

TIBETAN

self-immolations

1998 to 2018

news, views and global response

Tibetan Self-Immolations

1998 to 2018

News, Views and Global Response

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Published and distributed by
Kirti Monastery
Dharamsala

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Preface

In 2013, we published the first edition of this book, which quickly went out of print. We wanted to do a reprint since many people, including Tibetans and foreign scholars, kept asking for copies. However, self-immolation protests continued throughout these years and as a result we were unable to do a reprint without including these new cases of self-immolations in the book.

We are very happy that this revised and updated edition titled *Tibetan Self-immolation 1998 to 2018: News, Views and Global Response* is finally in print and available for the general public. This is perhaps the most comprehensive book in English on self-immolations that took place in Tibet as well as in Nepal and India to protest against continuing Chinese occupation of the Tibetan Plateau.

Tibetan Self-immolation is the sixth volume related to self-immolation that we have published in Tibetan, English and Chinese since 2013. We hope that this title provides not only information on these fiery non-violent protests but it also become a historic testament to the sacrifices that these brave Tibetans have made in order to gain freedom for their homeland.

Tibet Information Communicators

Dharamsala, 2019

Introduction

The Communist Party of China's aggression into Tibet started in 1935 and the People's Republic of China's occupation was completed by 1959. The invasion of 1949/50 was followed by a series of catastrophic campaigns such as Democratic Reforms, the Cultural Revolution, Patriotic Education and other turmoils resulting in the death of about 1.2 million Tibetans on the plateau and the destruction of Tibet's unique cultural and spiritual heritage dating back over thousands of years.

The first self-immolation in Tibet's struggle for freedom took place in exile on 27 April 1998 in New Delhi. Thupten Ngodup was involved in an indefinite hunger strike organized by Tibetan Youth Congress when he set himself on fire. Ngodup died a few days later in hospital. His action set a precedent in Tibet's freedom movement that is continuing today in Tibet.

A decade later on, 27 February 2009, a young monk named Tapey in Ngaba, a town in northeastern Tibet, set himself on fire to protest against China's colonial rule over Tibet. Since then self-immolation protests have spread all across the three traditional provinces of the Tibetan Plateau. Unlike Thupten Ngodup, who was born in an independent Tibet and forced into exile due to Communist China's occupation of his homeland, Tapey was born and raised under the Communist red flag. As a child growing up, he underwent the Patriotic Education campaign that has been strongly enforced in Tibet since 1998 and suffered the forced closure of his school. Later, he witnessed many monks from his monastery being slain by bullets of the Chinese security forces and knew of hundreds of others being jailed and tortured. This background gave Tapey ample reasons for taking the decision to set himself on fire. He was the first-ever Tibetan inside Tibet to take this non-violent step.

On 16 March 2011 – marked the third anniversary of the Tibet-wide peaceful uprising of 2008 – another young monk from Kirti Monastery in Ngaba set himself on fire. Phuntsok self-immolated to protest against

Beijing's decision to flood Tibet with more deployments of security forces to arbitrarily harass, torture and arrest Tibetans. Consequently, between February 2009 and December 2012, Tibet has seen ninety-five people setting themselves on fire to challenge Beijing's rule over their homeland. This has arguably become the largest count of self-immolation protests in the world. Self-immolation is without doubt the highest form of non-violent protest. And for Tibetans, the fundamental causes are rooted in Beijing's policies to wipe out Tibetan culture, language and religion; and alien policies that have been forced upon Tibetans for over half-a-century.

However, China's propaganda machine blatantly continues to blame His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exile Tibetans for instigating the self-immolations. It also claims that these are 'violent actions' by a few Tibetans. The fact that Beijing has failed to provide even a single evidence to the international community to validate its claims.

For the courage and audacity with which Tibetans challenge occupation – and to the brave heroes who have died in self-immolation protests – we salute and pay homage to their sacrifices. Many others who stand in solidarity with these heroes, and support family members they left behind, are being harassed, imprisoned, tortured and more recently handed down death sentences. They are true witnesses to our current tragic history.

In exile, the Tibetan people and their supporters under the leadership of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile steadfastly raise the issue of Tibet and highlight the basic aspirations of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire. Though these actions have resulted in United States, European Union and many world parliaments passing resolutions on Tibet and calling on China to change its policies in Tibet, so far there have been no satisfactory actions to end China's occupation of the plateau. Moreover, despite the extraordinary number of self-immolation protests on the Tibetan Plateau the coverage in the world's media has also been limited. Beijing's media blackouts and banning of journalists – even foreign tourists – from travelling into Tibet have effectively curtailed news coverage.

The exile Tibetan administration and various non-governmental organizations and Tibet Support Groups must now review, re-examine and re-evaluate past campaigns, activities and their results to plan strategic non-violent action plans for the future. Any failure to do so will leave

China free to continue with the same policies that it has enforced on Tibet for over half-a-century. This will drive even more Tibetans into setting themselves on fire. If this happens, history will not judge us kindly.

For history, and for future generations, it is fundamentally important to maintain a clear record of on-going self-immolations taking place in and outside. This is our responsibility in exile. Thus, Tibet Information Communicators of the Dharamsala-based Kirti Monastery has compiled five books recording the current self-immolations and related documents. There are three volumes in Tibetan and a volume each in English and Chinese.

This English edition is divided into three sections: news on self-immolation, feature articles and views, and global responses to Tibetan self-immolations. We hope that this record will be a witness for future generations, narrating to them the tragic events taking place today. As far possible we have taken great care in compiling this volume. However, due to a lack of expertise and fluency in English, there are bound to be mistakes for which we will be held solely responsible. It is not possible for a reader to know everything about Tibet and its people within the covers of this book, hence, we request you to explore more from other books and resources. We also request you to point out any mistakes and discrepancies herein so that we can avoid them in future.

We once again reiterate our deep respects for those who have sacrificed their lives for Tibet and we stand in solidarity with them. With prayers that the day Tibetans on both sides of the Himalayas will reunite may come soon.

Tibet Information Communicators
Kirti Monastery
Dharamsala
2019

NEWS

Thubten Ngodup

Age: 60

Occupation: retired army/cook

Date: 27 April 1998

Place of self-immolation:

Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, India

Current status: deceased



And the Tibetan strike goes on...

Rediff.com, 27 April 1998

Eighteen hours after police forcibly broke a fast unto death by six Tibetans in New Delhi, a batch of five hunger strikers replaced them, despite a police warning of strong action.

Meanwhile, 60-year-old Thupten Ngodup, who attempted self immolation in protest against the "police high handedness" on Monday, and the youngest of the first batch of six hunger strikers, Karma Sichoe (25), are still in critical condition at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital.

Thupten Ngodup, who suffered 90 per cent burns, was to join the second batch of strikers.

C Wangchuk, a spokesman of the Tibetan Youth Congress which is spearheading the strike, said a posse of policemen had warned they would use force if the Tibetans persisted with their protest.

Wangchuk said home ministry officials had tried to convince them to call off their protest. However, he made it clear they would continue till their demands are met.

He said Ngodup's self immolation attempt was a desperate act provoked by "police high handedness." "Many more such acts will follow if we are forced," he warned.

The five new hunger strikers are Jampa Kalsang (23), Phuntsok Semsang (25),

Tsering Dorjee (37), Kalden Norbu (47) and Tsering Gonkyab (55).

Tibetans from various parts of the country continued to throng Jantar Mantar, the venue of the fast.

Rinchen Norzon, with a bandaged hand, said the police beat her up. "They pulled me by hair and beat me with *lathis*," she said.

Norzon and 16 others had formed a cordon around the hunger strikers to prevent the police from taking them away. TYC vice-president Karma Yeshe said the police did not even spare a 14-year-old-girl, Dolma. Many other women with bruises were also critical of the police action, which they termed "brutality."

