



HUMAN RIGHTS *update*
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HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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Newly arrived former political prisoner speaks of police brutality

Palden a.k.a Phuntsok Namgyal (ordained name), a former political prisoner who served six years term in Drapchi Prison arrived in exile unable to bear the continued harassment by the Chinese authorities. Palden along with 16 monks staged a peaceful demonstration in 1992.

Palden, 35, was born in Biru Village, Tsodoe Township, Phenpo Lhundrup County, "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). In 1986 he was admitted in Drepung Monastery in Lhasa. He told the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), "We were a very poor family and I had to drop from the village elementary school after two years of study. I herded the family livestock for several years and later learnt carpentry from my father. When I reached 17 years of age, I joined

Tibet", "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama", "Tibet belongs to Tibetans" and "Chinese out of Tibet". A strong contingent of about 40 officers from the Barkhor Public Security Bureau (PSB) arrived at the spot to arrest us. All of us were arrested and thrown into a vehicle and driven to a military camp. Upon reaching there, we were made to stand against the wall and hit with a stick one by one. The beating lasted for about an hour and we were again taken into the vehicle. There were three officers in the vehicle, one armed with a gun and the other two were holding a brick in their hands. While we were being driven to Gutsa Detention Centre, the two officers hit us on the head and all over the body with the brick. By the time we reached Gutsa we were all covered in blood."

"Upon reaching Gutsa, we were again ordered to stand against the wall and the officers started their interrogations accompanied with beatings. Our leader, Phunstok Siji, was asked how old he was. When he answered 28 years old, he was ordered to take off the clothe from the upper part of the body. After telling him to show his bare back, an officer lashed him 28 times with a leather belt leaving strong marks and blisters on his back. All of us were then taken near a water pool and ordered to be on our four limbs like an animal and an officer then immersed our head into the water. When it became dark, our names were called one by one and we were all locked up in different cells.



Former political prisoner Palden at the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India

D r e p u n g Monastery. After studying for five years in the monastery, on 13 may 1992 I along with 15 other monks from the m o n a s t e r y staged a p e a c e f u l demonstration beginning from the ground in front of Lhasa Tsuklakang. We shouted "Free

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Tibetan released blinded from prison Tibetans given prison term for demanding Beijing Olympics be called off

One of the six detainees at Dege County jail held up during a mass protest against a slaughterhouse in Sichuan in August 2005 has been released blinded after sustaining brutal torture while in detention, reports Radio Free Asia on 2 February 2006. The Tibetan, Sogya, around 50 years old, became blind after receiving brutal beatings by the police and was denied medical treatment.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) condemns this brutal police action and depriving Sogya his much needed medical treatment. The case represents one out of many where detainees come out in critical condition from the torture frenzy network of prisons and detention centres in Tibet. Medical help is one of the basic human rights that every individual is entitled to, and yet in his case the police's act of denying him timely medical treatment which resulted in him going blind and releasing thereafter to shun responsibility is a grave abuse of human rights. Right against torture and medical treatment facilities are explicitly engrained in the International Bill of Human Rights. The six men held in a Dege County jail have been identified as Sherab Yeshe, aged around 70; Sogya [one name], aged around 50; Dawa [one name], aged around 30; Dawa, aged around 50; and two other men about whom no details were available.

In August 2005, a large number of Tibetans converged on the Manikengo slaughterhouse and set it on fire. More than a hundred people were rounded up for detention which included the six Tibetans and two other unidentified men. The slaughterhouse known to the Tibetans as Manikengo slaughterhouse is registered as Dege Longsheng Yak LLC, a subsidiary of

Chengdu Ganzi Longsheng Meizi Yak Ltd.Inc. is owned by a Chinese.

The owner of the slaughterhouse demanded the Tibetans to sell their livestock below the market rate. The Tibetans refused to do so as it was hampering their business. There was also a concern among the local Tibetans against the presence of a huge slaughterhouse where animals are killed in large numbers. Two lamas, Kalsang Rinpoche, reincarnate lama of Dzungchen Monastery, and Khenpo Sherab Sangpo, abbot of Golok Seda Buddhist Center, together offered one hundred thousand yuan to buy the slaughterhouse but the owner refused to sell.

