in solitary confinement. His story is told in the book 'A Tibetan Revolutionary: The Political Life and Times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye' by Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap and William R. Siebenschuh.
- <sup>15</sup> Yidam Tsering, one of the leading Tibetan poets passed away on 24 October 2004 in Lanzhou, Gansu province. Although Yidam Tsering wrote only in Chinese, he was regarded as an influential figure within the contemporary Tibetan literary scene, representing the first generation of Tibetan poets writing in Chinese.
- <sup>16</sup> The body of a girl shot dead in the Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county protest on 16 March, 2008 was identified as 16-year old Lhundup Tso, a student of Ngaba County Tibetan School, according to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) and other sources. Troops opened fire on unarmed Tibetans who joined a spontaneous protest following the morning prayer session at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba, Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Amdo) shouting slogans calling for freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. (Middle school student shot dead in Ngaba County, March 20, 2008, tchrd.org)



Armed riot police confront Drepung monks on March 10, 2008, after monks began an orderly march to Lhasa to protest about restrictions on religious freedom. The protest began a wave of dissent that swept the plateau. The whereabouts of many monks from Drepung is not known.

## BEARING WITNESS: THE TIBETAN BLOGOSPHERE

While the Chinese authorities attempt to exert strict control over what information is available online, short of shutting down servers and closing all Internet traffic in parts or all of Tibet, there is little that can be done to completely block online information dissemination. Internet users in the PRC have become adept at using evasive measures such as proxy servers in order to hide their online identity – as well as using a variety of alternative terms for words that are filtered by firewalls. Consequently, the Chinese authorities frequently resort to shutting down sites if they are deemed to be carrying and disseminating sensitive information; sites hosted abroad are blocked; and state censors also trawl through sites deleting individual postings deemed to be too sensitive. In February 2009, Tibetan-language sites and postings were particularly targeted in an apparent attempt to silence potentially dissenting opinions in the approach to the first anniversary of the March protests and the 50th anniversary of the Dalai Lama's flight to into exile.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these measures, frank and independent writing about Tibet is still readily available on sites hosted within China, both in the Chinese and Tibetan languages. Much of it avoids straying into topics that may draw the attention of the Chinese authorities, while other writings are forceful in their support for Tibetan cultural identity or their condemnation of the Chinese authorities' impact on Tibet. Other, rarer, postings express in no uncertain terms opinions that if expressed in different forums would almost certainly result in the Chinese authorities taking action against the writer, particularly in the current climate of campaigns against 'reactionary' cultural activity.

Scholar Tashi Rabgey, lecturer and director of the University of Virginia Contemporary Tibetan Studies Initiative, says: "Just as 20 years ago the advent of print media and literary journals triggered a burst of interest in self-expression and social critique, the recent arrival of the Internet has heightened the self-awareness and reflexivity of an entirely new generation of Tibetans. This new cultural moment is potentially even more significant because of the speed and physical reach of computer-mediated information. Discussions on one cultural website during its first months of existence revealed an acute dissatisfaction with the current Tibetan elite as well as a collective vision for Tibet that encompasses all Tibetan-speaking areas. This coincides with the general impetus toward increased regional integration. In nearly every aspect of social, political, and economic life, the various Tibetan autonomous areas share far more in common with each other than with the Chinese provinces to which they have been

assigned... The Internet has accelerated the development of these positions by collapsing physical space and bringing Tibetans in Beijing, Lhasa and Labrang into a single conversation.”<sup>2</sup>

The use of the internet and text messaging undoubtedly contributed to the spread of dissent across the Tibetan plateau and the momentum of the protests after March 10. As a result in many areas, laptops and mobile phones have been seized by the authorities.

The following blog postings have all been translated from Chinese into English by ICT, and represent just a small cross-section of the type of blog posting appearing on the Internet about Tibet. (A selection of postings from Tibetan into English is available on the High Peaks Pure Earth blog at [www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).) ICT has taken the precaution of not identifying the writers in case they may be in some way penalized by the authorities: often, writing provocative opinions for a domestic audience is more tolerable to the Chinese authorities than if those same opinions were intended for a foreign audience.

### **“My beliefs”**

*“President Hu’s concept of constructing a harmonious society demands a requirement of us to get rid of... internal barriers. Harmony cannot be realized by relying on oppressive policies, but needs instead to be derived from peace. My understanding of the word ‘harmony’ refers to peace and equality, implying exchange and consultation. Harmony needs mutual understanding, the promotion of exchange, and building peace together.”*

In this posting, a writer in a Tibetan area of Gansu province reminisces about the changes his family has witnessed in Tibet over the decades of Chinese rule, and the adaptations they have either chosen or felt compelled to make in order to conform to the demands of China’s rule of Tibet. He goes on to examine the compromises he has made, in particular regarding his Buddhist faith and his membership of the Chinese Communist Party. He laments the difficulties inherent in being a devout Buddhist and Tibetan in the modern Chinese state, and questions the Chinese authorities’ tendency to overly politicize Tibetan people’s religiosity in the wake of the March protests.

December 18, 2008

Everyone should have their own beliefs. People without beliefs live life like they’re dead, completely without value. I am a dyed-in-the-wool Tibetan, which is not to say

that I completely understand or have carried forth the traditional culture of Tibetans, but rather as far as cultural significance goes, I am a qualified Tibetan. I am referring to blood lines. My father and mother and their fathers and mothers were all Tibetan. As far as I can tell, my ancestors were all Amdowan, they all spoke Tibetan, ate tsampa [roasted barley, a staple food on the Tibetan plateau], and wore Tibetan dress. What's changed now though is that my father and mother and my maternal grandmother no longer wear Tibetan dress every day. Particularly my father and mother, who only wear it perhaps once or twice a year. It's been this way for as long as I can remember, and it's probably been this way ever since 1959. From that time on when my father left the monkhood and started work and my mother was one of the first women in Sangchu county [Chinese: Xiahe] to go to school after liberation – the new youth who had to closely keep up with the times, and who couldn't be so backward as to wear Tibetan clothes every day. My maternal grandmother was one of the first Tibetan women in Sangchu county to work for the Party, and to this day she loves talking about when she started working for the Party in 1950 and didn't have to go and labor anymore but still collected a wage to take home at the end of each month. The government arranged for her to study in Beijing in what is now the Central Minorities Institute, and she went on tours to the northeast and took part in National Day celebrations in Beijing. She went to all these different places and saw all these different things. But starting in 1958, such days as those left her and our family like a skin being shed from a snake. It was from that point onwards that wearing Han clothes and speaking the Chinese language started to become a matter of necessity. During the Cultural Revolution, the whole family was sent to the countryside to a mountain village a hundred li away from Sangchu county. I've heard my father and mother say that the village was very beautiful with babbling streams and dense forests amid enchanting scenery. Whenever my mother talks about this place she always says that when she first got there she felt so relaxed with none of the squalls of struggle in her ears and at night she could sleep in peace. It was during this time that my mother bore me; if it wasn't for a tractor taking us to the prefectural hospital in Tsoe [Chinese: Hezuo] because of a difficult delivery, my birthplace would have been that small village, Guda. When I was about one year old, we returned to the town. I hadn't been back to Guda again since until the summer of this year when I had an opportunity to go back to the little village. It is indeed very beautiful, but the thick forests can no longer be seen. There's a small stand of trees. I didn't see any workers but there were newly planted trees in the mountains that were festooned with leaves of delicate green. Perhaps in another 50 years they will recover their former glory.

Hmm. I've said all of this when originally I was going to talk about beliefs – how did I get onto talking about all this? Jabbering away – perhaps it's got something to do

with my age. I hear as people get older they reminisce about the past more and more. As I get older, I'm more and more like my people and beliefs as they too get older, where more and more they move away from the real world. I read an essay by a Han friend who said that we Tibetans love to dream and that we live in a dream-world. Ha ha – he could have been talking about me, and I can feel now that I've become sensitive, stubborn and impatient with many contradictions between what I feel and the real world. Take my beliefs, for example. In 1999 I joined the Party but I have been a Buddhist since I was very young – both beliefs are a contradiction. In the past 50 years, the former has vigorously tried to destroy the latter. In the past 10 years, I have tried to find the balancing point for both in my heart. Although they haven't both joined, I can say for now at least that they are in peaceful co-existence. I hope there won't be a day when it all turns, because on that day I'll be ruined. How would I choose if it came down to it? Should the former be allowed to destroy the latter or should the latter be allowed to destroy the former? I've no way of knowing, but it's more likely I'd choose the former because after all, the former has a long history – which is not to say that the older something is the more valuable it is. Buddhism has been around in the world for more than 2500 years, and is definitely worth a lot more money. From an economist's point of view, it'd be good to choose it. This religion thing is very strange. You cannot believe and not feel a thing, but as soon as you believe in it again it will often be moved. Slowly slowly, fame and fortune in the human world and even life and death itself no longer dominate your thoughts, and you find happiness in a destination of noble purity for the soul. People who don't understand religion say it is an illusion, but you can definitely feel it in your heart becoming more and more true, and it makes you more and more happy. With regard to Buddhist beliefs, the Tibetan people's Buddhist beliefs were interrupted from 1959 onwards, all the way through until 1980 when they were slowly revived.<sup>3</sup> Many families like ours once more threw themselves happily into the Buddhist revival, and once more the turning of prayer wheels and the reciting of scriptures became the most important thing in people's lives.

There is something that has always left me ashamed and upset, and that is that since I was very young I didn't study the Tibetan language to the extent that now I don't even speak Tibetan. In 1981 when I saw the Panchen Lama for the first time (the first time he had been to Tibetan areas after leaving prison), along with my classmates (third grade elementary school students) I said that the Panchen Lama was a feudal lord and a high living Buddha for the Tibetan people. Tibetans (meaning farmers and herders – at the time I felt very fortunate that I lived in a family of cadres) even ate the shit of living Buddhas, and Tibetans drank the piss of living Buddhas. I believed this, and couldn't understand why when I went home and talked like this with the grown-ups

in the family they'd be angered and I'd be beaten. This was the first time I'd heard the word 'Panchen,' and the first time I was beaten because of the word 'Panchen.' Even though I felt aggrieved at the time I still believed that the grown-ups were right. And when boys bullied me from a very young age by calling me "Old Tibetan" or "Alos" [a derogatory term for Tibetans] – they were deliberately trying to provoke and bully me. The Panchen Lama was definitely great, but I could never tell anyone this because that was what the grown-ups in the family had told me.

Oh, it's so hard to be a person but even harder to be a Tibetan person, and harder still to be a Buddhist Tibetan. Things are much better now, and you can go to the monastery in relative freedom to light candles and recite prayers. The contradiction in my heart between my belief in Communism and my belief in Buddhism is very benign and there has never been a conflict. But after the events of March 14, everything suddenly became strongly oppositional. Belief almost became linked with class struggle again. Now it seems it's no longer a question of believing or not believing in anything, it's become a question of political standpoint, a question of which side of the battle-lines do you stand. Particularly in Kanlho prefecture. The prefectural Party Secretary has taken command and there is comprehensive political thought education throughout the entire prefecture – the wave of education from Lhasa is apparently reaching us even here. It doesn't matter what the outcome of this education is, I just hope with all of my being that our prefectural Party Secretary doesn't turn into the second Zhang Qingli, making mountains out of molehills. Strongly linking religious belief to class struggle and forcing politics onto peasants and herders who only ever wanted religion puts them in a position of having to make a very difficult choice. In fact, religious belief is at times a very simple thing. When you have religious belief, material pleasures will never be in first place. But at times it can also be very complex. Religious martyrs often regard their own lives as insignificant, and regard religious sacrifice as the highest glory. But speaking of martyrs, I believe that the Tibetan people, brought up for thousands of years on the tenets of Buddhism, will never turn to extremism or terrorism. But it is the natural sentiment of every Buddhist to protect their own faith, and it's difficult to say what form of external expression this internal resistance will lead to. No matter what, whether violent or non-violent, this inner barrier will always be a hindrance to the realization of harmony. President Hu's concept of constructing a harmonious society demands a requirement of us to get rid of these internal barriers. Harmony cannot be realized by relying on oppressive policies, but needs instead to be derived from peace. My understanding of the word 'harmony' refers to peace and equality, implying exchange and consultation. Harmony needs mutual understanding, the promotion of exchange, and building peace together.