TYC president Tseten Norbu, who expressed deep anguish over the development, said they were disappointed with the Indian government's handling of the situation.

Five of TYC's 10 executive committee members are in the capital to monitor the developments and set future agenda, sources said.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/Storyold/30084/>

Buddhist monk succumbs to his burn injuries

Express New Service, 30 April 1998 IST

Thupten Ngodup, the 21-year-old Buddhist monk, who immolated himself on Monday night and was in hospital with 95 per cent burns died early on Wednesday morning. As news of his death spread today, hundreds of Tibetans visited the spot near Jantar Mantar where he had set himself afire on Monday. Prayers were chanted and candles were lit near a photograph of Ngodup. A few feet away, five other Tibetans were on another fast-unto-death agitation which commenced after the police forced the earlier six activists to break their 49-day hunger strike.

Ngodup's body was handed over to TYC members this evening after a post-mortem at Lady Hardinge Medical College, and taken to Majnu ka Tilla to enable Tibetans to pay their last respects. The body will be taken to Dharamsala for cremation later tonight.

Ngodup's self-immolation has spurred the TYC to step up their agitation to press for a discussion on the Tibetan question at the United Nations. The TYC

has even threatened to resort to more violent methods if need be to achieve their objective. This despite requests from the Dalai Lama against doing so.

Tseten Norbu, TYC president told The Indian Express: “We respect the Dalai Lama. That is why we have not resorted to any violent means despite being provoked and suppressed so long. But now it seems we have to think differently. For 40 years nothing has happened.” He, however, denies that the TYC is at loggerheads with the Dalai Lama.

When the Dalai Lama stepped out of RML hospital on Tuesday after visiting Ngodup, he had reassured the gathering of Tibetans outside that he was very much a part of their struggle.

But the Dalai Lama had pointed out that he eschewed violence in all forms, including self-immolations and hunger-strikes.

Norbu says: “The Dalai Lama is a spiritual leader and wants the good of every one. Therefore, he talks about following the middle-path to solve the Tibetan issue. But we are the people of Tibet and the TYC is a political body.”

<http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/apr/29tibet.htm>

Tibetan protester succumbs to burns; hunger strike continues

Rediff.com, 29 April 1998

Thupten Ngodup's death in the early hours of Wednesday, caused by the severe burns suffered by him during a self-immolation bid on Monday, has made the Tibetans determined to carry on the protest which began as an indefinite fast 51 days ago.

Ngodup, 60, set himself ablaze to protest against the police action to break the indefinite hunger strike by six Tibetans which started on March 10.

He was admitted to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital with 90 per cent burns, and died shortly after midnight. After a post-mortem at the Lady Hardinge medical college, his body was taken in a procession of 16 vehicles to Majnu ka Tila where it was handed over to the Tibetan Youth Congress spearheading the hunger strike.

TYC spokesman C Wangchuk said about 2,500 Tibetans gathered to take part

in the prayers and pay tribute to Ngodup.

Addressing the gathering, TYC president Tseten Norbu said, “as refugees, we get food and shelter from others. But for the freedom of Tibet, we cannot bank on it and have to make some sacrifices.”

“We are all the more encouraged by the deed of this brave man,” said Dolma, a representative of the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Meanwhile, all the six strikers of the first batch, admitted to hospital are improving. The youngest of them, Karma Sichoe, who was in intensive care, is said to be out of danger. “They are expected to be discharged from the hospital in a day or two,” Wangchuk said, adding that one of them, Yung Drung, was still refusing food though he was being given nutrients intravenously.

A group of thirty nuns who came from Dharamsala sat on a silent *dharna* near the tent where the second batch of five Tibetans are on hunger strike since Tuesday. A large framed photograph of Ngodup was kept on a table with 108 burning candles as part of a Tibetan ritual.

Ngodup’s body will be taken to Dharmasala where the cremation is scheduled to take place on Thursday.

He died barely six hours after the Tibetan spiritual head, the Dalai Lama, visited him and the six hunger strikers in the hospital last evening.

The Chhatra Janata Dal and Yuva Janata Dal also staged a one-day *dharna* near the Tibetan tent in support of the hunger strikers and their demands which include resumption of debate in the United Nations on the Tibetan issue and appointment of a special UN envoy on Tibet.

Dalai Lama fears outbreak of violence

The Associated Press, 1 May 1998

New York – The growing desperation of the Tibetan people could lead to violence, the Dalai Lama warned Thursday, urging China to enter into a dialogue over the autonomy of his Himalayan homeland.

The Dalai Lama is the religious and spiritual leader for many of Tibet’s 6 million people. However, as a Buddhist said he could not support actions such as recent hunger strikes and the self-immolation of a Tibetan activist, who died Wednesday.

day in New Delhi.

It was first act of its kind among the more than 10,000 Tibetans campaigning from exile in India to regain freedom for the mountainous country China invaded in 1950 and annexed nine years later.

Despite his opposition to such extremism, the Dalai Lama said he “admired the determination” of the activist. Thupten Ngodup. But he also feared that “if such determination and emotion is turned around, there is a danger of true violence.”

The Dalai Lama has long discouraged his followers from using violence to resist Chinese rule and sees a “middle approach” of dialogue with Beijing as the most beneficial way to reach an agreement.

Speaking to reporter Thursday after a meeting with American human rights lawyers, the Dalai Lama repeated his call for autonomy in Tibet rather than full political independence, and expressed disappointment that such declarations had brought no response from Beijing.

Later, during a tribute to “Kundun” a movie about Dalai Lama’s early life, he made clear that Tibet’s association with China has its advantages.

“We have to make economic expansion,” he told 1,500 people packed into a New York synagogue for the tribute. “If we join with another big nation, we might benefit. This is a proposal for long-term benefit.”

The Dalai Lama praised the Martin Scorsese film, which he said he viewed for the first time earlier in the day.

“When I saw it, I had mixed feelings of sadness and happiness,” he said. “Since I left, there have been a lot of unfortunate things that have happened, but the spirit of the Tibetan people remains very strong.”

Most of the Dalai Lama’s remarks Thursday, however, centered on the dilemmas he faces as head of a movement that has failed to create any substantial momentum over the years.

Proclaiming that conditions in Tibet were “becoming worse and worse,” the religious leader said that “in order to stop expressions of desperation, I have to offer something (to frustrated Tibetans).”

Still the 60 year-old leader said he supports US policy of engagement with China.

Monks mourn death of freedom protest

The Associated Press, 6 May 1998

New Delhi, India - Monks chanted Buddhist hymns and lit oil lamps today in special prayers for a Tibetan who burned himself to death in a protest that highlights growing frustration among Tibetan exiles in India.

The services marks the first week since Thupten Ngodup, a 50-year-old former monk, doused himself in gasoline and set himself ablaze to protest the police breakup of hunger strike by six other Tibetan exiles protesting China's rule of their homeland.

Ngodup's self-immolation April 27 was the most dramatic incident in nearly 40 years of peaceful protest by Tibetan exiles.

'We are praying that his soul rests in peace,' said Karma Yeshe, vice president of Tibetan Youth Congress, which organized the prayers and the hunger strike. he said prayers will be held each week for the next seven weeks, keeping with Buddhist custom.

Five other Tibetan exiles have begun a hunger strike in a tent in New Delhi to demand a UN debate on China's 1959 annexation of Tibet. The protesters also want the United Nations to appoint a human rights observer for Tibet and whether Tibetans want independence, greater autonomy or some other options. About 120,000 Tibetan refugees live in India, where their leader, the Dalai Lama, runs a government-in-exile.

The Dalai Lama said the hunger strike and self-immolation, which he believes violate Buddhist teachings of nonviolence, reflect frustration over failure of moderate approach.