In view of the slaughterhouse ruining the lives of the nomads and also the spiritual Tibetans' objection to the presence of it, a large crowd proceeded towards it after the horse race festival and burnt down the slaughterhouse after releasing all the livestock in it. ♦

A Chinese court has jailed five Tibetan monks and nuns for protesting against China's control of Tibet and demanding the 2008 Beijing Olympics be called off. Recent information reported by Tibet Watch updates previous reports on the arrests of the monks and nuns in Gansu Province. The new information confirms that three nuns from Gendun Tengye Ling Nunnery and two monks from Labrang Tashikyil Monastery in Labrang County were sentenced to various prison terms.

Two of the nuns, Tadrin Tsomo and Choekyi Dolma, and one of the monks, Dhargay Gyatso, were all sentenced to three years imprisonment. The third nun, Yonten Dolma (earlier reported as Yonten Tsomo, lay name: Dukarkyi), and the second monk, Jamyang Samdrub, were both sentenced to one and a half years imprisonment. Details reveal that Yonten Dolma and Choekyi Dolma were arrested on their way from the nunnery to Labrang town, Tamdrin Tsomo's arrest took place at her home and Dhargay Gyatso was arrested in his room in the monastery. Circumstances surrounding Jamyang Samdrub's arrest are still unclear.

The arrests took place on 22 May 2005, for involvement in the distribution and pasting of a protest letter in Labrang Monastery, the market of Labrang County and allegedly also in Hezuo and in areas in neighbouring Qinghai Province, a few days previously. The letter called for the independence of Tibet, for the Chinese authorities to enter into negotiations, and reportedly said

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

Biography of former political prisoner Ven. Gyaltzen Ngodrup

Gyaltzen Ngodrup a.k.a Dadon, 33 years old, was born in Lhasa Shar Sarsur. After completing her elementary schooling in Lhasa, she was enrolled in Lhasa Middle School no 7. Upon finishing her middle school, she joined Chusang Nunnery in Lhasa in 1989 where she studied Buddhist text for two years.

On 18 August 1991, along with four nuns, Gyaltzen Ngodrup holding a banned Tibetan national flag staged a peaceful demonstration in the Barkhor (central market) area. They shouted slogans calling for "religious freedom in Tibet" and "freedom in Tibet". Officers from the Lhasa Public Security Bureau (PSB) rounded up the nuns and led them to the Detention Centre. While in Detention Centre, the nuns were subjected to severe interrogations for three hours during which the officers threatened with releasing the police dogs on them if they didn't confess their crime. After three hours, they were transferred to Gutsa Detention Centre where they were put under further interrogations accompanied with severe beatings about the objectives behind their demonstration and who else were there behind the scene. In the evening their body was frisked and put into the cell. The interrogations continued every

ten days. After 19 days and four months, several officers came into the cell and ordered them to line up. An officer then brought out a paper and announced that they have been sentenced to three years "re-education through labour". During their detention, no body was allowed to visit them. The officers beat them up repeatedly alleging that



they were reciting prayers in the cell. When Gyaltzen wrote a complaint petition to the prison authority, she was thrown into the solitary confinement cell for 19 days.

After nine months detention at Gutsa, the nuns were transferred to Trisam "re-education through labour" camp in the west of Lhasa City to undergo intensive labour. In Trisam, the nuns were given jobs which included cleaning the prison septic tank daily.

In August 1994, Gyaltzen Ngodrup was released following completion of three years term. Unable to bear the constant vigilance, movement restrictions and continued harassment, she escaped into exile in 1995 by walking via Sollokhumbu Nepal-Tibet border town. However, she fell sick in Dharamsala due to the sudden change in weather and had to return around the end of 1995. She underwent medical treatment in a hospital in Lhasa for three months.

