



HUMAN RIGHTS

update

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CONTENT

- Press Statement on the 21st Birthday of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima the XI Panchen Lama of Tibet (pg 1)

- Biography of former political prisoner Lhamo Kyab (pg 3)

- Tibetan students staged peaceful protest in Machu County (pg 4)

- Language teacher arrested in Machu, whereabouts unknown" (pg 5)

- China arrests monk after protest in Nyarong County (pg 6)

- More than thirty Tibetan Primary students detained, one expelled in Sertha County after protest (pg 6)

- A lone protester calling for proper allocation of earth-quak relief arrested (pg 7)

Press Statement on the 21st Birthday of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima: the XIth Panchen Lama of Tibet

25 April 2010 marks the 21st birthday of the XIth Panchen Lama: Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, one of Tibet's most important religious leaders, who was abducted by the Chinese authorities on 17 May 1995 when he was just six years old. He and his parents were not seen for the past 15 years and there has been no clear information on their exact whereabouts and well being. Over the years the Panchen Lama's plight has come to symbolize the crisis facing the survival of Tibet's religious culture.

a good life as an ordinary citizen in Tibet and his siblings were studying at a university or working in regular jobs. But China has once again failed to substantiate its blunt statement on Gedhun Choekyi Nyima with any credible evidence for millions of his followers. The continued detention and disappearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is not only the deprivation of his rights alone but also a denial of religious guidance for and hurting religious sentiments of millions of followers.



Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the XI Panchen Lama of Tibet

Despite innumerable requests made by the world bodies, concerned governments, and NGOs over the past over 15 years for his release, the Chinese government has refused to provide any verifiable information on Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, nor have they allowed independent observers to visit the boy and his parents in order to confirm their whereabouts and well being. While in the latest revelation, Padma Choling, Chairman of the "Tibet Autonomous Region" ("TAR") Regional government on the sideline of the annual session of the National People's Congress in March 2010 told reporters, that the Panchen Lama selected by the Dalai Lama was "invalid" and added that he was living

On the other hand China over the years has strived to bolster the legitimacy and raise the profile of its handpicked Panchen Lama-Gyaltzen Norbu- through various means. He has long been earmarked as Beijing's choice to usurp the Dalai Lama as the public face of Tibetan Buddhism. For instance, China organized for the first time a World Buddhist Forum at Hangzhou in east China's Zhejiang Province from 13 to 16 April 2006 to espouse its leadership of the Buddhist world by providing international platform to Gyaltzen Norbu. The Dalai Lama was not invited to this international forum in which thousands of monks, experts and politicians from thirty-seven countries and regions gathered to participate in the discussion on

building a 'harmonious world,' because the Dalai Lama was seen as "splitting the motherland and sabotaging the unity of ethnic groups." As such, his participation would have caused "disharmony", Xinhua, the State's mouthpiece reported.

And Gyaltzen Norbu has taken on an increasing political role in recent years. He has made appearance with Communist Party leaders praising Chinese rule over Tibet and was recently elected as one of the 25 Vice-Presidents of the Buddhist Association of China on 3 February 2010. China on 28 February 2010 appointed him to the Parliamentary advisory body, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) as one of the 13 new members.

In religious sphere China in order to train 'patriotic and devotional religious personnel' and to dilute the influence of defiant monks in Tibet, who have strong and unflinching faith in the Dalai Lama, attempted to create a new group of monk subservient to Beijing. Subsequently in July 2007, China passed a law on reincarnation- Order No. 5 of China's State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), Management Measures for the Reincarnation of "Living Buddha" in Tibetan Buddhism- which requires all reincarnate lamas to be approved by the state. With this major tactical step China asserted its right to manage and select all reincarnate lamas of Tibetan Buddhism in the future and thereby sought to choose its own

Dalai Lama after the present one passes away.