Tapey aka Lobsang Tashi

Age: 27

Occupation: Monk

Date: 27 February 2009

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: Last seen in late 2011 in the military hospital of Barkham, Ngaba, Amdo, Tibet



Tibetan monk sets himself on fire - activist group

Rueters, Fri Feb 27, 2009

A Tibetan monk set himself on fire in protest on Friday during a prayer festival in a part of western China that erupted in deadly riots a year ago, an activist group said.

The monk started the blaze after walking out of a monastery in Aba county, an ethnic Tibetan area in Sichuan province, carrying a Tibetan flag with a picture of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, said Matt Whitticase, spokesman for the Free Tibet Campaign.

The monk was surrounded by armed police, three gun shots were heard and he was carried away in a van after falling to the ground, Whitticase said, citing unidentified sources. It was not known whether the monk was dead or alive, he added.

Reuters reached three people by phone in the town outside the Kirti monastery, where the monk had been based, but was unable to obtain confirmation of the protest.

"This is the first incident that I am aware of a Tibetan self-immolating since the late 1990s," Whitticase said. "It is extremely rare."

Tibetans marked their New Year this week and the Kirti monastery, which had been a centre of pro-independence demonstrations last March before a crack-

down, was observing the Monlam prayer festival on Friday, Whitticase said.

Next month also marks the 50th anniversary of the exile of the Dalai Lama, following a failed insurrection against China, and there is intense security across Tibet itself and many neighbouring areas with ethnic Tibetans.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7916544.stm>

Tibetan monk 'shot' while on fire

BBC News, 28 February 2009

A Tibetan monk has been shot after setting fire to himself during a protest at Beijing's rule, reports say.

The incident happened in the Tibetan-populated town of Aba in southwest China's Sichuan province during a gathering of more than 1,000 monks.

The monk, named Tapey, is said to have shouted slogans and waved a Tibetan flag, then used petrol to start a fire.

Campaign groups said witnesses then saw Chinese police shoot the man.

Banned meeting

The monk collapsed and was taken away by the police.

China's official Xinhua news agency confirmed a man had set himself on fire, saying he was taken to a hospital and treated for burns injuries. It made no mention of any gunshot wounds.

The protest began after more than 1,000 Tibetan Buddhist monks gathered at a temple in the town to celebrate the third day of the Tibetan new year.

Chinese officials had earlier banned the gathering.

After the incident, news agencies reported a heavy police presence on the streets of the town.

"There are many policemen on patrol in the street and all of them have guns," an employee at a teahouse in Aba told the AFP news agency.

It is extremely difficult to independently confirm any information coming out of Tibetan areas.

China's authorities have restricted access to the region.

Next month marks the 50th anniversary of the escape into exile of the Dalai Lama and China wants to make sure there are no Tibetan protests in support of the exiled spiritual leader like those of a year ago, says the BBC's James Reynolds in Beijing.

More than 200 Tibetans are thought to have been killed in a Chinese crackdown in the region, which it has ruled since an invasion in 1950.

China claims Tibet is part of its historic territory, but Tibetan groups in exile regard the invasion as a tragedy.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/02/27/Activists-Chinese-cops-shot-fiery-monk/UPI-94801235765262/

Activists: Chinese cops shot fiery monk

United Press International, Feb. 27, 2009 at 3:07 PM

ABA, China, Feb. 27 (UPI) -- Chinese police officers shot a Tibetan monk Friday in the Chinese city of Abo moments after the young man set himself on fire, activist groups say.

Tibetan activist groups, citing witness testimonies, claimed a monk identified only as Tapey was shot three times by police officers after he doused his clothing with oil and set himself ablaze as a protest, The Washington Post reported.

International Campaign For Tibet spokeswoman Kate Saunders said while Tapey's body was quickly removed from the scene, witnesses said the monk appeared to be dead.

The monk's fiery protest came shortly after nearly 1,000 monks were not allowed to enter the Kirti Monastery's main prayer hall.

The monks were not allowed to enter the hall and honor the traditional prayer festival of Monlam due to an order by local authorities, the Post said.

Students for a Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet said most of the monks then began to conduct their prayers outside the monastery until Tapey conducted his apparently deadly protest.

<http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/86864>

Protest Monk ‘Sets Himself on Fire’

Express UK, 28 February 2009

A Tibetan Buddhist monk in western China has set himself on fire in an apparent protest against government religious restrictions.

He was shot by security forces, international Tibetan advocacy groups reported.

The monk, identified as Tapey, was shot on Friday afternoon in the Tibetan town of Aba in Sichuan province, according to Free Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet, and phayul.com, a news site affiliated with the Dalai Lama’s India-based government in exile.

They said Tapey was carried to a van and driven away to an undisclosed location, possibly a hospital. No details were available about his condition.

Many Tibetans have reportedly heeded calls for an unofficial boycott of festivities that began on Wednesday to mark the start of the Tibetan new year as a form of protest against last year’s crackdown.

The Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, has said celebrations would be “inappropriate” under the circumstances.

Adding to the tensions, next month marks the 50th anniversary of a failed 1959 uprising against Chinese rule that led to the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile.

<http://www.tibetanreview.net/news.php?cp=63&id=2423>

Chinese repression leads to Ngaba monk’s self-immolation

TibetanReview.net, Mar 03, 2009

The paramilitary People’s Armed Police (PAP) shot three times at a monk in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province on Feb 27 after he had immolated himself in protest at the main town crossroad, according to several Tibet groups and media sources. At least one shot hit the monk who collapsed to the ground, to be picked up and taken away by the troops. China has confirmed that the monk had suffered head and neck burns and it was not clear whether he was alive.

The monk, named as Tapey and aged 25 to 30, belonged to Kirti Trunkhor monastery. On Feb 27, the third day of the Tibetan Earth-Ox New Year, the around 1,000 monks of Kirti Monastery gathered before their main prayer hall for the annual Monlam prayer festival even though the authorities had banned it already. When blocked from entering it, they prepared to hold the prayer service outside. However, senior monks and Tibetan officials dispatched by the Chinese authorities eventually convinced them to return to their living quarters.

However, some time afterwards, Tapey left his monastery, carrying with him a homemade Tibetan flag, with a picture of the Dalai Lama attached to the centre. By the time he reached the main town crossroad, he had doused himself with kerosene or petrol and lit himself. Eyewitnesses heard him shout slogans but could not make out the words. A PAP squad posted nearby shot at him before proceeding to douse the flame and take him to hospital.

Lobsang Phuntsok

Age: 20

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 16 March 2011

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Eastern Tibet

Current Status: died on 17 March 2011



Another Tibetan Monk dies following Self-immolation

Dharamshala, March 20 2012

A 20-year-old Tibetan monk who self-immolated on March 16, succumbed to his burn injuries yesterday in Ngaba County, Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, sources told TCHRD. Dukthen Kyi, spokesperson of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) here said Lobsang Tsultrim, a monk at Kirti Monastery, set himself ablaze at around 1700 hrs (Tibet Time) on March 16, on the main road of Ngaba County market protesting against the Chinese government. She said yesterday Lobsang succumbed to burn injuries at Barkham (Chinese: Maerkang), capital of Ngaba Prefecture. In the evening of the same day, the authorities cremated his body at a nearby cremation ground in Barkham, she disclosed. Kyi said only his ashes were given to his family. She said yesterday monks at the Kirti Monastery held prayer ceremony in the wake of Lobsang's death. Sources say Lobsang was a cousin of Norbu Damdul, a 19 year-old former monk at the Kirti Monastery, who self-immolated on October 15, and later died on January 5. After Lobsang Tsultrim's self-immolation, for three days local shops and restaurants owned by Tibetans remained closed as a sign of mourning and solidarity.

Kyi said that on March 16, Lobsang had walked down the main road of the Ngaba town before the security officers knocked him down. The officers arrested him after extinguishing the flames. He was then thrown into a police vehicle and taken away.