The Public Security Bureau had by then come to know that she had returned from India and maintained vigil on her. In 1997, some officers showed up suddenly at her home and took her to a detention centre nearby Sera Monastery. She was detained for two months during which the officers interrogated her about escaping to India and then returning to Tibet. She was later released unable to get any concrete evidence. Gyaltzen escaped again in September 1998 unable to withstand the constant harassment. On 6 November 1998 she arrived in Dharamsala, India, and studied in Dolmaling Nunnery for a while. In November 1999, she joined as a broadcaster in the Chinese section of the Voice of Tibet radio service and has been working there since then. ♦

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Education in Tibet remains grim

that China should not host the 2008 Olympics until the Tibet question is peacefully resolved.

The protests of the Beijing Olympics have continued since the bid was passed in Athens in 2004. Many human rights groups as well as local Tibetan groups have turned the eye of the world to investigate and push the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to withdraw Beijing as the Olympic host on the basis of the massive human rights violations, arbitrary imprisonment and torture in China.

The international human rights community has launched many campaigns and released statements regarding the positions that should be taken regarding the event.

On 14 February 2006, the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) organized an indefinite hunger strike at Turin, Italy, where the XX Winter Olympiad was underway.

The hunger strikers demanded that the International Olympic Committee pressurize China to improve human rights situation in Tibet and China and to release all Tibetan political prisoners including Gedun Choekyi Nyima and Trulku Tenzin Delek. The hunger strike was later called off on the 28 February 2006 after receiving "concrete assurances of necessary follow up from the executive committee of IOC". ♦

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014) was launched in 2005. The UNESCO stated "*Quality education is a prerequisite for education for sustainable development... Quality education is locally relevant and culturally appropriate; [it] is informed by the past (e.g. indigenous and traditional knowledge), is relevant to the present, and prepares individuals for the future... [It] should equip all people to be fully participating members of their own communities and also citizens of the world.*"

Beijing has repeatedly claimed that it has increased investments in education in Tibet. However, the reality remains that it is still terribly under funded, especially in rural Tibetan areas where around 80 percent of the Tibetan population exist, schools simply does not exist or the quality of education is way below standards . In a decade where

the UN emphasizes quality education, the Tibetans inside Tibet are relegated to the status of second class citizens in their own country. Beijing should emphasize more on quality education with cultural education rather than a curriculum based on imparting communist ideology. Beijing's education policies stressed on quantity and mass indoctrination which has failed terribly over the years. Loyalty to the motherland has always been the ultimate goal of education in Tibet.

Following is a reproduction of an analysis of the China Statistical Yearbook 2004, in relation to education by the Tibetinfo.net, an independent research body.

ILLITERACY AND EDUCATION LEVELS WORSEN IN THE TAR DESPITE DEVELOPMENT DRIVE

The most recent statistics available for the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) reveal that the proportion of the local population that cannot read or write increased by more than 10 percent, to 54.9 percent in 2003, from 43.8 percent in 2002. This places the TAR against the trend in all other western provinces of the People's Republic of China (PRC), where illiteracy rates decreased in 2003, as in previous years. Similarly, the proportion of the population in the TAR with primary, secondary or tertiary levels of education also fell in 2003, meaning that the population was on the whole less educated in the 2003 survey than in the 2002 survey. Given that the surveys in the TAR mostly look at ethnic Tibetans, who account for over 90 percent of the registered TAR population, if these findings are even remotely accurate they indicate a marked failure of the Western Development Strategies of the PRC to improve education levels among



Media personnels seeking statements from the hunger strikers (photo: TYC)



Mr. Mario Pescante, Executive Member of IOC and President of European Olympic Committee, addresses the press at the site of the hunger strike (photo: TYC)

Tibetans, despite official claims to the contrary.