The political machinations of Chinese propaganda machinery should not deceive the international community. No matter how hard Beijing tries, Tibetans will revere the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama as the legitimate one. The Chinese authorities' actions in the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama represent yet another attempt to weaken the social, moral and religious fabric of Tibetan life to further its exploitation as a colonial possession.

China's abduction of the Panchen Lama and denial of his religious identity violates basic principles enshrined in the general human rights instruments such the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is gravely concerned at the continued enforced disappearance and detention of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents. The Centre call on the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to disclose their exact whereabouts and allow independent international bodies to visit Gedhun Choekyi Nyima to verify his health and living conditions as recent blunt statement made by Chinese authorities on him living a good life wasn't enough to convince the millions of his followers. The Centre also would like to recall the recommendation made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

(CRC) in 2005 that China: "Allow an independent expert to visit and confirm the well-being of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima while respecting his right to privacy, and that of his parents."

The Centre also demand that any restrictions currently imposed are lifted immediately and that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family are allowed to return to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery-seat of the Panchen Lamas, and receive religious education and training deserving of his religious post.

The Centre urges the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances to intervene regularly with the Chinese authorities to ascertain the whereabouts of the outstanding case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family.

B A C K G R O U N D INFORMATION:

- On 14 May 1995, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced that the then six-years old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of the Xth Panchen Lama.
- Three days later, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his parents disappeared and have never been seen again.
- On 24 May 1995 the government of People's Republic of China issued a statement describing the Dalai Lama's proclamation as "illegal and invalid."

- China proclaims another child to be the real incarnation - an unprecedented and bizarre act of an atheist state.

- Shortly after this announcement Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family disappeared from their native hometown without any information about their whereabouts and well-being.

- Chadrel Rinpoche, a former abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery seat of Panchen Lama, and Chairman of the Search Committee for the reincarnation of the XIth Panchen Lama and his assistant Champa Chungla also disappeared from Chengdu Airport in Sichuan Province on 14 May 1995.

- On 21 April 1997, the Shigatse Intermediate People's court sentenced Chadrel Rinpoche to six years of imprisonment. He was charged with "plotting to split the country" and "leaking state secrets".

- He was accused of working for and assisting the Dalai Lama in the search for the XIth Panchen Lama. Though Chadrel Rinpoche's six years' prison term expired on 16 May 2001, he continues to be held under virtual house arrest in Shigatse which is an extended form of detention.

Biography of former political prisoner Lhamo Kyab

Lhamo Kyab was born to Mr. Dhargay and Mrs. Dolma Kyab in 1979 in Chunkama Township, Machu County, Ganan Tibet Autonomous Region (TAP), Gansu Province.

He was engaged in family nomadic chores from early in his childhood and he was a herdsman before coming to India.

In order to receive education and have audience with the Dalai Lama, he fled to India with a challenging journey for more than a month with his wife in 2003.

After the treacherous long journey, he was able to reach safely at Nepal Tibetan Reception Centre and later arrived at Dharmasala Tibetan Reception Centre, home of exile government and the resident of the Dalai Lama of Tibet. He was sent to Sherab Gasel Lobling a Transit School for newly arrived Tibetan adults in Dharmasala after having an audience with the Dalai Lama but he dropped from Transit School after more than one a year. Later on, he worked as watch man at Norbulingka institute and his wife got job in a tailor shop.

In 2006, he returned to Tibet and during his short stay in Machu County he shared information with local Tibetans, unfortunately Chinese local authorities suspected him and he wasn't able to stay any more due to fear of arrest.

On 13 May 2006, Lhamo Kyab was arrested by Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials and taken to PSB Detention Centre for interrogation. He

was interrogated and tortured for a few months in an attempt to force him to confess his activities and motives.



Lhamo Kyab

After long period in Detention Centre with harsh treatment, he was sentenced to three years imprisonment term on charges of disseminating information to the outside world with deprivation of four years political rights by the Lhasa People's Intermediate Court on 29 March 2007. He was then transferred to Lhasa Chushul prison on 10 April 2007.