<http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/tibet/1963-beijing-seizes-3-monks-in-phuntsok-immolation-inquiry-3-more-arrested>

Beijing Seizes 3 Monks in Phuntsok Immolation Inquiry, 3 More Arrested *The Tibet Post International*, 27 August 2011

London- Chinese authorities have arrested three Tibetan Buddhist monks claimed to have links with the self-immolation of Phuntsok, who burned himself to death last March in protest at the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Beijing accuses the three monks of the ‘intentional killing’ of Phuntsok. The authorities also arrested another three monks in Tawu county of Kham, eastern Tibet, according to the Tibetan Human Rights group.

Authorities in Beijing claim that two of the monks are to be charged for “plotting, instigating and assisting in the self-immolation of Phuntsok”. The third is accused of moving and hiding the monk for 11 hours, which authorities claim prevented him from receiving medical treatment and led to his eventual death.

According to Chinese state controlled agency Xinhua, the three monks; Tsering, Tegyam and Dhondup will stand trial on Monday 29th August and Tuesday 30th, 2011.

However, there is no confirmed report from Tibet’s side, whether the arrested monks were related to the case of late Phuntsok, a 20-year old monk from Kirti Monastery Ngaba county of Amdho, eastern Tibet, self-immolated to protest against Chinese rule. “We do not have a confirmed report right now. But, we’re currently investigating the new reports, whether it was related to the late Lobsang Phuntsok’s self-immolation,” Ven. Kanyak Tsering, India based Kirti Monastery told *The Tibet Post International*.

Because of the prohibition of foreign journalists in Tibet, conflicting reports have arisen since the immolation of Phuntsok on Wednesday 16 March 2011. While authorities in China maintain that monks forcibly moved the monk out of a nearby hospital and into Kirti Monastery, Tibetan rights groups highlight that Chinese police put out the flames, then beat the monk to death.

The death of Phuntsok, who was in his early 20s, and a Buddhist monk of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba province, Eastern Tibet, sparked a wave of human rights abuses in the region against Tibetans, and led to an international outcry on the

worsening human rights situation in the region. Eastern Tibet, and particularly Kirti Monastery, witnessed unprecedented military crackdowns, including a ‘re-education programme’ for the inhabitants of the monastery.

The disturbing news of the three arrested monks comes amid growing concern for the human rights of Tibetans in Tibet. Last week, 29 year old Tsewang Norbu self-immolated in a nearby region of Kham Province, eastern Tibet. The situation at Kirti Monastery remains tense and is under a heavy military presence from Chinese authorities.

Chinese authorities arrested another three Tibetans just days after a 29 year old Buddhist monk Tsewang Norbu of Nyatso Monastery in Kham Tawo, eastern Tibet, self-immolated to protest against Chinese rule, according to a report of the Dharamshala based Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy. “The three Tibetans – Norbu, Gyaltsen and another unidentified man - were arrested separately by officials of Public Security Bureau in Tawu County in Kardze county of eastern Tibet (Ch: Sichuan Province),” it said.

The Joint Press Statement from the Kashag and Tibetan Parliament-In-Exile
tibet.net, October 12, 2011

Since the 2008 uprising in Tibet, the situation in Tibet has been deteriorating. Particularly, as of March this year, it has become ever more tense and urgent with the increasing cases of self-immolation by young Tibetans who find China’s occupation and repression of Tibet intolerable.

Tibetans in Tibet are driven to these drastic acts to resist political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization and environmental destruction.

From the seven young Tibetans who self-immolated this year, the following succumbed to their injuries: On March 16, 2011, Lobsang Phuntsok (age 21), a monk of Kirti Monastery in northeastern Tibet. The second reported case, on August 15, 2011 was that of Tsewang Norbu, (age 29), a monk at Nyitso monastery in eastern Tibet. The third and the fourth cases were Khaying (age 18), and Choephel (age 19), both former monks of Kirti Monastery. They self-immolated on October 7, 2011 and died on October 8 and 11 respectively.

The conditions of the three others, namely Lobsang Kelsang (age 18), Lobsang Kunchok (age 19) and Kelsang Wangchuk (age 17) are still unknown.

The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply concerned about their whereabouts and well-being.

We express our solidarity with all those who lost their lives and with all other Tibetans who are incarcerated for their courage to speak up for the rights of the Tibetan people.

We appeal to the United Nations, freedom-loving countries and people around the world to show their support and solidarity with the Tibetan people at this critical stage.

Given the undeclared martial law in Tibet and the increasing cases of self-immolation, the international community must press the government of People's Republic of China to restore freedom and resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue for the mutual benefit of the Tibetan and Chinese people. In this light, we urge the international community and the media to send fact-finding delegations to ascertain the situation on the ground inside Tibet.

The Kashag and the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile have jointly planned activities in India and the world-at-large to highlight the deepening crisis in Tibet.

We call upon all Tibetans and Tibet supporters in the free world to join efforts and organize activities in their respective regions. These events must be peaceful, respectful of local laws and dignified. On October 19, 2011, the Central Tibetan Administration will offer day-long prayers and encourage all Tibetans to fast on that day as a gesture of solidarity with Tibetans in Tibet.

To our brothers and sisters in Tibet, we stand with you in fulfilling our common aspirations, and we share the pain of your sacrifice.

The Dalai Lama to join mass prayer gathering for self-immolators

Phayul.com, October 18, 2011

DHARAMSHALA, October 18: Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be joining a mass prayer gathering tomorrow at Tsug-la Khang in the exile seat of Dharamshala.

The day-long prayer session and hunger fast is being organised by the Kashag (cabinet) to "express solidarity with all those who lost their lives and with all other Tibetans who are incarcerated for their courage to speak up for the rights

of the Tibetan people”.

Gyalwang Karmapa and Kirti Rinpoche, along with the entire staff of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) will be taking part in the prayer session.

Since March this year, nine Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet, protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Lobsang Phuntsok (20), Tsewang Norbu (29), Khaying (18), Choephel (19), and Tenzin Wangmo (20) have all succumbed to their injuries, while there is no information on the well being and whereabouts of Lobsang Kelsang (18), Lobsang Kunchok (19), Kelsang Wangchuk (17), and Norbu Damdul (19).

Announcing the jointly planned activities in India and the world-at-large with the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay last week called upon “all Tibetans and Tibet supporters in the free world to join efforts and organise activities in their respective regions”.

“We appeal to the United Nations, freedom-loving countries and people around the world to show their support and solidarity with the Tibetan people at this critical stage,” Dr Sangay said.

“Given the undeclared martial law in Tibet and the increasing cases of self-immolation, the international community must press the government of People’s Republic of China to restore freedom and resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue ... we urge the international community and the media to send fact-finding delegations to ascertain the situation on the ground inside Tibet.”

Tsewang Norbu

Age: 29

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 15 August 2012

Place: Nyatso Monastery, Tawu, Kham,

Eastern Tibet

Current Status: Deceased



Tibetan monk dies in self-immolation protest, group says

Reuters, BEIJING, Mon Aug 15, 2011

A Tibetan Buddhist monk burned himself to death on Monday in southwest China calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader condemned by Beijing as a separatist, a group campaigning for Tibetan self-rule said.

The monk's self-immolation could spark fresh tensions in heavily ethnic Tibetan parts of Sichuan, which neighbors the official Tibet region, following protests in March when a Tibetan monk there also burned himself to death.

The London-based Free Tibet organization said the latest immolation-protest was carried out by a 29-year-old monk, Tsewang Norbu, who was from a monastery in Tawu, about 150 km (93 miles) from where the last immolation happened.

"Tsewang Norbu drank petrol, sprayed petrol on himself and then set himself on fire," Free Tibet said in an emailed statement, citing an unnamed witness.

"He was heard calling out: 'We Tibetan people want freedom', 'Long live the Dalai Lama' and 'Let the Dalai Lama Return to Tibet'. He is believed to have died at the scene," the group said.