## **“The Stupid Zhang Qingli”**

*“His ability to govern is quite mediocre.”*

The following piece is by a Tibetan blogger in Amdo who has published several insightful and thoughtful pieces on Tibet on his blog. Usually contemplative and generous in his appraisals of the overall situation in Tibet, he is uncharacteristically harsh in his criticisms of TAR Party Secretary Zhang Qingli – although he is careful to couch his criticisms amid “patriotic” opinions. Originally posted in late November 2008, by the middle of February 2009, dozens of readers had left positive comments or simple “thumbs up” icons in support of his basic sentiment.

November 29, 2008.

Leaving aside the question of the Dalai Lama’s political standpoint, let us talk instead about his religious status and his influence upon the Tibetan people and others who believe in Tibetan Buddhism: there is no one in the world like him – his influence is comparable only to that of the Pope upon Roman Catholics. In the eyes of westerners, the Dalai Lama is the embodiment of peace and non-violence, a model of morality to the people of the world, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and the most outstanding representative of Tibetan culture. Wherever the Dalai Lama goes, people spontaneously come forward with welcome and reverence welling from the bottom of their hearts.

As Party Secretary of the TAR when the Tibet question became a focus of global concern, Zhang Qingli’s stringent expressions of protecting the unity of the motherland were correct; but his statements to the media condemning the Dalai Lama as having “the face of a human but the heart of a beast,” and of being “a wolf in monk’s robes”, and by turning the Lhasa Olympic torch relay ceremony into a ‘struggle session’ against the Dalai Lama not only made him lose his own personal demeanor, it was also seriously damaging to the state’s Tibet policies and the state’s image in the world over its treatment of ethnic minorities.<sup>4</sup> Solely on the basis of these words, he could have pushed many Tibetans who originally supported the unification of the motherland but are still Buddhists to the other side. These people probably never before demanded Tibetan independence or greater autonomy, but when they saw their own “Pope” being insulted they had no hesitation in taking a stand to defend him and to defend their own faith. His words could also have affirmed the judgment of China’s Tibet policies among numerous European and American Tibet sympathizers, consolidating their belief that Tibet is full of ethnic repression and religious suppression. And so

therefore, I think Zhang Qingli's comments were not only mistimed and irrelevant, they were also extremely stupid, bad for the country, bad for the people, and bad for everything. Judging him by this, his ability to govern is quite mediocre.

The above is just the opinion of one; it is entirely from the perspective of "love the country, love religion," and is not intended in the slightest to defame Zhang Qingli.

## **Chinese bloggers as witnesses to events in Tibet**

*"You might think a civil war was going on here"*

Close monitoring of Chinese language blogs sometimes reveals inadvertent glimpses of the security situation inside Tibet. In the following few extracts, for example, details given by bloggers have provided minor although useful corroboration of information received from other sources.

One Chinese tourist to Lhasa noted in passing on his blog that he had to cross a PAP checkpoint to reach Ganden monastery outside the city. ICT had received occasional unconfirmed reports of greatly increased security at Ganden, but this was the first from a Chinese source:

December 15, 2008

*After passing through the PAP checkpoint, we went along the 3800 meter-high zig-zagging mountain road built specially to the monastery on Wangbori Mountain, and ascended up to Ganden monastery.*

Chinese bloggers who visit Lhasa on vacation or for other reasons rarely omit mention of the security presence in the city, as in the following excerpt from a much longer account of traveling in Tibet.



A Tibetan man passes armed security personnel on duty in Lhasa, with riot shields on the ground behind them, December, 2008.

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Fully armed police on a high-profile patrol through Jokhang Square in the heart of Lhasa in December 2008. Photo: Ryan Gauvin.

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December 12, 2008.

*In the morning Old Song went to put the Landcruiser into the shop and the three of us went to see the Potala. We first of all watched the street scenes around the Barkhor and saw there were quite a few police on the streets, in particular by the gates of important government offices. The police are all armed with some standing back to back and holding shields. It seems like it's still quite tense...*

*There are more than a hundred military police stationed at the Potala and I made a point of checking out the mood of the lamas inside. Many of them had really impatient expressions, like they wanted to riot. If you do we'll turn the state machinery on you and kill you!*

Chinese bloggers also posted similar accounts detailing the security situation in eastern Tibet. For instance, in Kardze county, the scene of continuing sporadic protests since March 2008 and a highly intensified police presence, a Chinese tourist wrote the following description of the security presence on her blog:

### **Kardze town beneath the Shaluli mountains**

December 22, 2008

*Kardze town is the prefectural capital of Kardze prefecture, and is a typical Sichuan Tibetan town. [...] Because of the sudden "March 14" incident, there are still quite a lot of PAP stationed when you go there, with a police vehicle at every junction and officers standing in rows armed with live ammunition. If you didn't know what was happening I'm afraid you might think a civil war was going on here.*

The following blog is a rare, if cautiously-worded, account of the protests from the side of security personnel sent to implement the suppression. Although the account, which appeared on a blog on December 31, 2008, does not include operational details, it gives a revealing insight into the motivations of, and conditions for, PAP troops on the ground.



View of a military camp in Kardze, near the monastery, the historic center of the Trehor region in the Tibetan area of Kham. Hardline Chinese campaigns against the Dalai Lama and economic policies that have led to the loss of Tibetans' land and livelihoods as well as the extraction of minerals by Chinese prospectors have caused deep resentment in the region. The recent intensification of restrictions on religious expression have compounded frustration and increased the likelihood of Tibetans taking risk to express their dissent.

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## Recollections of a military career

December 31, 2008

Our unit received an order from the Central Military Committee [zhongyang junwei]. Go to Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture [in Gansu province] and maintain stability! This was a rare opportunity, one that people who have been in for 10 years and more never get, but here's me getting it after only eight years! I was utterly thrilled when the order came in, but the unit commander said the tour was top secret and there was the chance of sacrifice! Several comrades in arms requested not to go. I was thinking, it doesn't matter if I go and never come back, but I just have to go! On March 18 we went to the specified location and when we got there everywhere was a mess! Shops had been trashed and government offices were destroyed beyond recognition. We quickly went into action. (I can't say what these actions were at this time as it's a military secret.) It was cold that day and snow started falling heavily as much as 10cm thick. We were all frozen cold! There was ice on our washing water in the morning! Some of my comrades in arms didn't wash for as long as three months! When I think

about it now... At night, everyone had to sleep on the frozen ground! It was so cold, several people would huddle together but still not be a single degree warmer. We stayed cold all the way through until the morning. If you were on sentry duty at night it was best not to sleep. If you tried to sleep it was not only just too cold, but you got colder still from standing. (Basically, you'd spend a day on sentry duty, and then a day later, spend a night on sentry duty.) In this way a lot of the new recruits got fevers of 40 degrees C. And that was how we spent six months there! During this time I experienced hardships, pressures and joys that ordinary people never experience! On September 20, we received orders from the center to return to our base. When we got back I discovered I'd changed, changed so that the old life no longer suited me. I was also slightly ill. After getting back I worked hard to get back to where I was six months before, and I slowly got used to the life of before again.

## **A 2008 record of Aid Tibet work.**

December 11, 2008

*In accordance with arrangements by the prefectural committee, the focus of our county's education activities has immediately changed, turning completely towards condemning the Dalai's crimes, and carrying out comprehensive checks and controls on all monasteries in the county, all monks and nuns, all business people and all outsiders.*

All over Tibet there are Chinese government officials who have been voluntarily drafted in from the Chinese mainland as part of the 'Aid Tibet' program, which brings managerial, technical and other expertise to remote jurisdictions in an attempt to promote economic development. One such official from Liaoning province in China's northeast was posted in Darchen (Chinese: Baqing) county in Nagchu (Chinese: Naqu) prefecture in the TAR, and put online his entire diary for the year 2008. This account includes detail of the official's experiences in March, 2008.

March 9: The county committee convenes a meeting in the evening about establishing stability work deployments during the sensitive period of "March 10."

March 10: Song Xiaoyi represents the fifth group of Aid Tibet cadres returning to Tibet for their first period.

March 12: In accordance with arrangements by the prefectural committee, the focus of our county's education activities has immediately changed, turning completely towards condemning the Dalai's crimes, and carrying out comprehensive checks and

controls on all monasteries in the county, all monks and nuns, all business people and all outsiders. At the same time, all contradictions, disputes, and prominent and difficult problems among the masses have been enumerated to understand the mood of the masses and grasp the social situation. A 12-strong force of police rushed through the night to set up a roadblock in Rongbu [Tibetan: Rongpu] in Suo [Tibetan: Sog] county; police in Zaduo [Tibetan: Dzatoe] county in Qinghai have been requested to establish a road block on the border between the two counties to control those Qinghai masses coming to Tibet to participate in the trouble.

March 14: Violent incidents of beating, smashing, looting and arson taking place in Lhasa.

March 16: The county and prefecture are in lock-step. A solemn meeting was held in a small hall in the county to denounce and expose the Dalai clique's crimes of "splitting the motherland, destroying Tibet and ruining religion." There was a total of 220 people from the prefecture party standing committee; the prefecture party committee secretary general; Zhao Hongyang, leader of the steering group on themed educational activities in Baqing [Tibetan: Drachen] county; leaders from the county's four groups [details of these groups are not mentioned]; members of the prefecture propaganda reporting group and county-level offices; enterprises and work units; PAP; troops stationed in Baqing; retiree personnel and representatives; monastery democratic management committee personnel; and representatives of school teachers. A mass signing ceremony for cadres was held to "fiercely denounce Dalai, defend the unity of the motherland."

March 17: County-level cadres organized work groups to go to offices in all townships.

March 19: After Leshan TV station interviewed the fifth group of Aid Tibet cadres, county party secretary Zhang Xin finished his leave early and returned to Baqing.

March 21: County party secretary Zhang Xin returned to Baqing, and the county committee held a work meeting through the night on further strengthening stability. On the basis of stability work, the county will again examine, again analyze, again research, and again adopt a series of work measures around stability in the whole county to ensure peace on the sensitive day of the lighting of the Olympic torch, and to ensure a peaceful and stable situation in Baqing county.

March 24: Our county peacefully passed the sensitive day of the lighting of the Olympic torch.

March 26: The county party committee held a joint meeting on researching and implementing stability maintaining work over the recent period.

March 30: In order to stabilize the mood of small businesses, the county committee convened a “Meeting for Baqing small businesses on Party building and social harmony.” Important county Party and county government leaders participated and delivered speeches demanding people dispel their concerns and maintain strong faith. Meanwhile, our county peacefully passed the sensitive day of the Olympic torch entering Beijing.

March 31: The county party secretary Zhang Xin was accompanied by prefecture committee members and the prefecture committee secretary general Zhao Hongyang on an inspection tour of Jiangmian township, Longka monastery, and Hongmian Yuanxiao.