During his stay in Chushul prison, he met Dolma Kyab, a well known Tibetan writer, who is currently serving prison term in the same prison. He was soon put in a separate prison cell.

He was released from Chushul prison after completing three years in prison on 12 May 2009. The authorities told him to go back to his native place. However, Lhamo under the pretext of visiting the great monasteries in Lhasa sought further pilgrimage visit to Sakya.

He fled from Sakya and escaped to India. He is currently resides at Dharmasala in north India

Tibetan students staged peaceful protest in Machu County

Tibetan students in Machu County, Kanlho “Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture” (“TAP”) in Gansu Province have staged a

protest by students of the school in mid March this year and this had led to their latest protest. The Tibetan nationality Middle

The students have vowed to carry on with more protests until fulfillment of their demand.



Kyabchen Dedrol, Headmaster of the Machu Tibetan Nationality Middle School

peaceful protest on 3 April 2010 against the Chinese government sacking their school heads, according to information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) from reliable sources.

The students of Machu Tibetan Nationality Middle School, in Machu County, Kanlho “TAP”, Gansu Province, led by senior students staged a peaceful protest in the afternoon of 3 April 2010. According to the source, the students were infuriated by Chinese authorities’ firing of the school’s headmaster, Kyabchen Dedrol and two of his Tibetan assistants; Do Re and Choekyong Tseten from their job last month following a pro-independence



Do Re, Assistant Head Master

school reportedly comprises about 1,500 students.

Choekyong Tseten was known to have been secretly whisked away by Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials and there is no information on his current whereabouts. Following this, the students approached the concerned Chinese authorities in Machu County and submitted petitions seeking reinstatement of the three sacked school heads. The students asserted in their petition that they would stage further protest if their demands were not met by the authorities, and the latest protest could be a result of failure on the part of authorities to heed the call by students, according to the source.

Over the past few weeks, a series of peaceful protests were carried out in Gansu Province particularly by students of the middle school and as of now there is no information available on the detention of any students or staff members of the school after the protest but it was said that school is completely cordoned off by armed police and students were confined to school compound. Students were also barred from contacting or meeting with the outsiders.

Language teacher arrested in Machu, whereabouts unknown

In another incident, the Chinese PSB official authorities in Machu County arrested a 40-year-old Tibetan language teacher, Topden, of Machu

refusal to comply with the China's "Patriotic re-education" campaign in the monastery that requires monks to denounce their religious

that China is legally bound to effectively ensure the physical and psychological integrity of all persons deprived of liberty in accordance with international human rights law. The Centre is also seriously preoccupied about their arbitrary arrest as it appears to be solely based on their peaceful political and religious beliefs and the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and calls upon the government of the PRC to order their immediate and unconditional release in the absence of valid legal charges that are consistent with international law and standards, or, if such charges exist, bring them promptly before an impartial, independent and competent tribunal and guarantee their procedural rights at all times, including immediate and unconditional access to a lawyer of their choice.



Topden, 40, a Tibetan Language Teacher

Tibetan Nationality Primary School on 28 March 2010 for unknown reason. There is no information on his current whereabouts since his arrest.

Topden was ordained monk and joined Nyulra Ngenthok Monastery after completing his primary schooling. In year 2000, he escaped into exile in India to pursue his further studies after his

leader, the Dalai Lama. Unable to tolerate the religious repression he escaped into India and continued his studies at Tibetan school in Dharamsala until his return to Tibet in 2006 when he completed his studies.

TCHRD is gravely concerned about the safety of Mr. Choekyong Tseten and Mr. Topden and recalls to the competent Chinese authorities

China arrests monk after protest in Nyarong County

Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials in Nyarong County (Ch: Xinlong xian), Kardze “Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (“TAP”) in Sichuan Province have arrested a Tibetan monk named Abo Tashi, a 22-year-old of Guru Monastery, for his participation and taking photographs during a protest rally on 8 April 2010, according to information received by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD).