China's official Xinhua news agency also reported the monk's self-immolation, but said "it was unclear why he had burned himself."

Tawu, called Daoфу in Chinese, is in a largely ethnic Tibetan part of western Sichuan that many advocates of self-rule say should form part of a larger homeland under Tibetan control. Calls from Reuters to the government and police

bureau in Daofu County went unanswered on Monday evening.

Tensions over the fate of the exiled Dalai Lama and his calls for Tibetan self-determination have continued to dog the region, sometimes flaring into protests.

In March 2008, Tibetan protests led by monks in Lhasa, the regional capital of Tibet proper, were suppressed by police and turned violent. Rioters torched shops and turned on residents, especially Han Chinese, whom many Tibetans see as intruders threatening their culture.

That unrest spilled over into other ethnic Tibetan parts of China, including mountainous western Sichuan.

Beijing has repeatedly accused the Dalai Lama of being a separatist who has abetted violence. China also rejects accusations of oppression of Tibetans, saying its rule has brought huge benefits to what was a dirt poor society.

The Nobel Peace prize-winning Dalai Lama denies seeking independence for Tibet, saying he wants a peaceful transition to autonomy for his remote mountain homeland, which the People's Republic of China has ruled since troops marched in 1950.

Security forces detained about 300 Tibetan monks from a monastery in western China for a month amid a crackdown sparked the previous self-immolation, two exiled Tibetans and a prominent writer told Reuters at the time.

"Today's news exposes how desperate some Tibetans feel," the director of Free Tibet, Stephanie Brigden, said in the group's email.

After the self-immolation in March, she said, Chinese authorities "deployed troops on to the streets, imposed curfews, undertook house searches and set up military round blocks."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/aug/15/tibetan-monk-burns-himself-death>

Tibetan monk burns himself to death in call for return of Dalai Lama *Guardian News, 15 August 2011*

A Tibetan Buddhist monk calling for the return of the Dalai Lama has burned himself to death in south-west China.

The 29-year-old monk's self-immolation at a monastery in Tawu could spark

fresh tensions in the heavily ethnic Tibetan parts of Sichuan, which borders Tibet, after protests in March when a Tibetan monk there also burned himself to death.

“Tsewang Norbu drank petrol, sprayed petrol on himself and then set himself on fire,” the Free Tibet organisation in London said, citing an unnamed witness.

“He was heard calling out ‘we Tibetan people want freedom’, ‘long live the Dalai Lama’ and ‘let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet’. He is believed to have died at the scene,” the group said.

China’s official Xinhua news agency also reported the monk’s death, but said “it was unclear why he had burned himself”.

Tawu, known as Daofo in Chinese, is in a largely ethnic Tibetan part of western Sichuan that many advocates of self-rule say should form part of a larger homeland under Tibetan control.

Tensions over the fate of the exiled Dalai Lama and his calls for Tibetan self-determination sometimes flare into protests in the region.

In March 2008, Tibetan protests led by monks in Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region, were suppressed by police and turned violent. Rioters torched shops and turned on Han Chinese residents, whom many Tibetans see as intruders threatening their culture.

Unrest spilled over into other ethnic Tibetan parts of China, including mountainous western Sichuan.

Beijing has repeatedly accused the Dalai Lama of being a separatist who has abetted violence. China rejects accusations that it oppresses Tibetans, saying its rule has brought huge benefits.

The Dalai Lama, who was awarded the 1989 Nobel peace prize, denies seeking independence for Tibet, saying he wants a peaceful transition to autonomy for his remote mountain homeland, which the People’s Republic of China has ruled since its troops invaded in 1950.

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“Today’s news exposes how desperate some Tibetans feel,” said Stephanie Brig-

den, the director of Free Tibet. After the self-immolation in March, she said Chinese authorities “deployed troops on to the streets, imposed curfews, undertook house searches and set up military road blocks.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/world/asia/19briefs-China.html>

China: Officers Surround Monastery After Suicide

By Andrew Jacobs, *The New York Times*, August 18, 2011

In the days since a Tibetan Buddhist monk in southwestern Sichuan Province set himself on fire to protest Chinese policies, the authorities have sent as many as 1,000 armed police officers to surround the monk’s monastery and have restricted telephone and Internet access, according to advocacy groups. The monk, Tsewang Norbu, was the second this year to kill himself by self-immolation. The suicide of the other monk, Phuntsog, at the Kirti Monastery, in a nearby prefecture in Sichuan, set off a violent standoff between local residents and paramilitary police, who eventually detained 300 monks. Before his suicide on Monday morning, Tsewang Norbu reportedly handed out leaflets demanding the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader, and calling for an end of the repression that has intensified in the area since the clashes at Kirti Monastery.

Tawu tense after monk’s self-immolation

Phayul, August 19, 2011

Over a thousand Chinese armed security personnel have locked down Tawu Nyitso monastery, cutting off electricity and water supply as schools in the region remained closed following Monday’s self immolation of monk Tsewang Norbu.

Tsewang Norbu, 29, had set himself ablaze, raising slogans for the Dalai Lama’s return and freedom in Tibet in Tawu town. Defying the Chinese authorities, monks carried Tsewang Norbu’s charred body to his monastery where almost 10,000 local Tibetan gathered overnight to pay their respects.

Chinese police stopped the gathered people from entering the monastery resulting in the severe beating and arrests of an unspecified number of people. Sensing trouble, Chinese authorities ordered the immediate cremation of Norbu’s body.

Speaking to Phayul, Khenrab a monk in Dharamshala with links inside Tawu said that Chinese authorities had cordoned off the funeral site with a three-layered security blanket, barring local Tibetans from attending the funeral.

“Tsewang Norbu’s last rites were carried out at 7 in the morning on August 17 but the local Tibetans who had come in their thousands were not allowed to attend the funeral,” Khenrab said. “They had to pay their last respects from the top of a far away hill overlooking the funeral site”.

In exile, Tibetans and supporters from New York to Dharamshala to Taiwan organised prayers and protests to mark Tsewang Norbu’s sacrifice.

The Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-exile while paying homage to Tsewang Norbu said, “Such tragic incidents which happen frequently in Tibet are a clear indication of the Tibetan people’s deep-seated resentment against the Chinese government’s wrong policy on Tibet”.

Social networking sites have been rife with messages of respect and calls for campaigns and protests rallies.

Tendor, the executive director of the Students for a Free Tibet, on his facebook page made an open call of support for a protest rally on August 19 in honour of Tsewang Norbu in front of the New York Chinese Consulate.

Reaching out through his facebook page, Tsewang Rigzin, president of the largest pro-independence organisation in exile, the Tibetan Youth Congress, wrote, “the precious sacrifice by Pawo Tsewang Norbu will give inspiration and rebirth to thousands of more Pawos and Pamos to continue our struggle and ultimately regain Tibet’s Independence.”

Chinese Authorities Attempt to Take Tibetan Monk’s Body

By Lin Weizhen, *The Epoch Times*, 18 August 2011

Following the self-immolation of a Tibetan monk in China’s southwest, Chinese authorities dispatched more than a thousand policemen to besiege the monastery where his body was kept, prompting fears of a fresh crackdown in the Tibetan-populated Garze Prefecture.

According to sources familiar with the situation, the police have cut off electricity, water, and food supplies for the 100 monks in the Nyitso monastery and

attempted to take the body of the 29-year-old Tsewang Norbu.

To support those inside the monastery, many nearby Tibetan residents, who had their telephone and Internet services shut down by local Chinese communist authorities, flocked to the monastery to confront the police, the source said.

“The power and water have been cut off for days, and we have no food supplies coming in,” one monk told AFP in a phone interview on Tuesday from inside the monastery in Sichuan Province, which is adjacent to Tibet.

Tsewang Norbu, according to the London-based Free Tibet Campaign, set himself on fire on Monday in front of the county government building after drinking and spraying himself with petrol in protest of Chinese authorities’ ban on the celebration of the Dalai Lama’s July 6 birthday.