April 1: The autonomous region held a teleconference on deepening and consolidating work to uphold stability, and the autonomous regional party secretary Zhang Qingli made an important speech. The prefecture party secretary Bianba Zhaxi [Penpa Tashi] raised some concrete asks at the Naqu branch meeting, and the county party secretary Zhang Xin raised nine suggestions at the Baqing branch meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> “Curb on Tibetan language blog posts,” High Peaks Pure Earth, February 10, 2009, available at: [www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).

<sup>2</sup> “Bringing Tibetans together through cyberspace: the impact of China’s digital revolution on a new generation,” ICT publication, “Incomparable Warriors: Non-violent Resistance in Contemporary Tibet,” available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).

<sup>3</sup> This was a period of relative liberalization following the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

<sup>4</sup> In a rare departure, the International Olympics Committee said that it “regrets that political statements were made during the closing ceremony of the torch relay in Tibet,” referring to comments made by Communist Party chief in the Tibet Autonomous Region Zhang Qingli. ICT report, International Olympic Committee sets precedent with reprimand for Tibet Party boss, June 26, 2008, <https://nl.savetibet.org/news/newssitem.php?id=1329>



Armed police in Labrang (Chinese: Xiahe) town, Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) county, Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province on February 12, 2009. Security forces have been increased in several Tibetan areas prior to Losar (Tibetan new year) and the 50th anniversary of the March 10, 1959 uprising which led to the Dalai Lama's escape into exile. (Photo: Free Tibet Campaign)

## WOESER'S WRITINGS

Poet and author Woesser has documented in unprecedented detail the events of the past year in Tibet, including an evaluation and publication online of hundreds of separate reports of events during the protests – an archive of material that remains one of the most important sources in a year that has transformed the political situation in Tibet. Woesser now lives in Beijing having been removed from an editing position in Lhasa because of her online writings, and lives under constant and close police supervision together with her husband Wang Lixiong, also a dissident writer who has written extensively on Tibet and the Tibetan people among other topics deemed sensitive by the Chinese authorities.<sup>1</sup>

### **Remember and memorialize louder than the gunfire!**

January 1, 2009

*In this powerful article written to mark the New Year in the western calendar, Woesser describes the fear prevalent among Tibetans in Lhasa, and urges people not to forget the events of the previous year.*

Because we're still all so deeply bogged down by what just happened in 2008, it seems that 2009 has crashed into us without warning. I'm reminded once more of what a friend in Lhasa says only when drunk: you just don't greet each other with 'Tashi Deleg' (good fortune in all things) when there is no good fortune – what we should be saying to each other is "Zubzub jis" (be very careful).

Terror still hangs like a black cloud over the heads of Tibetans. A week ago, the Deputy Director of Lhasa Municipality Public Security Bureau declared at a press conference the detention of 59 'rumor mongers' who had "incited racist sentiment." The so-called rumors referred to "illegally downloading reactionary songs from the Internet"... A journalist with the foreign media asked me "What kind of song is 'reactionary?'" For a moment, I really didn't know how to answer. If I said that these 'reactionary songs' were songs of yearning and praise for the Dalai Lama, then surely this would sound ridiculous to a westerner who had never experienced such extreme repression.

Not only was there March, April and May with wanted notices being broadcast every night; not only was there June, July and August with armed police patrolling the streets; and not only was there September, October and November when cameras were

installed everywhere; there was also last night in Tibet, where friends are telling me that every night you can hear dogs suddenly start barking incessantly and you can't help being terrified, terrified that your door will be kicked down by state security, terrified that you'll be locked away in the night for some unknown crime, terrified that your loved ones or you yourself will disappear like vapor... I have heard this told to me again and again in a whisper, and it saddens me so deeply.

What consequences will this terror bring? Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung Sang Suu Kyi has said: "Within a system that denies fundamental human rights, fear becomes a kind of fashion: fear of going to prison, fear of torture, fear of death, fear of losing friends, family, property or the means of making a living, fear of poverty, fear of solitude, fear of failure. The most insidious form of terror is the one disguised as common sense and even as wisdom, where brave daily acts of helping to preserve people's own self-respect and inner dignity is condemned as stupid, reckless, worthless and trivial."

To compare this with Lhasa today, Tibetans who are unwilling to speak their minds instead spill their hearts in their blogs: "Lhasa is simply a 'stupid' city with 'stupid' Party and government offices; politicians from home and abroad are 'stupid' and Tibetans are getting more 'stupid' than each other, and it seems they're getting 'stupid' ever faster." To put it another way, people are playing dumb. It is only if they play dumb that they can hide their terror and escape their internal agonies. Those killed are gone, and wounds have scabbed over. How are we supposed to live with this hard and soft of carrot and stick?

I do not blindly praise people in western societies. But an American president once said some of the most incisive words in the history of humanity. He said a democratic society cannot be arbitrarily deprived of four freedoms: freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom from want and freedom from fear. As mortals, as ordinary people, we should be able to share in these most basic freedoms but regrettably, these most basic freedoms are as unattainable as stars in heaven. It is not much that we want, in actual fact; but is it too demanding to want the right to live, a meaningful existence and hope for the future?

During the advent to 2009, I received many text messages wishing a prosperous and happy new year and good fortune for the New Year. I know at this moment, people the world over are heaping best wishes and blessing upon each other – a product of human nature. I would also add: in the New Year, I hope you will be free from want. And to that I would in fact add, I hope that everyone will be free from fear! We should not be reconsidering the way we live our lives, saying farewell and forgetting 2008, but we should remember and memorialize louder than the gunfire!

*(Written originally for RFA; translated by ICT.)*

## **"The dagger revealed with the unfolding of the map"**

November 12, 2008

*"In our circumstances today, this 'fight' does not signify as it did for Mao something bloodstained and violent, an armed revolution, a class struggle. Non-violence is also a struggle, a greater and more enduring fight! For each individual, this fight starts with oneself, in the present moment, in each particular detail of living. Let us begin identifying ourselves as Tibetans, for this is our duty: any effort of daily life, however small, is still a kind of struggle. What must be clearly remembered is that the struggle is not irrational, but rational; not impulsive, but deliberate; not necessarily lofty and tragic, but reflected in practical action; bound up in the defense of the rights of every human being, the old and the young, children, men and women, clergy and laypeople: defending and protecting the rights of all human beings."*

The eighth round of Sino-Tibetan talks<sup>2</sup> was, obviously, a major turning-point. Beijing harshly declared that the Venerable Dalai Lama "had absolutely no standing to negotiate with the Central Government." The Vice-Minister for the United Front who was taking part in the negotiations declared at a press conference, without the slightest concern for etiquette, that the Venerable Dalai Lama "was concealing his evil intent" and that his message was a "deceitful lie." He even denied that Deng Xiaoping uttered that saying thirty years ago which people have since overused, namely, "Anything can be discussed except independence." To these developments, one upright and much-respected Tibetan retorted, "This is precisely the way of hegemony!"

After their initial shock and repugnance, many Tibetans inside the PRC have recognized that this outcome was not wholly unanticipated. When Beijing sprang this on the world, like the dagger revealed with the unrolling of the map, it was accompanied by a murderous glance; but it was only the unmasking of their true face. And like a thunderclap it put an end to the last thread of illusion that still lingered in Tibetan hearts. It's been known for a long time that little could be expected from talks with a high-handed adversary who was lacking in good faith, but it took the eighth round, and Beijing's callous judgment, for Tibetans to lose hope entirely. One Tibetan said, "That moment of disillusionment is perhaps a new turning-point, and it could lead to a new breakthrough."

While witnessing the enormous change in Sino-Tibetan relations and looking back on the turmoil in our world, we can see that history repeats itself. I'm referring to an essay by the founder of Communist China, Mao Zedong, directed at America and the Kuomintang, or, as he called them, "Imperialism and its running dog." He appealed to

the Chinese people: "Cast aside illusions and prepare to fight." I'm not exactly a fan of Mao, although the indoctrination of my formative years set him up – in my mind and countless other minds – as a god. But on this point (prescinding from the others), we can discover in his essay a practical significance. We need only reverse the roles.

Mao says, "Imperialist elements will never repent and see the light until they are exterminated... To hope to persuade the imperialists to have a change of heart and reverse course is an impossibility. The only way is to organize our forces and fight them..." Hence Mao demanded that clear-headed people "fulfill their responsibility to co-opt elements within the middle classes and centrist parties, laggards in every stratum of society, all the people who are still uncommitted... to use goodwill to help them, to criticize their indecisiveness, to teach them, to win them over so they will take a stand on the side of the masses, not to let imperialism draw them away: tell them to cast aside illusions and prepare to fight."

But in our circumstances today, this 'fight' does not signify as it did for Mao something bloodstained and violent, an armed revolution, a class struggle. Non-violence is also a struggle, a greater and more enduring fight! For each individual, this fight starts with oneself, in the present moment, in each particular detail of living. Let us begin identifying ourselves as Tibetans, for this is our duty: any effort of daily life, however small, is still a kind of struggle. What must be clearly remembered is that the struggle is not irrational, but rational; not impulsive, but deliberate; not necessarily lofty and tragic, but reflected in practical action; bound up in the defense of the rights of every human being, the old and the young, children, men and women, clergy and laypeople: defending and protecting the rights of all human beings.

'Casting aside illusions' does not mean giving up our dreams. There's a young Tibetan who says that November 4, 2008 was the most beautiful day in his life. Although he could not cast a ballot, he too wanted to celebrate Obama's election to the American Presidency. For Obama's victory was historic; it showed people that nothing is impossible. A dream that was once beyond belief can come true today; so why can't our dreams of today come true tomorrow? But to reach that tomorrow will require a struggle. If you think you will get it as a favor from someone, if you think it will all come soon or easy, then those are the illusions you have to cast aside.

*(Written for RFA; translation by Andrew Clark, Ragged Banner.  
www.raggedbanner.com.)*

## Notes by translator, Andrew Clark ([www.raggedbanner.com](http://www.raggedbanner.com))

**The eighth round of Sino-Tibetan talks.** The first round occurred in September 2002, after a nine-year period during which there had been no contacts between the PRC and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

**The Vice-Minister for the United Front.** The ‘united front’ was a tactic dear to Trotsky and Lenin, and it has been modified and reapplied numerous times during the history of the Communist Party. The essential idea is to form a tactical alliance with non-Communist parties while seeking to supplant them. The United Front Work Department is a substantial bureaucracy within the Communist Party of China, tasked with directing policy toward ethnic minorities, intellectuals, and entrepreneurs, as well as the vestiges of eight non-Communist parties that have been preserved as to serve as evidence of democracy in the PRC.

**That Deng Xiaoping uttered that saying.** Tibetan sources have affirmed for years that Deng Xiaoping made this comment during a 1979 meeting in Beijing with Gyalo Thondup, an elder brother of the Dalai Lama. The meeting is undisputed, though what was said at it is not easy to establish. I am not aware, however, of any previous official denial from the Chinese side regarding this quotation.

**The way of hegemony.** Literally, ‘Hegemonism.’ A formulaic Communist term frequently applied to the foreign policy of the United States.

**Like the dagger revealed with the unrolling of the map.** This proverbial saying was inspired by Jing Ke’s unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the first Emperor of China, as recorded by the historian Sima Qian. It denotes the revelation of one’s true (and hostile) intentions at a late stage.