The most recent survey data available is from the sample survey of population changes conducted in 2003 and published in the 2004 China Statistical Yearbook (CSY). Although survey results tend to vary from year to year, the sharp jump in the illiteracy rate of the adult population aged 15 and older in the TAR in 2003 is striking. At 55 percent, it is closer to the illiteracy rates that were measured in the late 1990s (60 percent in 1998), than in the intervening years when the Chinese authorities were making a concerted effort to portray that social conditions had improved markedly in the TAR (in 2002 it was recorded as low as 44 percent).

Similar trends are seen in the education levels of the population aged 6 and older, which are alternative and perhaps more reliable indicators, since these education measures seem to be less politically sensitive than illiteracy rates. In this case, the gains that had been made between 2000 and 2002 in the proportion of the population with primary education and above were apparently almost completely lost in 2003. The proportion fell from 62 percent in 2002 to only 55 percent in 2003. The proportion of the

population with secondary education (middle and high schools & vocational schools) and above also fell from 15.4 percent in 2002 to 14.2 percent in 2003. This is particularly relevant to the Tibetan workforce since the formation of skilled workers generally takes place from the secondary level onwards.

Notably, in the PRC as a whole, 57 percent of the population had a level of secondary education or above in 2003. Almost 50 percent of the population of Sichuan, which is the main source of Chinese migrants to the TAR, also have this level of education. In both cases, these education levels had improved since 2002. Seen in connection with worsening Tibetan levels, this indicates that the competitive educational disadvantages faced by Tibetans within their own towns and cities have continued to worsen with respect to the increasing out-of-province migration to these same



File photo: Tibetan children in assembly pledging their loyalty to the Party towns and cities, most of which is made up of ethnic Chinese and Chinese Muslims (Hui).

Part of the fluctuation in the data from 2003 could possibly represent the variations that are typical to survey work, although the change is far from a normal deviation given the consistency of the data from the 2000 census to the 2002 survey. Considering that in recent years the Chinese authorities have been trying to improve their social surveys in the TAR, it could also represent a more accurate appraisal of education levels in the region. Or else, it could represent a lapse in government attention to portray a favourable picture of social development in the TAR under the current Western Development Strategy (xibu da kaifu). However, several additional reasons can help to explain why at least part of the changes in education levels may in fact represent real changes in the society.

On one hand, while there was a sharp increase in education spending during the first years of the Western Development Strategy in 2001 and 2002, this was short lived and the increase started to taper off in 2003 (Table 8-14 in the 2004 CSY and equivalent tables in previous years). Furthermore, much of the initial and subsequent spending increases were absorbed by rapid salary increases of teachers and other education-related staff, which

Table 1: Illiteracy rates among the population aged 15 and older, 1998 to 2003

	TAR	Qinghai	Gansu	Sichuan	PRC
1998 survey	60.0%	42.9%	28.7%	15.7%	15.8%
1999 survey	66.2%	30.5%	16.3%	16.8%	15.1%
2000 census	47.3%	25.4%	19.7%	9.9%	9.1%
2001 survey	45.5%	29.6%	22.5%	14.1%	11.6%
2002 survey	43.8%	24.8%	21.1%	13.6%	11.6%
2003 survey	54.9%	23.5%	20.3%	11.7%	11.0%
Change from 2002-2003	+11.1%	-1.3%	-0.8%	-1.9%	-0.6%

Source: 2004 China Statistical Yearbook

Table 2: Education levels of the population aged six and older, TAR, 2002 survey

	6+ population of the TAR with education including and above:			
	(No schooling)	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2000 census	46.4%	53.6%	12.7%	1.5%
2002 survey	38.0%	62.0%	15.4%	0.8%
2003 survey	44.9%	55.1%	14.2%	0.8%
Change 2002-2003	+6.9%	-6.9%	-1.2%	0%

Source: 2004 China Statistical Yearbook

almost doubled between 2000 and 2003 (Table 5-25 in the 2004 CSY and equivalent tables in previous years).