While outside the building, he had thrown a massive amount of pamphlets into the air and called out, “We Tibetan people want freedom,” “Long live the Dalai Lama,” and “Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet.”

Upon his death, he was brought back to the monasteries by fellow monks.

Tsewang Norbu’s self-immolation marks the second reported case this year in Sichuan, where several protests have erupted in recent years due to discontent toward the Chinese authorities’ repressive ethnic policies.

Tibetans in Exile Mourn Monk Who Set Himself Aflame

By Hannah Beech, *Time Magazine*, 16 August 2011

The Tibetan National Martyrs’ Memorial is a black obelisk in Dharamsala, the Indian hill station that serves as the headquarters of exiled Tibetans who have fled their Chinese-ruled homeland. Usually the slender monument is surrounded by a colorful tangle of Tibetan prayer flags. But on August 16, the base of the memorial was plastered with something new: pictures of Tsewang Norbu, a burly monk wearing sunglasses and a slight smirk. On August 15, the monk from China’s Sichuan province set himself on fire. Even as he burned to death, he reportedly shouted slogans supporting freedom for Tibet.

The self-immolation was the second this year by a Tibetan monk in Sichuan. Both clerics, according to exile Tibetan organizations, were driven to desperation by a mounting Chinese crackdown on ethnic minorities and religious expression.

(China's official Xinhua News Agency acknowledged that Tsewang Norbu's set himself ablaze but reported that authorities did not know why the 29-year-old had done so.) Certainly the official reaction toward the monasteries where the two monks lived was swift and harsh. After a monk named Phuntsog fatally doused himself with fuel in March, hundreds of his fellow monks at the Kirti monastery were forced to leave; surveillance continues to this day, according to Tibetan media. Exile groups report that similar events are now unfolding at Tsewang Norbu's Nyitso monastery, where Chinese security forces are ringing the complex and telecommunications have been severed.

In July, the monastery had defied a government ban by trying to celebrate the 76th birthday of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who lives in exile in Dharamsala. Beijing considers the Dalai Lama to be a dangerous secessionist; simply displaying his image can carry heavy repercussions in China. In recent days, Nyitso monastery was essentially under police siege for having dared to venerate the Dalai Lama, say exiled monks with ties to the area, leading to the tinderbox atmosphere in which Tsewang Norbu lit himself on fire. Shortly before his self-immolation, the monk apparently passed out leaflets calling for Tibetan freedom and praising the Dalai Lama.

Since the 1980s, the Dalai Lama has insisted that he is calling for autonomy for Tibet, not outright independence. He has won the Nobel Peace Prize for advocating non-violent resistance against a brutal Chinese rule. But frustration among Tibetans has boiled over on several occasions, most recently in 2008 when protests culminated in deadly clashes between Tibetans and members of China's Han majority. The latter ethnic group has flooded to Tibet in recent years, and Tibetans allege the Han get most of the good jobs created by China's recent investment drive in Tibet.

The monks' fiery displays are just another sign of how deep Tibetan discontent remains, even as China builds roads and other development projects across the vast region. Although self-immolation was a historic mode of protest by monks in places like Vietnam, it is not a tradition in modern Tibetan Buddhism. So while some Tibetans in Dharamsala mourned Tsewang Norbu as a martyr, others were less forgiving. "Committing suicide is against our teachings," says a monk studying in Dharamsala, who declined to give his name because he plans to return to Tibet. "We are all desperate, but [suicide] is not the solution."

Lobsang Kunchok

Age: 18

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 26 September 2011

Place: Ngaba County market, Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current Status: Hospitalized with his legs amputated



Lobsang Kelsang

Age: 18

Occupation: Monk

Date: 26 September 2011

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba County market, Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current Status: Deceased



Fiery sacrifices continue in Tibet, Two more monks self-immolate

Phayul, September 26, 2011

Dharamshala, September 26: In reports coming out of Tibet, two more monks in eastern Tibet set themselves ablaze in an apparent anti-China protest today at around 10 am local time.

While bystanders have told sources in exile that one of the protesting monks died on the spot, the other who has been described as being in critical condition was taken to an undisclosed location by Chinese security personnel.

Today's fiery sacrifice comes as the fourth incidence in this year alone when China's repressive policies in Tibet have forced Tibetans to take the drastic step of self-immolation as a non-violent mean to protest China's rule over Tibet.

In a release today the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala described the two monks as Lobsang Kalsang, younger brother of monk Lobsang Phuntsok who died after setting himself on fire on March 16 and Lobsang Kunchok, both around 18 years of age. The monks belong to the under-siege Kirti Monas-

tery in Ngaba, eastern Tibet.

“The two monks carried out their protest in the central town of Ngaba district and raised slogans calling for the long-life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and religious freedom in Tibet before setting themselves on fire,” the release said.

Following the March 16 self-immolation of monk Lobsang Phuntsok, Ngaba Kirti Monastery has been taken over by hundreds of Chinese government officials and the monastery placed under heavy security surveillance with many of its monks disappeared and sentenced to lengthy jail terms.

The release noted that while the monks have been subjected to incessant political re-education sessions by Chinese officials, they have been kept in virtual prison for the last five months with Chinese security personnel keeping a strict watch over their movement.

Confirming beefed up security in and around the entire Ngaba region and increased restrictions on communication, the release said that the phone lines in Ngaba area were not connecting.

The Central Tibetan Administration in a release today conveyed its “heartfelt condolences and prayers to the family members of both individuals” and called upon the Chinese authorities to “immediately address the grievances of the Tibetan people and resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully.”

“These recent series of self-immolation in Tibet attest to the desperation of the Tibetan people arising from the grim current situation in which they live,” the release said.

<http://www.tibetexpress.net/en/news/exile/6611-2011-09-26-12-08-24>

CTA says the monks' self-immolation tragic

Tibet.net, 27 September 2011

Dharamshala: The Central Tibetan Administration on Monday said it is deeply saddened by the incident of self-immolation involving two monks of Kirti Monastery in north-eastern Tibet today while terming the incident as “tragic.”

“The Kashag of the Central Tibetan Administration is deeply saddened by the latest development in Tibet involving two monks setting themselves on fire this

morning to protest the continuing occupation of Tibet by People's Republic of China," a statement by the Tibetan cabinet posted on CTA's website said.

Lobsang Kelsang and Lobsang Kunchok, ages 18 and 19 immolated themselves after a brief protest shouting slogans calling for more freedom and long life of Dalai Lama whom Beijing reviles as a "separatist" despite repeated claims by the Tibetan spiritual leader that he is only seeking increased autonomy for his country.

Eyewitnesses at the site of protest report that the bodies of both monks were taken away by the Chinese police. One of the individuals involved in this latest incident, Lobsang Kelsang, is a relative of Phuntsok, another monk who also self-immolated last March.

The Kashag conveyed its condolences and prayers to the family members of the monks and expressed concern to the monks' condition.

"At this stage, we don't know whether they are dead or survived the self-immolation," the statement said.

Alleging that Kirti Monastery is once again under heavy Chinese military control, Kashag condemned China's policy in Tibet as having a direct bearing on the latest self-immolation protest.

"These recent series of self-immolation in Tibet attest to the desperation of the Tibetan people arising from the grim current situation in which they live. The Central Tibetan Administration calls upon the Chinese authorities to immediately address the grievances of the Tibetan people and resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully," it said.

Meanwhile, the Tibetan Parliament which is currently holding its monsoon session, expressed its concern at the self-immolation and called on international community to pressure China to end its repressive policies in Tibet.

Kalsang Wangchuk

Age: 17

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 3 October 2011

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba County, Ngaba,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Hospitalized



Self-immolation 'trend' at restive Tibetan monastery

By Michael Bristow, *BBC News*, Beijing, 4 October 2011

A Tibetan monk has set fire to himself - the fifth one this year - in an apparent indication of the escalating tension between Tibetans and the Chinese government.