## The Sudden Appearance of Advertisements for the Sale of Guns all over Tibet is Not A Joke

December 15, 2008

*In this article, translated into English by High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)), Woesser recounts seeing hand-scrawled advertisements on walls in Lhasa offering guns and drugs for sale – apparently, entrepreneurial gun-runners from the Chinese interior saw business opportunities in Tibet having been convinced by the Chinese media in the wake of the March protests that the Tibetans involved were “terrorists.” Woesser also relates having to report sightings of the advertisements herself to police who were either unaware or unconcerned.*

After the “Incident of March 14”, all official media, from Beijing to the various regions in China, exaggerated in the extreme incidents of “beating, smashing, robbing and burning” in Lhasa and other regions in Tibet by continuously claiming that they had “hunted down and seized” batches and batches of “firearms and ammunition” in many monasteries and tried their best to create evidence that Tibetans had become “terrorists.” As a result, this not only caused people in inland China to change their attitude when talking about “Tibet” but also many mini-advertisements in Amdo, U-tsang and Kham (traditionally, Tibet includes Amdo, U-Tsang, Kham and other regions) have quietly appeared overnight, the content of which is unexpectedly about the sale of real firearms and ammunition!

It is said that these are all mini-advertisements put up by gun dealers from all over China. Since they are “terrorists,” there will be demand for firearms and ammunition. The gun dealers believe the authorities’ propaganda that the Tibetans are “terrorists,” but they believe it’s the perfect business opportunity they wished for, whereupon, they have travelled a great distance to come to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, where the sky is high and the rivers are long, and sent out information about supplying firearms to the ubiquitous Tibetan terrorists by randomly putting up mini-advertisements everywhere.

This news, which sounds preposterous, was first told to me by a friend from Amdo. He also said the following with a serious tone: “look, the power of market economy is great after all.”

I originally thought this was a joke made by Tibetans to mock current affairs, but, I did not expect that I would be fortunate enough to witness the joke to become a reality as soon as I arrived at my house in Lhasa. Opposite our house, there is a ‘retirement house’ which is rented to temporary workers from other places. On its walls where many mini-advertisements are repeatedly put up or written, I saw a line of hair-raising black characters, which read “13579293739 for knockout drugs and guns.”

Look, there are not only knockout drugs for sale, but also firearms! Certainly, what they wrote in their ads are all in Chinese characters and they are not necessarily selling firearms specifically to Tibetans. But this was clearly the joke told to me by my Amdo friend. Morals of the world are indeed splendid! What is more splendid is that there was a patrol car parked next to the mini-advertisement!

Later, on the day of 21st August, after I had been taken by the Tibetan and Chinese public security and interrogated for eight hours,<sup>3</sup> to show my gratitude for sending me home, I deliberately told the story to Wangdu, the fat deputy director of the Public Security Bureau. He gave a snort of contempt and said it was a fabricated story and he was

about to criticize me for “having an ulterior motive,” so before the night fell on Lhasa, I immediately pointed out the rather eye-catching “knockout drugs and guns” opposite my house and said the following words to the deputy director, “Director, you should track down the gun dealer by following clues. Make a phone call to this phone number. So brazenly selling guns and knockout drugs is simply damaging the great stability of Tibet.” All the public security officers were surprised. Ha, they hadn’t thought that I could “provide meritorious service by reporting [illegal activities] to the authorities.”

Later I read a blog written by a Han Chinese who went to Tibetan areas as a tourist and wrote that when he travelled to the famous travel destination Shangri-la he also saw the mini-advertisement about “guns” which made him shake with fear. He wrote baffled, “Ads for the sale of ‘firearms’ in Tibetan areas are just like those of ‘the [fake] I.D Group of Southeast Asia’ in Beijing and those of ‘detectives’ in Shenzhen, that leave their phone numbers openly and legally. I asked Xiaoxiao to take a photo of the advertisement that had shocked me, and his angle for the photo is rather interesting: next to the advertisement for firearms there is a hotpot restaurant which is permeated with warm-heartedness. The people in the photo sitting there eating hotpot are uniformed police.”

Since the advertisements for firearms have suddenly been put up all over Tibet just as the spring wind comes overnight, it cannot be justified if I show indifference to a new thing like this, therefore, I document it as such.

*(Written for RFA; translation  
High Peaks Pure Earth.  
[www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).)*



A Tibetan woman turns a prayer wheel in Kham. Photo: ICT

## The Fear in Lhasa

August 23, 2008 On the road out of Lhasa

*On a visit to Lhasa in August, 2008, Woeseer was detained and questioned. She was released and left the city two days later. In response to the incident, she wrote the poem, saying: I was in Lhasa from August 17 to August 23, my shortest stay ever, and I had no choice about leaving... these words were to remember it by. And there's something I want to say: You have the guns. I have a pen." Andrew Clark translated the poem from Chinese into English. (<http://www.raggedbanner.com/pTFIL.html>)*



*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Now a city of fear.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Where the fear is greater than all the fear after '59, '69, and '89 put together.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Where the fear is in your breathing, in the beating of your heart,  
In the silence when you want to speak but don't,  
In the catch in your throat.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Where constant fear has been wrought by legions with their guns,  
By countless police with their guns,  
By plainclothesmen beyond counting,  
And still more by the colossal machinery of the State that stands behind them night and day;  
But you mustn't point a camera at them or you'll get a gun pointed at you,  
maybe hauled off into some corner and no one will know.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Where the fear starts at the Potala and strengthens as you go east, through the Tibetans' quarter.  
Dreadful footsteps reverberate all round, but in daylight you won't glimpse even their shadow;  
They are like demons invisible by day, but the horror is worse, it could drive you mad.  
A few times I have passed them and the cold weapons in their hands.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa,  
Where the fear is now minutely scanned by the cameras that stud avenues and alleys and offices,  
and every monastery and temple hall;  
All those cameras,  
Taking it all in,  
Swiveling from the outer world to peer inside your mind.*

*"Zap zap jé!<sup>h</sup> They're watching us" – among Tibetans this has become a byword,  
furtively whispered.*

*A hurried farewell to Lhasa:  
The fear in Lhasa breaks my heart. Got to write it down.*

## Let Us Make Lamp Offerings and Light Candles to Commemorate the Souls of the Deceased

January 8, 2009

*In this posting, translated into English by High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)) Woesser contributes to the discussion among Tibetans about not celebrating the traditional Tibetan new year – Losar – as in years gone by, but instead to mark the festival in mourning and remembrance of the Tibetans who were killed or imprisoned during previous year's protests.*

*There is a precedent for this move. Tibetans in Lhasa adopted non-celebration of Losar to express collective dissatisfaction in 1992, the first Tibetan New Year following a 14-month period of martial law imposed on March 8, 1989, after three days of protests in Lhasa. According to one eyewitness account: "That year, the first day of the Tibetan New Year, called Losar, fell on March 5, the anniversary of the demonstrations in 1988 and 1989. Many Lhasa residents had decided to acknowledge the coincidence of Tibetan New Year and March 5 not by doing, but by not doing. Contrary to tradition, tattered window-awnings, dirty door-hangings, and faded whitewash remained untouched, greeting the New Year with utter cheerlessness."<sup>5</sup>*

At the beginning of the New Year, the various festivals with best wishes have arrived one after another. These festivals include those of the East, the West, Tibet and China etc. If it is really a peaceful and flourishing age, a true reunion of the entire family, and if it is indeed a period in which the old can grow old, people in the prime of their life can put their talents to use and the young can grow up and mature peacefully, then we will naturally have our own unique customs to celebrate these festivals which have lasted for centuries.

However, this year's celebration will be different. This year's differences are due to the fact that so many people have been plunged into the abyss of misery. In the land of Tibet, in the villages, pastures and towns of Amdo, central Tibet and Kham, many white-haired grandparents and parents had to endure the suffering of attending the funeral of young blacked-hair people. What is even more tragic is that some of these white-haired ones have not been able to attend the funeral services since the black-haired ones have disappeared without their corpses being able to be found. The family members do not know the day they died, thus, it is not even possible to hold the religious ceremony to release the soul of the deceased from purgatory suffering. The monasteries have already been closed, and monks expelled. There are countless vultures circling around over the desolate sky burial grounds.

Then, let us light butter lamps to make offerings in memory of the deceased, whose exact number we still do not know, in the corners where the video surveillance can not

reach. Furthermore, those of us who live in alien lands and do not have butter lamps to offer, let us light candles for those deceased whose exact number we still do not know. Like March 16 last year, several hundred Tibetan students from the Northwestern University for Nationalities in Lanzhou spread out banners with the slogan “share weal and woe with Tibetans” on the ground, and staged a sit-in under candlelight throughout the night. On March 17, over a hundred Tibetan students from the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing also lit candles and staged a sit-in on the campus, thus, the fire of protests extended to the capital of the “empire.”

In our culture and tradition, we attach great importance to the commemoration of the deceased. Many rites are the ones to offer sacrifices, and all the sacrifices have to make offerings to deities for the souls of resentful relatives and creditors. The 49 days, from the first week to the seventh week, are the 49 phases the soul of the deceased has to pass through the intermediate stage between death and rebirth, so the family not only need to invite the monks to perform Buddhist rites to release the soul of the deceased from purgatory suffering, but also have to give alms on a large scale to the poor. The coming year is similarly important, in fact the entire coming year should be the year to make sacrifices! At such a moment, we should pay tribute to the monks who are qualified to be called lamas. It is because only the practice of the monks can help the souls of the deceased to head for the truth, the light and a good rebirth. This is not superstition, on the contrary, it is the cherished memory of the deceased, which is the deepest and most beautiful feeling of mankind. Even Lenin said that “forgetting the past means betrayal.” For those of us who believe in religion, forgetting about the deceased means betrayal and signifies that we walk around without any feelings. If one does not commemorate one’s deceased relatives, then one is worse than a beast. If members of an ethnic group do not commemorate their deceased compatriots, then they are also worse than beasts.

Cherishing the memory of the deceased is not a virtue unique to any ethnic group. Similarly, the Han Chinese also deeply cherish the memory of their compatriots who have died. I read an article written by a Chinese who suffered in the “Incident of June 4” in 1989. After having been silent for as long as 20 years, he made a series of short films entitled “1989: The Calling of Memory.” He wrote, “...the gun shots smashed all our dreams, how is it possible what’s smashed are just dreams of individuals? Our entire ethnic group has a common pain, but because of fear, we even dare not think about the pain, or dare not touch the pain. In this way, this pain has been buried in the heart of each one of us for year after year...When all our world desires have been satisfied, we ourselves are feeling more and more lost. We have material wealth, but we have lost our soul.”

To respect life is to respect oneself, and to cherish the memory of the deceased is to rescue and redeem oneself. The brutality and valiance of a materialist lies in the fact

that he believes in guns and money. However, they also acknowledge the law of birth, death, illness and death as well as the law of rise and fall. Even Mao Zedong, who claimed that he himself was an outstanding person compared with others in history, was not able to avoid death. What is absurd is that after Mao's death, a memorial hall was built for his corpse. Is this different from the countless terracotta warriors buried underground by the First Emperor of Qin? Certainly, if materialists also have the right to cherish the memory of the deceased, Tibetans who have religious belief should also have the right to cherish the memory of the deceased!

Therefore, 2009 is the year for us to cherish the memory of the deceased. And we have our own way to do so: make lamp offerings and light candles to commemorate the souls of the deceased, and recite the mantra of Avalokiteshvara: Om mani padme hum!