Abo Tashi was accompanied by Tsering Gyatso, 19; Tsering Wangchuk, 22; of Guru Monastery and Rinzin Dorjee, a 24 year-old from Jamchon Monastery in Nyarong County. All four protesters were hailed from Serwoe Village, Nyarong County, Kardze “TAP”.

The four Tibetan monks staged their protest at the county main market square carrying banned Tibetan national flag and chanted slogans and thrown handwritten pamphlets demanding “quick return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet,” “independence for Tibet,” and “stop mining activities in Nyarong.” Following their protest, around 500 local Tibetans joined the protest march in support. According to source, sound of gunshot fires were heard during the protest and it cannot be confirmed whether it was fired in the air to disperse the protesters or onto the protesting Tibetans. As of now there is no information on Tibetan getting hurt in the incident. Abo Tashi was detained by the PSB officials from the site while capturing the event of Tibetan protest in his

camera. There is no information on his place of detention.

TCHRD is gravely concerned about the safety of Abo Tashi and recalls to the competent Chinese authorities that China is legally bound to effectively ensure the physical and psychological integrity person deprived of liberty in accordance with international human rights law. The Centre calls upon the government of the PRC to order his immediate and unconditional release as his action constitute nothing more than a peaceful exercise of the fundamental human rights.

More than 30 Tibetan Primary Students detained, one expelled in Sertha County

Sertha County in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi) “Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture” (“TAP”) over the past couple of months witnessed at least eight cases of protests by individuals and group against the Chinese government and reports of Tibetans having been detained also emerged from the area. In the latest case, more than thirty students of Khar Primary School in Sertha County were detained by the Chinese security forces following minor stone throwing incident that took place after security forces paraded monks in various places around the

county. The names of the monks cannot be confirmed at the moment.

According to information provided by the source, on 8 April 2010, the Chinese security forces paraded two monks on a vehicle, who were arrested earlier for staging a protest, around various places in Sertha County. Sources told the Centre that the two were severely beaten up by the security forces while being paraded. On reaching Khar Primary School area, students started protesting against the security forces brutality and humiliation of monks and they started pelting stones on the security vehicles and shouted slogans. Glasses of the security forces’ vehicles were smashed and injuring few security forces in the melee. Later students wrote and pasted posters calling for Tibet’s independence around the school walls and on the teachers’ desks.

Following the incident more than thirty Tibetan students of Khar Primary school were detained by the security forces. Although most of the students were released after brief detention, around 10 students are still being held. It was announced that the remaining students won’t be released until they pay monetary fine of 2000 Yuan each and sign surety letter by their parents guaranteeing non participation by their children in such activities. The juveniles are currently held at Sertha county Public Security Bureau (PSB) Detention Centre. Most of the detained were students in their early teen.

Dhonyoe, a 16-year-old student of class VI who participated in the protest was expelled from the school. Dhonyoe hails from Thatshi Township, Sertha County. Following

the incident Khar Primary school administration was fined 10,000 Chinese Yuan for students' indiscipline. There is no information on staff members expelled for their failure to check the protest.

According to sources, eighteen vehicles of People's Armed Police (PAP) were brought into Sertha County as a measure to intimidate the residents thereby preventing the escalation of the protest.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) condemns in strongest terms over the detention of juveniles and expulsion of the class VI student from school. The Centre calls on the government of People's Republic of China for the immediate and unconditional release of around ten students who are still held at the County PSB Detention Centre and calls for the readmission of Dhonyoe into school without any delay.

A lone protester calling for proper allocation of earthquake relief arrested

An exile Tibetan returnee was arrested on 2 May 2010 for staging a solo protest in front of Tsuglakhang in Lhasa, according to confirmed information received from reliable sources by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD).