The 17-year-old, named as Kelsang Wangchuk, was reported to have been carrying a photograph of the Dalai Lama as he set himself alight.

This is the latest in a series of incidents this year at the Kirti monastery, in Aba County - called Ngaba in Tibetan - in Sichuan province.

As well as the self-immolations, there has been a stand-off between residents and the security forces, and a row about a group of monks sent for re-education - an incident that even drew comment from the United Nations.

China has reacted by tightening security at the monastery, launching a series of criminal prosecutions and criticising the behaviour of some monks.

But it still appears to be struggling to assert its authority in at least this one Tibetan area.

'Worrying trend'

News of the latest self-immolation came from campaign groups with contacts in the area.

The US-based International Campaign for Tibet said the monk had set himself on fire on Monday as he shouted slogans against the Chinese government.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency confirmed the incident had taken place, saying the police had immediately extinguished the flames. The monk had only slight burns to his leg, according to Xinhua.

Another campaign organisation, Free Tibet, based in London, also reported the incident.

"A growing number of Tibetans clearly feel that this is the only way that they can be heard," said Stephanie Brigden, the director of Free Tibet.

This is the fifth case of self-immolation in Tibetan areas of western Sichuan province this year, something Ms Brigden described as a "worrying and absolutely unprecedented" trend.

Thubten Samphel, a spokesman for the Tibetan government-in-exile, said Tibetan Buddhism did not accept violence against other people or oneself.

"Whatever the reason for this, it's a very strong and desperate indication that the people there are totally unhappy," he said from the government's base in Dharamsala in India.

'Know nothing'

It is not easy, though, to understand even what is going on in and around the Kirti monastery, let alone why it is happening.

Kirti has a sister monastery in Dharamsala, and the two sets of monks keep in touch using mobile phones.

"It seems the monastery is under heavy police and military surveillance," said Thubten Samphel, adding that reports had come from this informal network between the two monasteries.

But, in an indication of just how patchy those links can be, he said the government-in-exile learnt about this latest self-immolation only through international news reports.

Telephone calls to the monastery and surrounding town glean little more in the way of information about what is going on in the area.

Workers at hotels and businesses on Tuesday told the BBC they knew nothing

about the monk who had set fire to himself.

A person who answered the phone at the monastery was equally unhelpful. “I don’t know anything about it,” he said.

The Chinese government usually restricts journalists’ visits to sensitive Tibetan areas - something the US government has recently complained about - so it is difficult to get on-the-ground information.

And officials are almost always reluctant to talk openly about such incidents.

“Police are investigating the man’s motives,” was the curt comment in the Xinhua report about why this latest monk should feel impelled to set himself alight.

Prosecutions

But the Chinese government has not been passive - it has attempted to counter the discontent being displayed at the Kirti monastery.

Access to Kirti monastery is restricted but this image of a monk’s funeral was sent to campaigners

In August it sentenced three monks to lengthy prison sentences for helping another to kill himself through self-immolation in March.

And earlier this year it ordered the “legal education” of monks at the monastery, an incident, among others, that resulted in queries from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It wanted to know what was going on at the Kirti monastery and surrounding area.

The Chinese government gave perhaps its fullest justification yet for its actions at the monastery in its reply to the UN.

It accused the monks there of long being engaged in acts “aimed at disturbing social order”, including vandalism and self-immolation.

“Some monks of the monastery also frequented places of entertainment, prostitution, alcohol and gambling, and spread pornographic CD-Roms,” said the official document from May this year.

China told the UN that forcing the monks into re-education was a “showcase” of how to manage religious affairs.

Many at Kirti monastery appear to disagree with that view.

Self-Immolation a 'Worrying' Trend

Radio Free Asia, 2011-10-04

Tibetan monks take desperate action to highlight what rights groups say are Chinese human rights abuses.

Recent self-immolations by desperate Tibetan monks from a monastery under siege signal an alarming trend and highlight unrelenting Chinese actions to curb religious rights, according to human rights groups and experts.

"This is an extremely worrying and absolutely unprecedented trend that we hope will end," London-based Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said after Monday's incident in which a fifth Tibetan monk set himself on fire this year.

The monk, identified as Kalsang Wangchuk, 17 or 18 years old and from Kirti Monastery in southwestern Sichuan province's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture, set fire to himself near the vegetable market in Ngaba town.

His upper body was seen to be badly burned and security forces, according to some accounts, began beating him after the flames were extinguished and pointed weapons at an angry crowd.

Three other monks from Kirti monastery had set themselves ablaze earlier in a trend that began in March this year and that led to a security crackdown on the monastery. According to Free Tibet, only one monk in Tibet was known to have set fire to himself before this year.

Chinese police and military personnel had then moved in to occupy Kirti monastery, and around 2,000 of its monks now live elsewhere, according to Jampel Monlam, head of the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy based in the northern Indian town of Dharamsala.

"There are Chinese soldiers and police inside the monastery. There are plain-clothes police there, and they frequently carry out patriotic and law enforcement propaganda campaigns," he said.

'Political re-education'

Chinese authorities frequently carry out "political re-education" of Tibetan monks, who are put under pressure to renounce their allegiance to Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and pledge loyalty to the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

Jampel Monlam said that the number of monks and lamas at Kirti had dropped sharply in recent months, with many being sent away.

“A lot of monks and lamas have been kicked out, and there are only 500 or so monks left behind there,” he added. “There used to be more than 2,500, and now there are only a few hundred. The rest remain outside [the monastery.]”

The self-immolation by the monks underscores the depressing situation in Kirti, the International Campaign for Tibet said, asking Beijing to review its Tibetan policies.

It “makes clear that only a change in China’s policies can put an end to the cycle of desperation that has compelled these Tibetans to sacrifice so much,” said the group’s president, Mary Beth Markey.

“Since the self-immolation of young monk Phuntsog in March, Kirti monks have ‘disappeared’ and returned, broken by torture; several hundred of them have been removed for so-called ‘legal education,’ two laypeople have been killed in trying to protect the monks, and the presence of armed troops has made religious practice almost impossible,” she said.

“Suicide is seen as the worst kind of taking of life and is prohibited according to Tibetan Buddhist principles, so their actions are a measure of the anguish these young monks feel.”

The Free Tibet group’s Brigden said China’s response to the string of self-immolations has been a “failure.”

“We hope that China will recognize the failure of such measures to appease Tibetan grievances,” she said.

Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping—the likely successor to President Hu Jintao, who must retire from running the Party in late 2012 and from the presidency in early 2013—visited Tibet in July to preside over celebrations marking 60 years since China gained control over the region.

Xi, in his first major speech on Tibet, vowed to crack down on “separatist activity” in the region and suggested that he will not ease Beijing’s hard-line stance.

Police control

Meanwhile, the whereabouts and condition of Kalsang Wangchuk is not known as Ngaba town came under strict police control and curfew, with no one allowed

to enter or leave the area.

Tibetans in Ngaba town declined to speak to RFA's Mandarin service on Tuesday, with some hanging up as soon as they heard who the caller was.

"I don't know about that incident over in Ngaba county," said one resident of the area before hanging up the phone.

"Sorry, we're really busy here," said another.

An employee who answered the phone at the Ngaba county police department declined to comment on the latest self-immolation.

"I'm sorry, I don't really know," he said. "If you want further information, you'll have to contact the legal departments directly."