*(Written for RFA; translation High Peaks Pure Earth. [www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com).)*

## **A great "civil disobedience" spreading throughout all of Tibet**

January 29, 2009

*Woeser here expands upon the growing movement in Tibet not to 'celebrate' the Tibetan New Year and instead to use it to mourn and remember the people killed and imprisoned during and after the protests that began in March 2008.*

In recent days on my blog there has been a lot of opinions left about the Spring Festival and Losar. Han readers leaving comments have said, "You have your Losar, we'll have our Spring Festival – there's no connection between the two. It's nothing to do with us whether you choose to celebrate Losar or not." No mistake, every nationality has its own festivals and shouldn't demand another nationality observe another nationality's festivals. The first day of the first month in the lunar calendar is set as the Spring Festival when the entire country has a vacation as started in 1913 when Yuan Shikai was president of the Republic of China. Because the 'republic of Five Races' was advocated at the time, the main Han festivals such as the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival were not made national festivals. It seems China's current leadership doesn't have the breadth of mind of even Warlord Yuan Shikai. With the prevalence of the notion of "the people's of China," the hack writers of China are calling for a unified "Chinese expression."

Seeing as a "Chinese expression" is wanted, "expressions" from other nationalities are deleted or substituted. But in order to evince the largesse and magnanimity of the

Party's nationality policies, 'expressions' by other nationalities are regularly taken and embellished so that a nationality's festivals such as Losar are not only made into a holiday, but evening television events like those for Spring Festival are put on for the Tibetan new year too. In some Tibetan areas in Amdo and Kham, Losar has been replaced by Spring Festival for many years now. Even though the Chinese new year is celebrated in basically the same way as the Tibetan new year, Han customs are being adopted more and more, such as pasting up couplets of poetry on doorways, hanging lanterns and setting off fireworks. These days, even when calls to abandon Spring Festival are growing, it'd be difficult in so short a time to remove these habits that have already become customary. Even though Losar has also been celebrated these past few years, compared to the Spring Festival it is far less lively.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with celebrating Spring Festival. Online comments from Han readers have said "If some Tibetans want to celebrate Han festivals or if Han want to celebrate Tibetan Losar they are free to do so. No one has any right nor any reason to tell them what to do just because they are same nationality as themselves." Such opinions as this sound reasonable, and I find it laudable. But the problem is, the reason why so many Tibetans are conflicted about this year's Spring Festival and Losar is less to do with both new year celebrations belonging to different cultural systems, and is more to do with the levels of toleration in ones conscience and a religious sentiment full of compassion.

No matter whether its Spring Festival or Losar, people who experienced what happened in Tibetan areas in 2008 do not want to celebrate as they have in previous years. As with last year's earthquake in Sichuan, when thousands and thousands of ordinary people died, their surviving families do not want to forget them in the new year even as their corpses are not yet cold. A volunteer who spent the new year in the disaster area said: "No one can stipulate a time when the atmosphere at Spring Festival has to be lively; it must be peaceful. True emotions, whether joyous or sad, all come from the deepest places." By the same reason, with events in Tibet that started last new year and still haven't stopped, there are countless ordinary Tibetans still living and dying under the barrels of the PAP's guns, countless ordinary Tibetans who are still behind bars, and so how can their friends and families be happy in their grief to see in the new year?

The absurdity is that the authorities do not see this. They hope that the people will forget the hardships they created, and have resorted to all manner of tricks that leave you not knowing whether to laugh or cry. For example, in Rebgong [in Qinghai, the Tibetan area of Amdo], the local government has gone house to house with documents requiring Tibetans to sign their name or leave their thumbprint on the documents which say: I will ensure that there will be absolutely no demonstrations this year as there were last year,

I will ensure I am obedient to the Party and government, and I will ensure that I will celebrate the new year. In the Tibetan areas of Labrang and Ngaba, the local government has given firecrackers to government workers and cadres, telling them to set the firecrackers off at the New Year. And in Lhasa, Tibetans who put the word out not to mark the New Year are being detained. Some Tibetan readers leaving comments have left sarcastic remarks about this on my blog, such as: "The great Party pays close attention to happy or not happy, and celebrating or not celebrating the New Year... When it wants you to be happy, you're not happy. And that's a problem with your thinking, and it can even be contrived into making you a member of some 'clique' or other."

As citizens, Tibetans do not even have the most basic right to mark – or not – the New Year. Tibetans with their indomitable spirit who insist on their right not to mark the New Year are becoming a completely new kind of counterbalance, the significance of which is a "great civil disobedience" spreading throughout all of Tibet.

*(Written originally for RFA; translated by ICT.)*

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- <sup>1</sup> The following articles represent a small selection of Woesser's work since March 2008 posted on her main blog – <http://woesser.middle-way.net/>. All of the articles reproduced here have been translated by ICT, by High Peaks Pure Earth ([www.highpeakspureearth.com](http://www.highpeakspureearth.com)) – a site providing commentaries and insights on events in Tibet, and by Ragged Banner Press ([www.raggedbanner.com](http://www.raggedbanner.com)), a US publisher which has also issued Woesser's poems translated into English by the American poet A. E. Clark, in an anthology entitled "Tibet's True Heart."
  - <sup>2</sup> Chinese officials admitted to stepping up security in Lhasa linked to "the Dalai Lama's separatist activities" and coinciding with the eighth round of dialogue between Chinese officials and the Dalai Lama's representatives in Beijing from October 31 -November 5, 2008. ICT report, <http://www.savetibet.org/mediacenter/ict-news-reports/intensified-security-lhasa-coincides-with-eighth-round-talks>
  - <sup>3</sup> On a visit back to Lhasa in August last year Woesser was detained and questioned. On her departure from the city back to Beijing two days later, Woesser wrote a poem called 'Fear in Lhasa', which is translated into English by Andrew Clark at <http://www.raggedbanner.com/pTFIL.html> and included in this report.
  - <sup>4</sup> Zap zap jé (Tibetan): "I beg you, be careful." These days, a very common expression among Tibetans.
  - <sup>5</sup> Steven Marshall, "Prisons in Tibet," in Elliot Sperling, Steven Marshall, Orville Schell, and Mickey Spiegel, Tibet Since 1950: Silence, Prison, or Exile, Aperture and Human Rights Watch (New York: Aperture, 2000), pp 144–149.





An image from the official media of senior TAR government, Party and military officials lined up in front of the Potala Palace in Lhasa during a Chinese flag-raising ceremony on October 1, 2008 to mark China's National Day.

## SMASHING THE DALAI CLIQUE: CHINA'S LEADERSHIP AND TIBET

In early March 2009, China's parliament – the National People's Congress (NPC) – is due to convene in Beijing for its short and highly publicized annual session. The meeting of the NPC, and the concurrent meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), is the highlight of China's political calendar, bringing together with great fanfare the country's most senior Party, state and regional leaders to ceremoniously review "work reports" by the government, the legislature itself and the Supreme People's Court, as well as to review and approve economic development plans for the coming year.

Legislation and other deliberations by the NPC are usually passed almost unanimously by the 2000 or delegates from around the PRC, and typically, there is no public debate at the NPC or the CPPCC – a body of various Party-mandated organizations and individuals functioning similarly to an upper house in liberal democracies. Instead, the NPC simply rubber-stamps decisions made by a handful of China's most senior leaders. Nevertheless, both meetings provide an unusually visible platform for China's leaders in a system that is otherwise deliberately opaque, secretive and unaccountable.

The protests in Lhasa starting on March 10, 2008 coincided with the March 2008 NPC and CPPCC meetings, causing considerable embarrassment for China's highest leadership. On March 6, 2008 President Hu Jintao had attended a side-meeting of officials from the TAR and was reported in the official media as saying: "Stability in Tibet concerns the stability of the country,<sup>1</sup> and safety in Tibet concerns the safety of the country." Up until the protests of March 2008, numerous official accounts of economic and social development in the TAR were regularly put in a context of 'stability' being maintained in the TAR for 19 years – the period since the Lhasa protests on 1989 – as an indicator used by the regional government of its own validity in the TAR.

The weeks and months leading up to the NPC and CPPCC meetings in Beijing are often marked by concerted anti-crime campaigns throughout the PRC, known as 'Strike Hard' campaigns, where the police, state prosecution and courts are granted license by the Party to circumvent potentially cumbersome administrative routines in an attempt to speed up the judicial process. 'Strike Hard' campaigns, which have become a byword in Chinese legal circles for abuses of police powers and highly unreliable prosecutions, are explicitly billed in the official media in terms of reducing

crime to create a 'healthy social environment' for the NPC and CPPCC meetings. In the past, this has meant vastly increased numbers of people detained throughout the PRC on suspicion of wanting to disrupt the spectacle of the two meetings in Beijing, such as the thousands upon thousands of people attempting to petition the government over a myriad of unresolved grievances, or detaining and removing them from Beijing simply because their presence undermines the largely self-congratulatory tone of the meetings.

In Lhasa, police launched a Strike Hard campaign on January 18, 2009 intended to last until April 1, targeting mainly violent crimes but also targeting people with 'reactionary opinions' and those who had 'reactionary songs' stored on their cell-phones, almost certainly referring to songs about the Dalai Lama.<sup>2</sup>

There was no mention of the upcoming NPC and CPPCC meetings in any of the official media reports about the Strike Hard campaign in Lhasa; throughout other parts of the PRC, the link was much more explicit, such as in Shandong province, where the provincial police authorities announced on February 7, 2009 that a Strike Hard campaign was due to run "from now until the end of the national 'two meetings'."<sup>3</sup>

In Lhasa as well as practically everywhere else across the Tibetan plateau, there has been an intense Strike Hard campaign underway in all but name since the protests of March 2008 and beyond. The decision therefore to start a mandated Strike Hard campaign in Lhasa – timed to cover the tense period from the Tibetan New Year, the anniversaries of March 14, 2008 and March 10, 1959, and then beyond "Serf Emancipation Day" – is therefore being regarded as intended to further intimidate people not to attempt any form of protest during this period.<sup>4</sup>

The situation in Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet as the anniversaries of March 10 and March 14 approach will certainly be a focus of the foreign media's coverage of the NPC and CPPCC meetings – which usually last around 10 days. The Chinese authorities will undoubtedly therefore be extremely anxious to prevent public protests occurring in Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet, and failing that, anxious to stop information about any protests reaching the outside world.

Even aside from the whole issue of Tibet, international attention is certain to be focused much more closely than usual on the NPC and CPPCC this year as people around the world try and gauge how China intends to handle the global economic crisis, and the raft of enormous domestic social problems that are being exacerbated in China as a result – in particular, rural unemployment and underemployment, as well as finding or providing employment for six million new university graduates a

year – traditionally, peasant farmers and students are some of the most politically volatile people in China.

The anniversaries in March of the 1959 Uprising and the Dalai Lama's flight into exile will be the first in a sequence of sensitive anniversaries in the PRC, all of which have the potential for bringing social unrest and which are undoubtedly a cause for deep concern among the Chinese authorities: April 2009 sees the 10th anniversary of a large protest by practitioners of Falun Gong, a meditative and physical exercise regimen, which led to the group being outlawed and its members suffering a concerted and often brutal wave of suppression; May 12 sees the one-year anniversary of the devastating Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan, where public anger is reportedly simmering over efforts to stall people suing the government over deaths deemed avoidable when poorly built schools and other buildings collapsed as a result of alleged local corruption; June 2009 sees the 20th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen Massacre, which remains a forbidden topic for public discourse in China; and October 1, 2009 sees the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, when the Party encourages popular celebrations of the Party's rule.



March 1959: His Holiness the Dalai Lama escaping to India with his bodyguards. The Dalai Lama left Lhasa under cover of darkness after the Chinese authorities started shelling the Norbulingka, his summer palace, on March 17, 1959, and arrived in India on March 31, 1959. © Tibet Images / Department of Information and International Relations, the Tibetan government in exile, Dharamsala, India

## **China's leadership and the March 2008 protests in Tibet**

When the March protests started in Lhasa on March 10, 2008, regional leaders from the TAR attending the NPC as well as central government leaders made no public mention or acknowledgement of events in Lhasa; however, by March 15, Beijing's official explanation for the protests had been cast and has remained basically unchanged ever since: the protests were planned by the 'Dalai clique' and 'hostile anti-China forces' abroad. Over the ensuing days, this explanation was embellished to include the claims that the protests were carried out with the intention of 'splitting China' by people in Tibet who had been 'fooled' by the Dalai Lama, in particular a 'tiny minority' of monks who are described as 'the scum of Buddhism' and the 'loyal running dogs of the Dalai clique.'