Additionally, despite the fact that the TAR has a sharp per person undersupply of schools relative to every other province of the PRC, as well as the youngest population in the country (and thus greater per person demand for schools), the number of primary schools in the TAR dropped by three, from 895 to 892, between 2002 and 2003, while the number of secondary schools increased only marginally from 100 to 105, and two of these were senior secondary schools. Perhaps most disturbing is the drop in vocational schools by half, from four to two. Vocational schools are critical for training Tibetans in the practical skills that could allow them to compete with out-of-province migrants. Even at their number in 2002, per person supply of vocational schools was only one-fifth the average in the PRC. Conversely, higher education institutions (i.e. universities) increased from three to four, even though these are oversupplied relative to elsewhere in the PRC (all data taken from Chapter 21 in the 2004 CSY). Thus, despite high levels of illiteracy and no-schooling, the bias towards higher education and against primary, secondary and vocational education in the education policy of the TAR has become even more accentuated in 2003 than in 2002. This bias might be in part driven by the use of universities in the TAR to train incoming Han Chinese cadres serving in the TAR.

On the other hand, many aspects of the current education policies may have counter-productive. For instance, despite assertions from the government that tuition for primary education is free in the TAR, reports indicate that many rural schools still impose a variety of non-tuition fees, particularly those that are outside the jurisdiction of county towns and are thereby extremely short of funds.

These fees at the primary level continue to place a heavy burden on rural families, let alone the costs of secondary education and above, which are often prohibitive for poorer families.

Also, the poor quality of rural schools combined with the difficulties that graduates face in finding employment, particularly since the policy of guaranteeing employment to graduates was stopped in 2001, leaves many rural families questioning the value of such increasingly expensive education.

Finally, the use of education in the Tibetan areas as a tool of assimilation into the mainstream Chinese society, for instance through the growing use of Chinese as the medium of instruction and by imposing patriotic education in the curriculum, alienates many of the rural farmers and nomads. ♦

Continued from page 1

Newly arrived former political prisoner speaks of police brutality

After five months in detention, one day all of a sudden all of us were lined up and the officer announced that the court verdict has come and began to read our respective imprisonment terms. The Lhasa People's Intermediate Court has charged us of "counter revolutionary propaganda" and sentenced us to varying prison terms between one to eight years prison terms. I had received six years term."

"We were all transferred to Drapchi Prison to serve our terms. Upon reaching Drapchi, initially we were made to study the prison rules and regulations and undertake exercise drills. Later we had to grow vegetables in the prison green house. In 1994 the vegetable green houses were closed following the prisoners non-cooperation in using chemicals to grow vegetables. The prisoners said that thousands of worms and insects living in the field are killed by the use of chemicals to grow the vegetables. When the green houses did not produce much vegetables and started to incur heavy loses, it

was closed down."

"On 1 and 4 May 1998, when the prisoners protest took place, I was called for interrogations over and over again. The prison authorities knew that my term expires on 12 May 1998 and they desperately wanted to extend it by making me confess something by which they could extend my term. However, I stood my ground and did not leave any opportunity for them to extend the term. Accordingly I was released on the aforementioned date and handed over to Lhasa PSB. They handed me over to the township PSB who in turn handed me to the village head. Finally I reached my home and the authorities ordered that I do not leave to any other place. Since my family was very poor, I sought permission from the authorities to venture into other places to earn some money. I did carpentry in the neighbouring villages, the money I earned was used to sustain the family members."

"In 2002, I went to Lhasa and got carpentry work in construction sites by which I send home the money to support my old parents, younger brother and a sister. During national holidays or ceremonies and also when some dignitaries arrive in the city or whenever a big meeting is taking place, I was ordered to leave Lhasa because of which I lost jobs on numerous occasions. In September 2005 there was a grand ceremony in Lhasa commemorating 40 years of establishment of the "TAR". Much in advance I was ordered to leave Lhasa."

"Due to repeated harassment and loss of job, twice I tried to escape from Tibet but failed on both the occasions. In October 2005, along with a group of 70 people, I escaped to Nepal via Sollukhumbu (Nepal-Tibet border area) and reached the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre in Kathmandu."