Samdup Gyatso, a 28-year-old was arrested by around seven Public Security Bureau (PSB) officials during his brief solo protest in front

of Tsuglakhang temple in Lhasa. According to sources, at around 3:20 PM (Beijing standard time) during the peak hour for religious activities around the Tsuglakhang temple, Samdup Gyatso staged a lone protest carrying banned Tibetan national flag in hand and had another stitched on the back of his shirt and shouted slogans calling for the "quick return of the exiled Tibetan leader to Tibet," "release Panchen Lama" and "proper allocation and delivery of earthquake relief received from international donors to the much needed nomadic communities in Kyegudo." He was immediately arrested by PSB officials and whisked off in a police vehicle. There is no information on his current whereabouts.



Samdup Gyatso

Samdup Gyatso was born in a nomad family in Haiyan County, Tsochang (Ch: Haibei) "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" ("TAP") in Qinghai Province. He was a former student of Sherab Gatsel Lobling, a Transit School for newly arrived adult Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala. Before that he was also a monk of Jabdrung Gartok Monastery. Samdup came into exile in November 2007 and studied for a year at Sherab Gatsel Lobling School. In March 2008, he returned

to Tibet via Tibet-Nepal border of Dram and was arrested for carrying several books of speeches by the Dalai Lama and subsequently detained at Shigatse PSB Detention Centre for a month. He was later shifted to Drapchi Prison where he spent next six months. He went back to his hometown after his release from prison in October 2008.

This was the second known case of a Tibetan getting arrested in connection with the recent earthquake that devastated the Tibetan areas of Kyegudo (Ch: Yushu/Jiegu) in Qinghai Province killing thousand of Tibetans and injuring tens of thousands. Earlier on 23 April, Tagyal, a renowned Tibetan writer in Xining was arrested for signing an open letter of condolence to the victims of the disaster that criticized the Chinese government's handling of the earthquake relief efforts. The open letter was written by a group of prominent Tibetan intellectuals based in Xining, Qinghai Province just three days after the earthquake. Tagyal writes with the pen name "Shogdung" (morning conch) and worked for the Nationalities Publishing House in Xining.

TCHRD condemns in strongest term over the arbitrary arrest of Samdup Gyatso. His action constitutes nothing more than a peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights enshrined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and other major international human rights covenants that PRC is a signatory. The Centre believes the grievances expressed by Samdup during the protest represent views shared by a broad spectrum of Tibetans in Tibet.

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The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is an independent centre which aims to promote and protect human rights and a democratic polity for Tibet. It attempts to educate Tibetans on human rights principles and to work with other human rights and democracy groups as part of a worldwide movement towards these ends. TCHRD is registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act 21 of 1860 in 1996.

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Partial list of TCHRD publications:

•The Next Generation: *The State of Education in Tibet Today* (1997) • Behind Bars: *Prison Conditions in Tibet* (1998) • Closing the Doors: *Religious Repression in Tibet* (1998) • *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Tibetan Translation) (1998) • *Democracy: An Education Booklet* (1998) • Fearless Voices: *Accounts of Tibetan Former Political Prisoners* (1998) • *Human Rights: An Education Booklet* (1998) • *A Guide to Human Rights* (1999) • *A guide to Democracy* (1999) • *Tales of Terror: Torture in Tibet* (1999) • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet* (1999) • *Torture and Ill-Treatment in Tibet* (2000) • *Racial Discrimination in Tibet* (2000) • *Impoverishing Tibetans: China's flawed economic policy* (2000) • *Destruction of Serthar Institute : A Special Report (2002)* • *Dispossessed: Land and Housing Rights in Tibet* (2002) • *Strike hard Campaign: China's crackdown on political dissidence* (2004) • *State of education in Tibet: A human rights perspective* (2004) • *Kuxing: Torture in Tibet* (2005) • *Death Penalty in China* (2005) • *International Bill of Human Rights* (2005) • *TCHRD 1996-2006: A Decade of Human Rights Research* • *Railway and China's Development Strategy in Tibet: A Tale of Two Economies* • *Prisoners of Tibet* • *Annual Report : Human Rights Situation in Tibet (1996 - 2008)* • *Uprising in Tibetan 2008* • *Briefing paper for travellers to Tibet*

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