The Chinese leadership's apparent refusal to publicly consider the possibility that the unrest in Tibet could be due to broad dissatisfaction among Tibetans – or even to concede that the unrest has its roots in Tibet itself – has not enhanced its credibility with Western and some other Asian governments. Indeed, the calls from foreign governments urging China's leadership to enter into substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama on Tibet's future is at least a partial acknowledgment by Western leaders of the shortcomings and failings of China's policies in Tibet, as well as an implicit acknowledgment of the Dalai Lama as the pre-eminent representative of the Tibetan people.

Within China, the concept that the Tibet issue is merely an 'internal affair' has been profoundly challenged by the protests, both among Chinese intellectuals and governments worldwide – particularly given Hu Jintao's public emphasis on projecting the image of China's 'peaceful rise' and its 'harmonious society.'

While there is clearly serious debate behind closed doors and some speculation that even within the leadership, policies on Tibet may be being challenged or at least reconsidered, public statements emanating from Beijing on Tibet and the Dalai Lama continue to be hostile, and couched in dogmatic and ideologically loaded language reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution.

Tibet continues to be controlled – both regionally as well as in relevant Party and government offices in Beijing – by a hard line conservative faction, made up of people whom several observers have noted over the years have based their careers almost entirely on being 'anti-Dalai' and 'anti-splittist.' Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, a veteran Tibetan official who once championed the Party in Tibet but who is now a vocal critic of the Chinese government's Tibet policies, has accused such officials of deliberately blocking any kind of resolution with the Dalai Lama to further their own vested interests. In an open letter

to Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2007, he said “Their food comes from being anti-splittist, their promotions come from being anti-splittist, they get rich from being anti-splittist.”<sup>5</sup>

While such ‘anti-Dalai’ postures may have been key to advancing their own careers, the often stinging personal condemnations of the Dalai Lama have profoundly alienated the vast majority of Tibetans from the Chinese establishment in Tibet – long before any considerations of Tibetans’ growing social and economic marginalization are taken into account. They have increasingly even alienated the relatively comfortable elite minority in Tibet.

However, there are occasional suggestions that leaders are emerging in Beijing and Tibet who appear to have a more nuanced and thoughtful understanding of Tibet’s history and current situation. Although other potential reformers on Tibet have emerged over the years, they soon lost sway in China’s far more volatile political climate of previous decades. Yet even in China’s relatively stable current political climate, these new and rising leaders are unlikely to be able to assert themselves until at least 2012 when the 18th Party Congress will usher in the “fifth generation” of leadership, and many of the current stalwarts of Tibetan policy finally retire.

## **Tibet and the central state leadership**

Ultimate responsibility for China’s policies in Tibet lies with China’s President Hu Jintao, the most senior Party and government figure in the PRC. Hu has a particularly strong personal connection to Tibet: as TAR Party Secretary from 1988 to 1992, he presided over the imposition of martial law in response to a series of protests in Lhasa in 1989 leading to the torture and imprisonment of thousands of Tibetans. He was also instrumental in drafting the policies of suppressing dissent and fast-track economic reform at two “Tibet Work Forum” meetings in 1994 and 2001, policies which are still in place today in Tibet, and which include numerous deeply unpopular and confrontational elements which has since developed into Tibet’s political order, such as Patriotic Education, and the strategy of personally attacking the Dalai Lama.<sup>6</sup>



**Hu Jintao, Party Secretary and President of the People's Republic of China**

Since becoming president in 2003, President Hu has personally appointed many of the senior regional leaders in the various provincial-level administrations into which Tibet is now incorporated, including many from his own personal power base in the CCP, the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC).

Among these people appointed by Hu are the Party Secretary of the TAR, Zhang Qingli, who worked under Hu at the CYLC headquarters in Beijing; the Party Secretary of Sichuan province, Liu Qibao, who used to head the Anhui provincial CYLC; as well as the Party Secretary of Qinghai province, Qiang Wei, and Qin Guangrong, the Governor of Yunnan province, both of whom have also headed provincial CYLC offices, and who largely owe their careers to President Hu's patronage.

So far at least, there does not appear to have been any public accountability for the protests among senior Party and government leaders in Tibet. All of the most senior regional officials are still in the same posts they occupied before the protests started in March 2008 – aside from a minor re-shuffle among some senior police and security officials in the TAR (see below). Observers initially surmised that behind closed doors, the leadership in Tibet would be apportioned some blame by opposing factions within the Party in Beijing. If for no other reason, it was assumed President Hu Jintao would want to protect himself from the fallout of these regional officials – his own protégés – apparently 'losing control' of Tibet.

However, at the time it was also thought that any public apportioning of blame would signal a degree of culpability by the authorities over the protests. Politically, all factions in Beijing and not just that surrounding President Hu, realized this would be an untenable admission, added to which was the imperative of 'maintaining stability' in the approach to the Olympics.

Now that the Olympics have passed, however, and still with no sign that regional leaders in Tibet are to be held publicly accountable for failing to predict or contain the protests of March 2008 and beyond – if not be held accountable for implementing policies which gave rise to the protests – it appears that these officials may have ridden out any pressure and criticisms they may have faced in the Party.

Furthermore, with China facing numerous potentially destabilizing challenges in the coming months and years as a consequence of the global economic slowdown, the Party's tendency to 'batten down the hatches' is likely to come into play, meaning any changes might only happen once Hu Jintao hands over the presidency at the 2012 Party Congress, and there'll be a new tranche of officials looking for opportunities.

There are few personal glimpses of Hu, who has been a taciturn Party apparatchik for his entire career – hence the ubiquitous headlines, ‘Who’s Hu?’ One of the only Westerners to have gained any sort of personal insight is the journalist and respected China correspondent Dr Jonathan Mirsky, who was once placed next to Hu at a dinner in Lhasa. Without enquiring who he was, Hu commenced to tell Mirsky that he disliked Tibet with its ‘lack of culture’ and its ‘dangerous people’, and confided that if there were an uprising, no Tibetan would protect him.<sup>7</sup>

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has had little visible involvement on Tibet over the years, although with Tibet now featuring more prominently in China’s international relations than it has for decades, he is undoubtedly closely briefed on developments in Tibet and on international responses to those developments.

Almost all of his rare statements on Tibet tend to repeat the formulaic Party line with no embellishment or further explanations offered. On March 17, 2008, during the only press conference the Chinese Prime Minister gives each year at the close of the National People’s Congress, Wen set the tone and content of practically all future official comments on the protests in Tibet – and effectively stymied all public discussion and analysis of the protests – when he declared “There is ample fact and we also have plenty of evidence proving this incident was organized, premeditated and incited by the Dalai clique.”<sup>8</sup> He, nor anyone else in a leadership position in China, has yet to provide any corroborating ‘facts’ or ‘evidence’ to support this claim.

On the same day as the press conference, the Dalai Lama sent a letter to Chinese President Hu Jintao, offering to dispatch emissaries to Tibet to calm the situation, but no response was ever received.

Two weeks later, Wen Jiabao appeared to be setting a new precedent and offering some hope for progress in the dialogue process with the Tibetan side. He was the only senior leader to say publicly that the Dalai Lama should “use his influence” to bring an end to the protests in Tibet, thus departing from the hostile rhetoric against the Tibetan religious leader and appearing to acknowledge his legitimacy as the pre-eminent representative of the Tibetan people. However, the statement needs to be set in context: it was made during a regional trade conference in Laos, and it



Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of China

was reported in the Hong Kong media – and not carried by the state media, which indicates that it was perhaps not intended to be given too much political weight.<sup>9</sup> No other comments have been made by the Chinese leadership referring to the Dalai Lama's possible role in calming the situation in Tibet.

In early December 2008, despite his relatively low profile on the question of Tibet, Wen Jiabao became embroiled at the center of a high-profile dispute with French President Nicolas Sarkozy over his decision to meet with the Dalai Lama in Poland. Sarkozy insisted he was meeting the Dalai Lama in a private capacity on the sidelines of an event where Nobel Peace Prize laureates, including the Dalai Lama, were to mark the 20th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to Lech Walesa, the Polish labor leader and later Polish president. In response, and in one of the strongest protests ever made by the Chinese government, Wen Jiabao raised the diplomatic stakes by postponing a scheduled summit between EU and Chinese officials.

A *People's Daily* editorial said that Beijing had “demanded several times” Sarkozy call off the meeting with the Dalai Lama, a meeting which “hurt the feelings of the Chinese” and was “guaranteed to cause offence.” The editorial said people who believed that the meeting was merely private were “idiots,” and continued: “Regardless of Beijing’s strong protest, Sarkozy stubbornly carried out the meeting, in a move that was thought to be provocative and dangerous. He must pay for it.”<sup>10</sup>

### **China's Party leadership in Tibet.**

As described above, China's policies on Tibet were largely conceived and drafted by Hu Jintao based on his responses to being Party Secretary of the TAR during a period of protests and heightened security in the late 1980s, and his participation in two “Tibet Work Forum” meetings. However, significant additional input into the ideological nature of China's policies has come from three individuals whose overall impact on China's formulation of policies in minority areas has been immeasurable. These three are Li Dezhu, the former Director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, who was instrumental in guiding implementation of the state's centrally planned development policies throughout the PRC's



**Zhang Qingli, Party Secretary of the TAR**

western – and overwhelmingly non-Chinese – regions; Wang Lequan, the Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, who has overseen the implementation of a series of policies directed against the Uyghur people’s resistance to China’s rule ever bit as severe – and possibly even more so – than those implemented in Tibetan regions; and Zhang Qingli, the Party Secretary of the TAR who served under Wang Lequan for six years before being posted to the TAR, and who is widely regarded as uncompromisingly hard-line in his publicly expressed views to the point of being widely regarded among Tibetans as a throwback to the divisive and destructive extremism of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>11</sup>

However, policy coordination among the PRC’s various state-level ministries is undertaken by a group about which little is publicly known. The ‘Central Tibet Work Coordination Working Group’ – also referred to as the ‘Central Coordination Group on the Struggle Against the Dalai Clique’ – is rarely mentioned in the official media in China despite consisting of at least half a dozen Ministers of State, and despite being “in overall charge of Tibetan affairs.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Strong-arm tactics and tantrums: Beijing’s diplomacy in the EU**

*“The most important thing is to show your values as a leader: that you won’t put aside principle for the sake of cooperation. Otherwise everybody will be disappointed. Take the French president and the German chancellor. They made decisions about meeting with the Dalai Lama. Some people criticized them saying they’re naive and stupid. But I have great respect for their decisions. They demonstrated a society’s concern for a weak minority group... to simply say you won’t have dialogue is wrong... The dialogue [that China is having with Tibet] is thanks to international pressure. If it wasn’t for this pressure,*



**Wang Lequan, Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**

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**Li Dezhu, former Director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission**

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*China wouldn't have had a dialogue. Every change China makes, if China has moved forward 100 steps it's all because of international pressure. Not a single step is due to its own determination. China's reform and opening has no ideals – what kind of idea is 'feeling the stones as you cross the river'? 'Letting some people get rich first' – what kind of statement is that?"*

– Comment by Ai Weiwei, the Chinese architect of the Olympics 'Birds Nest' stadium in Beijing, January 13 2009, in conversation with the journalist Rebecca McKinnon on her blog, <http://rconversation.blogs.com>.