Palden is now under the care of Reception Centre in Dharamsala, India, and plans to do some studies before starting to work here. ♦



TCHRD ACTIVITIES

Bulletin

TCHRD releases Annual Report 2005: Human Rights Situation in Tibet

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy released its 2005 Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet on 21 February 2006.

Two separate press conferences were held for the launch of the report. The Tibetan press conference was conducted at the DIIR Lhakpa Tsering Hall while the English press conference was held at the Coffee House in Lower Dharamsala.

Below is the press release issued to the media.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) releases its 2005 Annual Report: Human Rights Situation in Tibet. This year's report focuses on five spheres of rights violation in Tibet: Civil and political liberties, Religion, Development, Education and Information.

At the end of 2005, TCHRD has documented 20 known arrests of Tibetans during the year for simply calling for freedom in Tibet and for showing allegiance to the Dalai Lama. A total of 132 known Tibetan political prisoners are currently serving lengthy prison terms in a network of Chinese administered prisons in Tibet. The Centre believes that there are many more cases of unknown arrests whereas some cases remain unconfirmed although it has been reported.

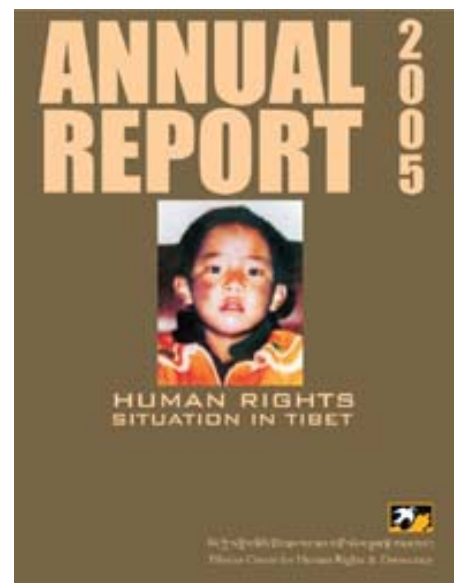
In September 2005, the People's Republic of China (PRC) celebrated with aplomb the 40th founding anniversary of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR"). Severe restrictions were placed beforehand as a precautionary measure against any

Tibetans showing dissent during the event. Suspected Tibetans had been arrested and former political prisoners had been put under vigilance or detained temporarily. Anti-separatists strategies like the "summer strike hard" campaign and the "patriotic re-education" campaigns were unleashed to purge dissent activities and to inculcate "proper" ideology, and allegiance to the "splittist" Dalai Lama in any form became the chief targets of repression. Sonam Gyalpo, a former political prisoner and a tailor by profession was lifted by the Chinese Security Officials from his home on 28 August 2005. The 43 year-old had earlier served three years' term for participating in a peaceful pro-independence demonstration on 27 September 1987.

The dramatic rise of religious repression in Tibet has been the most concerning in 2005. China's new regulations on Religious Affairs, which became effective on 1 March 2005, helped to limit and curtail religious freedom in Tibet. The authorities placed intensive "patriotic re-education" campaigns, anti-Dalai Lama campaigns, imposed control over monastic curriculum, practice and study of Tibetan Buddhism. Throughout the year, newly arrived refugees reported conduct of intensive campaigns in the monasteries and nunneries. Drepung Monastery was in the highlight during 2005 owing to one death, several expulsions and mass sit-in protest by the monks over denunciation of the Dalai Lama under the banner of "patriotic re-education" campaign.

17 May 2005 marked the tenth year anniversary of the disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet. Total absence of additional information on his whereabouts and well-being and the Chinese authorities' repeated denial of access to him is of great concern to the Tibetan people.

Along with the Annual Report, TCHRD also releases two special reports: Torture in Tibet and Death Penalty in China. The two reports take a hard look at the practice of two of the most heinous crimes in the PRC. ♦



To receive a copy of the reports, TCHRD members can write to us at our postal address or contact us at dsala@tchrd.org