In a familiar pattern of loudly expressed indignation whenever foreign government leaders and other high-profile individuals meet with the Dalai Lama, the Chinese government invariably leaves the door open for an almost immediate rapprochement on the understanding that the offending party – whoever it was who chose to meet with the Dalai Lama despite China's 'demands' otherwise – is contrite and offers some kind of statement or gesture which can be played in Beijing as an admission of the error of their ways. In the case of President Sarkozy's decision to meet with the Dalai Lama in December 2008, for example, barely six weeks later Wu Hongbo, a deputy foreign minister, was quoted as saying "We are ready to work with France to improve our bilateral relations. This is in the interest of the two countries and their people. France is a great country, French people are great people. [...] We very much hope that there will be an improvement in bilateral relations; however, as the Chinese saying goes, the one who tied the knot should be the one who unties it. As the one who tied the knot, France, I believe, is clear about what needs to be done."<sup>13</sup>

Such aggressive posturing and strident language by the Chinese authorities is not confined to the issue of Tibet. For instance, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs angrily dismissed as "slanderous accusations... unworthy of rebuttal" an assertion in a US congressional report that China has an active cyber espionage program;<sup>14</sup> violations of intellectual property rights have been condemned as "vicious crimes";<sup>15</sup> and an album entitled 'Chinese Democracy' by the US rock band Guns 'N' Roses was described as a 'venomous attack' on China.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Tibet, the Chinese authorities refuse to engage on what Tibetans and their supporters regard as the key issues of human rights and religious freedoms. The Chinese authorities base their opposition to the Dalai Lama and the "Dalai clique" – and their apparent disregard for the dialogue process – on accusations which have no apparent grounding and are therefore extremely difficult, if not impossible, to engage with constructively. This includes, for example, summarily dismissing all notion of greater genuine autonomy for Tibet – amid the Dalai Lama's frequent

assertions that he is not seeking independence for Tibet – as “a naked expression of Tibet independence aimed at nakedly spreading the despicable plot of opposing the tide of history.”<sup>17</sup>

As the *People's Daily* editorial quoted above continues: “Political figures like Sarkozy in the west will never understand the sensitivity of the Tibet issue, nor can they understand why China opposes any forms of separatist activities by the Dalai Lama in any countries.” In other international forums, China describes Tibet as a “core issue,” one which directly impacts upon the very fabric and integrity of the Chinese nation, and one which is therefore not open to any discussion whatsoever. Historians and commentators have noted that China’s history of being invaded and semi-colonized during the 19th and early 20th centuries has fostered in modern China not only a tendency to assert its current international borders with unusually strong ideological fervor, but also to profoundly mistrust the intentions of anyone discussing issues which even vaguely touch upon the sovereignty of the PRC.

## The United Front Work Department

*“The [authorities] hope that the people will forget the hardships they created, and have resorted to all manner of tricks that leave you not knowing whether to laugh or cry. For example, in Rebkong [Tongren county in Qinghai, the Tibetan area of Amdo], the local government has gone from house to house with documents requiring Tibetans to sign their name or leave their thumbprint on documents that say: ‘I will ensure that there will be absolutely no demonstrations this year as there were last year. I will ensure I am obedient to the Party and government, and I will ensure that I will celebrate the New Year... Some Tibetan commentators have left such sarcastic remarks about this on my blog as: ‘The great Party pays close attention to [being] happy or not happy, and celebrating or not celebrating the New Year – when it wants you to be happy, you’re not happy. And that’s a problem with your thinking, and it can even be contrived into making you a member of some ‘clique’ or other.’”*

Woesser, January 29, 2009

The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is a major and well-resourced department constituted within the Party to act as a ‘gate-keeper’ for non-CCP individuals and groups – both domestically and overseas – engaging with the CCP on a select range of issues, including engaging with representatives of the Dalai Lama on the Tibet question. The UFWD operates in close conjunction with other core Party organizations, such as the Propaganda Department and the International Liaison Department, and is in essence

geared far more towards propagating, asserting and enforcing the Party line than towards discussing or negotiating it. Despite its leading role in the dialogue process with representatives of the Dalai Lama, one of the UFWD's stated functions is to "Work in coordination with relevant departments to struggle against activities of splitting the Motherland by the Dalai clique and domestic and foreign hostile forces."<sup>18</sup>

Frustrations with the dialogue process among Tibetans include the fact that the UFWD has no direct executive authority over the Chinese government's policies on Tibet, and that the dialogue should properly be the purview of a top government ministry such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if not the office of the Chinese president. Many observers claim that the main reason for a lack of progress in the dialogue is because the UFWD is content to merely expound the Party's hard-line stance on Tibet, and that it has neither the intention nor the authority to actually debate or modify those policies.

While the UFWD at the national level is in control of the dialogue process with representatives of the Dalai Lama, at the local level in Tibet UFWD officials are responsible for instilling the Party's hard-line policies among local-level government and Party offices in Tibet's prefectures and counties. According to ICT's sources, UFWD officials are regarded as some of the most politically indoctrinated and 'anti-splittist' – not to mention resented – cadres in all of Tibet.

### **Du Qinglin, Director of the UFWD**

Du Qinglin has headed the UFWD since late 2007, and as with many senior Party appointees in recent years, rose to prominence in President Hu Jintao's power base, the Communist Youth League of China (CYLC) and is therefore closely allied to President Hu in China's deeply factional political landscape. Du has only very limited personal experience of Tibet having briefly served as Party Secretary of Sichuan province from 2006 to 2007, during which time he toured parts of Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi), an area of Tibet which saw a large number of protests in March 2008 and the ensuing months. Du is nevertheless a senior and experienced politician having served as the Minister for Agriculture from 2001 to 2007.



**Du Qinglin, Director of the United Front Work Department**

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Du Qinglin's public comments on Tibet appear to be directed far more towards a domestic audience, as opposed to being intended for the Dalai Lama and his representatives in the dialogue. (This is in stark contrast to two other senior UFWD officials Zhu Weiqun and Sithar – see below – who make frequent and confrontational remarks directed at the Dalai Lama and his supporters.) For instance, Du attended a ceremony in Beijing in November 2008 for conferring traditional degrees in divinity on 11 Tibetan Buddhist monks. The Chinese authorities had suspended awarding the degrees following the protests in Lhasa in the 1980s, and only began conferring the degrees again in 2004 having appropriated the role of administering them from the senior clergy. During the conferral ceremony in November 2008, Du Qinglin said “We hope the monks, outstanding in Buddhism study, will love the country, abide by laws, follow religious disciplines and serve the people,” adding “The monks are expected to work for the stability of Tibet and Tibetan people outside Tibet.”<sup>19</sup>

The implication that devotion to Buddhism and Buddhist studies should be secondary to higher civic and political responsibilities towards the Chinese state is a core theme of the Chinese government's policies and propaganda in Tibet, and underscores much of the UFWD's work there.

### **Zhu Weiqun, Executive Deputy Director of the UFWD: A Propaganda Offensive against the 'Memorandum of Genuine Autonomy'**

Although Du Qinglin is Director of the UFWD, the main interlocutor during negotiations with representatives of the Dalai Lama in recent years has most often been Zhu Weiqun, an executive deputy director of the UFWD with special responsibility for Tibet. He has frequently been accompanied during the dialogue by Sithar (Chinese transliteration: Sida), another UFWD deputy director (see below).

While Du Qinglin has remained in China and largely directed his comments on Tibet to a domestic audience, Zhu Weiqun has been more visible internationally, presenting and defending China's position not only on the dialogue process around the world, but also on the current general



Zhu Weiqun, Executive Deputy Director of the United Front Work Department

status of Tibet. Unlike Du Qinglin, he has also directed public comments directly at the Dalai Lama and his supporters.

At a press conference on November 10, 2008 held soon after the conclusion of the latest round of dialogue from October 30 to November 5, 2008, Zhu Weiqun was the first senior Party official to publicly dismiss the “Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People” – a document prepared by the Dalai Lama’s Envoys and the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGiE) detailing the facets of Tibet’s proposed autonomy within the PRC’s legal and constitutional frameworks, and which was presented to the Chinese side during the October 30 to November 5, 2008 dialogue.<sup>20</sup>

At the press conference which according to ICT’s sources was broadcast widely in Tibet, Zhu repeated the Chinese government’s often-stated accusation that the “genuine autonomy” as perceived by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile – and as described for the first time in detail in the Memorandum – is a veiled attempt to achieve Tibetan independence.

Zhu Weiqun and other UFWD officials have repeatedly stated that a main reason for the “Dalai clique” allegedly wanting Tibetan independence is so that they could reintroduce a system of “feudal serfdom” in Tibet – an accusation Zhu again leveled at the November 10 press conference.

The characterization of Tibetan society prior to the Chinese government’s dissolution of the Tibetan government in 1959 as “feudal serfdom” is not accurate. There was no systematic slavery in Tibet prior to the Chinese takeover. While there were undoubtedly severe inequalities in Tibet and severe poverty and deprivation – as there was in many parts of China and elsewhere in Asia – the 13th and then the current 14th Dalai Lama were both set on instituting sweeping reforms to address these imbalances. Additionally, the 14th Dalai Lama has set up a thriving democracy in exile.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, based on his impressions of the Memorandum and previous statements made by the Dalai Lama, Zhu Wiequn accused the Dalai Lama at the November 10 press conference of wanting to evict all non-Tibetans from the Tibetan plateau in a form of ethnic cleansing. Similarly, there is no evidence in the Memorandum to support this allegation, but this pattern of treating all human rights concerns in Tibet as well as calls for greater autonomy as first and foremost an attack on the sovereignty of the PRC is standard practice among Chinese leaders with responsibility on Tibet (see above).

Zhu also gave an interview to the Hong Kong media in late December 2008, where he repeated another of the Chinese authorities’ standard assertions, that the dialogue

process is solely about the Dalai Lama's personal status, and not the status of Tibet: "As far as I'm concerned, there isn't a 'Tibet Question,' just as there isn't a 'Jiangsu Question,' and there isn't a 'Hubei Question,' and there isn't a 'Sichuan Question.' And so what question is there? The one question left behind is the question of the Dalai Lama."<sup>22</sup>

### **Sithar, Deputy Director of the UFWD**

An ethnic Tibetan, Sithar (Chinese transliteration: Sida) has also participated in several of the recent rounds of dialogue between the UFWD and representatives of the Dalai Lama. As a career diplomat, Sithar started working at the UFWD in 1984, and has spent much of that time posted in China's embassies in India and in Switzerland – both countries have large and politically active exile Tibetan communities, with whom he actively tried to engage during his tours of duty, and according to his biography, he systematically gathered intelligence on them and their activities.



**Sithar, Deputy Director of the United Front Work Department**

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Sithar is known for frequently and pointedly declaring this loyalty in public, stating for example that his was the first generation of Tibetans to have "become their own masters," and that he himself "bathed in the sunlight of the Party" from a young age as a result.<sup>23</sup>

Sithar was first posted to the Chinese embassy in Zurich in 1988, and was there during the Tiananmen Massacre on June 4, 1989. Biographical material on him recounts that "the political turmoil of spring and summer 1989 presented a severe political test for people posted overseas," but that "Sithar's loyalty to the Party and motherland did not change in the slightest," and he in fact set about contacting the Chinese and Tibetan communities in Switzerland "stabilizing the thoughts and moods of many people."<sup>24</sup>

### **Recent leadership changes in the TAR**

In September 2008, the TAR People's Congress – the legislative body in the TAR – announced that two senior officials in the region had been removed from their posts and replaced by a single individual. There was some speculation among observers at the time that the two officials removed from their posts, Wang Binyi and Qin Yizhi, had been removed as a direct consequence of the protests in Lhasa: Wang Binyi was the

most senior police official in the TAR and Qin Yizhi was Party Secretary of Lhasa Municipality as well as a vice governor of the TAR government. Observers assumed that they had been apportioned a degree of blame for not pre-empting or controlling the protests in March 2008 and beyond.

Speculation that they had been dismissed apparently arose in large part from the fact that when contacted by foreign journalists, Chinese officials in the TAR refused to answer or simply evaded questions about the two officials' removal. Additionally, in the short and terse official announcement of the changes, no reason was given for them being removed from their posts.



**Wang Binyi, Chairman of the TAR Political and Legal Affairs Committee**

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However, routine press reports in the TAR in the following weeks showed both Wang and Qin still working in official positions in the TAR: for example, Wang not only retained his position as chairman of the highly influential Political and Legal Affairs Committee, he had also been appointed chairman of another key Party committee overseeing implementation of security policies in the TAR. Qin Yizhi retained his position as Party Secretary of Lhasa Municipality, and although he was removed as vice Chairman of the TAR government, he was made a deputy Party Secretary of the TAR instead – a Party position arguably carries more authority and prestige than a government position.

Filling the positions they vacated is Li Zhao, a police official who arrived in Lhasa having previously headed the branch of the national police force responsible for monitoring the Internet in China. According to the scant biographical material available on him, Li Zhao has also conducted academic research on “evil cults” – a term most often used to refer to the outlawed Falun Gong spiritual movement in China – and has been a visiting professor at the University of Public Security in Beijing.

Li's substantial portfolio – as both director and Party secretary of the TAR police force as well as vice



**Qin Yizhi, Party Secretary of Lhasa Municipality; Deputy Party Secretary of the TAR**

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chairman of the TAR government – could possibly have been conferred on him as compensation for a “hardship” posting, as any move onto the Tibetan plateau is invariably regarded by Chinese government and Party officials.

It is not clear what precipitated Li Zhao being posted to the TAR to head the police force. One theory is that the Chinese authorities throughout Tibet have taken considerable steps to stop information about protests and security measures reaching the outside world, and so it could be speculated in this context that Li Zhao’s experience in policing information would be a useful asset. Li Zhao’s arrival in the TAR coincides with – and is possibly intended to compliment – the Chinese authorities’ ongoing and intensifying efforts to stop information leaving Tibet via unofficial channels, including the Internet and by other means.



**Li Zhao, Director and Party Secretary of the TAP Public Security Bureau; Vice Chairman of the TAR Government**

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- <sup>1</sup> "Hu Jintao Joins NPC Panel Discussion, Stresses Stability, Social Harmony in Tibet," Xinhua, March 7, 2008.
  - <sup>2</sup> "Behind the scenes of the 42-day [sic] Strike Hard" [in Chinese], Lhasa Evening News, January 23, 2009, available at: [www.lasa-eveningnews.com.cn](http://www.lasa-eveningnews.com.cn).
  - <sup>3</sup> "Shandong public security: put full effort into good 'two meetings one festival' security work" [in Chinese], Xinhua, February 7, 2009, available at: [www.xinhuanet.com](http://www.xinhuanet.com).
  - <sup>4</sup> See: "Authorities launch 'Strike Hard' campaign, heightening Lhasa tension," ICT, January 27, 2009, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>5</sup> "Witness to History," Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, trans. Tenzin Losel, Paljor Publications, 2007, New Delhi.
  - <sup>6</sup> For a much broader account of Hu Jintao's legacy in Tibet and his personal rise to power, see: "Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown," ICT, August 2009, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org). Also see: 'Hu Jintao: Reformer or Conformist?' Free Tibet Campaign, November 15, 2002, [www.freetibet.org](http://www.freetibet.org); see also 'Cutting off the Serpent's Head,' Tibet Information Network & Human Rights Watch, March, 1996.
  - <sup>7</sup> "China's Gaping Wound," The New Statesman, June 4, 2007, available at: [www.newstatesman.com](http://www.newstatesman.com).
  - <sup>8</sup> "Chinese premier: Dalai Lama followers inciting violence, riots," Associated Press, March 17, 2008.
  - <sup>9</sup> "China asks Dalai Lama to 'use his influence' to stop Tibet violence," PTI, March 31, 2008.
  - <sup>10</sup> "Sarkozy-Dalai Lama meeting undermines political credibility," People's Daily, December 8, 2009.
  - <sup>11</sup> For a fuller description of the careers and impacts of these individuals, see: "Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown," ICT, August 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>12</sup> The Tibet Work Coordination Working Group and its known members are discussed in further detail in: "Tibet at a Turning Point: The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown," ICT, August 2009, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>13</sup> "China ready to mend ties if France moves first," Agence France Presse, January 22, 2009.
  - <sup>14</sup> "China rejects US cyber-warfare report," Agence France Presse, November 23, 2008.
  - <sup>15</sup> "China Achieves a Major Change in Cracking Down on Violations of Intellectual Property Rights," Xinhua, July 28, 2007.
  - <sup>16</sup> "China: Roses album is 'venomous,'" BBC, November 25, 2008.
  - <sup>17</sup> "Dalai Lama urges Chinese contacts," BBC, November 23, 2008.
  - <sup>18</sup> See "Main Functions" [in Chinese], undated, on the UFWD's website at: [www.zytzb.org.cn/zytzbwz/introduce/zhineng.htm](http://www.zytzb.org.cn/zytzbwz/introduce/zhineng.htm).
  - <sup>19</sup> "Tibetan Buddhist Monks Urged To Contribute To Ethnic Harmony," Xinhua, November 18, 2008.
  - <sup>20</sup> For the full text of the Memorandum, see: "Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People," Central Tibetan Administration, available at: [www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net); for a discussion on the content of the Memorandum and its significance, see: "ICT welcomes public scrutiny of memorandum on Tibetan autonomy to counter Chinese propaganda," ICT, November 16, 2008, available at: [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org).
  - <sup>21</sup> It has been concluded by some western scholars that prior to the Chinese invasion of Tibet most Tibetans were bound to the local land and the lord who owned it. However, the Chinese claim that 'feudal serfdom' in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion is highly contested due to the large number of Tibetans who could manage their obligations by paying off the landowner, and in some cases, utilize the Tibetan legal system to appeal certain cases.

<sup>22</sup> “Conversation Zhu Weiqun: Just how big are the Dalai’s ambitions for a Greater Tibet?” [in Chinese] Phoenix TV, December 29, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> “Loyalty” [zhongcheng] [in Chinese], undated document, available at: [www.xfc.gov.cn](http://www.xfc.gov.cn).

<sup>24</sup> “Notice on the United Front systems carrying out activities to learn from Comrade Sida” [in Chinese], Liu Yandong, United Front document (2006) 16, available at: [www.jaxtzgc.com](http://www.jaxtzgc.com).



[tw.myblog.yahoo.com/tibet-girl314](http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/tibet-girl314)

Chinese troops in Lhasa on March 14, when rioting broke out - other protests in Tibet over the past year have been overwhelmingly peaceful. This image was taken by an eyewitness, believed to be Chinese and uploaded online.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIBET

*by the International Campaign for Tibet*

The uprising in 2008 and the continuing tensions in Tibet result from the failure of the government of the People's Republic of China to implement a system of genuine autonomy for Tibetans concurrent with its campaign to dilute the Tibetan identity and, in particular, to constrain the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, of which devotion to the Dalai Lama is an integral element.

A political solution is possible. Envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Chinese officials have been engaged in a dialogue since September 2002. Unfortunately, seven years of sporadic dialogue have not progressed to substantive negotiations and have not met the expectations of the international community, including several heads of state, for meaningful progress towards a mutually-agreeable solution for Tibet.

The Tibetan position in the dialogue is that Tibetans be able to maintain their distinctive Tibetan identity into the future. Central to this position is the political right of autonomy provided to all Tibetans living in contiguous Tibetan areas, an area roughly defined by the geography of the Tibetan plateau, governed by a single administrative unit under a single unified policy. According to the Chinese government's own analysis of its law on regional ethnic autonomy, the Tibetan people are entitled to the full political right of autonomy:

- full decision-making power in economic and social development undertakings;
- freedom to inherit and develop traditional culture and to practice religious belief;
- freedom to administer, protect and be the first to utilize natural resources; and
- freedom to independently develop educational and cultural undertakings.

Given the disappointing results of the dialogue, the instability in Tibet and the unjustifiably and disproportionately harsh consequences for Tibetans involved in the spring 2008 demonstrations, and the intensification of Chinese government campaigns against the influence of the Dalai Lama, ICT offers the following recommendations:

*For the government of the People's Republic of China:*

1. End the ongoing Patriotic Education and 'Strike Hard' campaigns that provoke resentment among Tibetans and undermine rights nominally conferred by the Chinese constitution;
2. Provide unimpeded access to Tibet for UN human rights experts and other independent observers to investigate the situation in Tibet;
3. Release immediately and unconditionally all those detained solely for engaging in peaceful protest;
4. Provide an accounting of all who have been killed or gone missing and all those detained, including names, whereabouts and charges against them;
5. Ensure that all detainees have prompt access to family members and any medical treatment they may require, lawyers of their choice, legal documents in the Tibetan language, and that they are treated in full accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, to which the People's Republic of China is a party;
5. Provide unrestricted foreign media access to Tibet, including the Tibetan areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region, and an end to the special permits required for access to the Tibet Autonomous Region.
6. Implement all Tibet-related recommendations of the United Nations Committee on Torture and issue standing invitations to all UN Mechanisms to visit Tibet, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs on Torture, Religion, Extrajudicial and Summary Executions, and Human Rights Defenders.
7. Engage in sincere, results-based negotiations with the Dalai Lama or his representatives on a solution to the Tibet issue that meets the interests and aspirations of the Tibetans and Chinese peoples.

*For other governments and heads of state:*

8. Continue to work multilaterally for a negotiated solution to the Tibet issue and consider the establishment of a Contact Group for Tibet as well as other means to enhance regular contacts, exchanges of views and coordination on Tibetan issues;

9. Urge the Chinese government to engage in substantive discussions with the Dalai Lama or his representatives on the Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People, which was provided to representatives of the Chinese government at their request by the Dalai Lama's envoys in November 2008.
10. Recognize that assertive and visible engagement with the Chinese Government on Tibetan issues, in addition to quiet diplomacy, can yield positive consequences and provide hope to Tibetans that a peaceful solution is possible;
11. Give political and financial support to programs that address chronic needs, as articulated by the Tibetan people, in such areas as education, work force development, environmental protection, and sustainable development; and
12. (For the United States) expeditiously appoint a Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues at the State Department; (for other governments and the EU) consider the creation of a similar post to promote and coordinate Tibetan policies and programs.
13. Adopt a common position that heads of state meet with the Dalai Lama as the preeminent Tibetan leader and also press for his participation in appropriate global fora.

*For the international community:*

14. Foreign broadcast and other media outlets should actively seek unguided access to Tibet and Tibetans in order to provide the world an accurate portrayal of Chinese rule in Tibet.

The International Campaign for Tibet is a non-profit membership organization that monitors and promotes internationally recognized human rights in Tibet. ICT was founded in 1988 and has offices in Washington, DC, Amsterdam, Berlin and Brussels.

## A GREAT MOUNTAIN BURNED BY FIRE

China's crackdown in Tibet

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