<http://newsblaze.com/story/20111003172625藏语.nb/topstory.html>

Kelsang Wangchuk Self-Immolates in New Protest in Tibet

News Blaze, 3 October 2011

A 17-year old monk from Kirti monastery immolated himself in Ngaba county town at approximately 2:00 pm local time today, according to Tibetans in exile in contact with Tibetans in the area. The monk, Kelsang Wangchuk, carried a photo of the Dalai Lama and was shouting slogans against the Chinese government when he set fire to himself along the main street in Ngaba county, Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province. Full details of the incident have yet to emerge, but some exiled sources say that he was immediately surrounded by security personnel, who extinguished the fire and beat Kelsang Wangchuk before taking him away. Kelsang's current wellbeing and whereabouts are unknown.

According to the same Tibetan sources, people in the street and surrounding area began to gather at the scene and prepared to protest, but the crowd was quickly dispersed by security personnel. Shortly after the immolation, additional security forces were deployed in Ngaba county town and at Kirti monastery, increasing an already tense security atmosphere in an area known for its outspoken expression of the Tibetan identity and frequent peaceful protests.

According to monks from the re-established Kirti monastery in exile in

Dharamsala, India, pamphlets were distributed and posted around Kirti monastery and the market place in Ngaba county town a few days ago, stating that if the current security crackdown in the area were to continue, “many more people were prepared to give up their lives” in protest.

Kelsang Wangchuk, who is from Tsaru’ma village, Chujee’ma township in Ngaba county, is the third monk from Kirti monastery to set fire to himself in the past week. On September 26 Lobsang Kelsang and Lobsang Kunchok, both believed to be approximately 18-years old, set fire to themselves while shouting “Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” in a protest also held in Ngaba county town. After extinguishing the flames, police took the two young monks into custody. Their current whereabouts and wellbeing remain unknown. (See ICT report: “Two more Tibetan monks from Kirti monastery set themselves on fire calling for religious freedom”). According to exile Tibetan sources, one of the monks is related to Phuntsog, the 20-year old Kirti monk who died after setting fire to himself earlier this year, leading to the current crackdown in the area. (See ICT report: “Monk immolates himself; major protests at Tibetan monastery violently suppressed”).

On February 27, 2009, a Kirti monk in his mid-twenties named Tapey set himself on fire in protest after local authorities told monks at Kirti monastery that they were not allowed to observe Monlam, a traditional prayer festival that is held after Tibetan New Year (Losar). According to several sources from the area, police shot Tapey before they extinguished the flames and took him into custody. His whereabouts and current condition remain unknown. (See ICT report: “Monk in Tibet sets himself on fire; shot by police during protest”).

In nearby Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, a 29-year old monk named Tsewang Norbu died on August 15 after drinking petrol and setting fire to himself while calling for freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Tsewang Norbu was a monk at Nyitso monastery in Tawu (Chinese: Daoфу) in Kardze, an important historic center of Tibetan religious culture that was surrounded by military troops following Tsewang Norbu’s protest. (See ICT report: “Troops surround monastery as Tibetan monk dies after setting himself on fire & calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet”).

Khaying

Age: 18

Occupation: former monk

Date of self-immolation: 7 October 2011

Place: Ngaba County, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Choephel

Age: 19

Occupation: former monk

Date of self-immolation: 7 October 2011

Place: Ngaba County, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



2 Tibetans set selves on fire in latest protest

By GILLIAN WONG, *Associated Press*, Beijing, 7 Oct 2011

Two Tibetan men set themselves on fire in southwest China in the latest self-immolation protest against the Chinese government, state media and a rights group reported Saturday.

The two former monks, 18-year-old Thongan and 20-year-old Tenzin, set themselves on fire in Aba county in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture Friday, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Xinhua cited an Aba county spokesman as saying the monks were rescued and were being treated at a local hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

They are the fourth and fifth Tibetans to set themselves on fire in Aba county in the past two weeks. Aba prefecture has been the scene of numerous protests

in past years against the Chinese government. Most are led by monks who are fiercely loyal to Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled the Himalayan region in 1959 amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule and is reviled by Beijing.

Overseas Tibet activist groups gave slightly different accounts of the self-immolations. The Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet said the two men were named Choephel, 19, and Kayang, 18, and that they clasped their hands together as they set themselves alight.

It and the London-based Free Tibet group said there were unconfirmed reports that Choephel died at the site.

Free Tibet said that it has heard that pamphlets were being distributed saying that if Chinese policies at Kirti monastery and in Aba town continued, "many more people were prepared to give up their lives in protest."

Kirti monastery has seen recurring unrest against Chinese rule for the last three years. In March, Rigzin Phuntsog, a 21-year-old Kirti monk, died after setting himself on fire. Phuntsog's death was seen as a protest against China's heavy-handed controls on Tibetan Buddhism and provoked a standoff between security forces and monks.

As custodians of Tibet's Buddhist culture, monks are especially sensitive to strict Chinese controls over monasteries that they say take precious time away from religious study and practice.

Kirti monastery is under tight guard by security forces who have been accused by overseas pro-Tibetan groups of beating onlookers and detaining monks. The area is off-limits to foreign journalists.

In June, China rejected pressure from a U.N. human rights panel to provide information about more than 300 monks from Kirti whose whereabouts it said have been unknown since the monastery was raided in April.

Ex-monk burns to death in latest outbreak of Tibetan unrest

By Tania Branigan, *Guardian* China correspondent, 7 October 2011

Two more young men, believed to be former monks, have set fire to themselves in the latest self-immolations in a troubled Tibetan area of western China, exiles

and campaign groups have said.

Choepel, 19, and Khayang, 18, are thought to be from the Kirti monastery in Aba, Sichuan province, known as Ngaba to Tibetans. Choepel is believed to have died at the scene while the condition and whereabouts of Khayang are unknown, Free Tibet said.

The public security bureau in Aba denied any knowledge of an incident. “Nothing like that happened here. I am not aware of the situation,” a spokeswoman told Reuters, despite claims that police officers had helped extinguish the flames and beaten the men as they took them to hospital.

Until 2009 experts knew of only one Tibetan self-immolation, by a lay person living overseas. But today’s death was the second at Kirti within a week – another monk set fire to himself on Monday – and the seventh in Sichuan within two and a half years. “This is a new development ... We are all struggling for the right words to characterise what is happening,” said Kate Saunders of the International Campaign for Tibet.

In August, a court jailed three lamas over the death in March of another monk, Rigzin Phuntsog, 21, also from Kirti, who set fire to himself. They were accused of denying him medical treatment by hiding him. Exile groups said the monks intervened because security officers were beating him, a claim denied by state media.

The death led to a confrontation with armed police and the number of monks at Kirti has fallen from about 2,500 to several hundred. Campaign groups said there was still a high security presence in the town, with conditions further tightened today.

Free Tibet said Choepel had been expelled from the monastery after Phuntsog’s death. It is not clear why Khayang left, but exiles said his uncle was among 13 people shot dead in March 2008 as riots in Lhasa spilled over into unrest across Tibetan areas.

“There are many courageous young Tibetans who are determined to draw global attention to one of the world’s greatest and longest-standing human rights crises no matter the cost to themselves,” Free Tibet’s director, Stephanie Brigden, said.

Photos of Khaying and Choephel appear in exile

Phayul.com, Wednesday, December 14 2011

DHARAMSHALA, December 14: More than two months after two young Tibetans set their bodies on fire demanding an end to China's continued occupation of Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile, their photos have finally made its way outside Tibet.

The Dharamshala based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) yesterday released undated photos of Choephel aged 19 and Khayang aged 18, both former monks of Ngaba Kirti Monastery in eastern Tibet.

On October 7, at around 11.30 am Tibet time, Choephel and Khayang had set themselves ablaze in the central town of Ngaba district. Eyewitnesses had told sources in exile that Choephel and Khayang, with their bodies engulfed in flames and hands joined in prayers, called for Tibetans to unite and rise up against the Chinese regime while raising slogans for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama.

Both Khayang and Choephel succumbed to their injuries days later in a Chinese government hospital in Barkham area.

In his last moments, Khayang reportedly told his attendants in the hospital that he felt gratified with his act of self immolation for the cause of Tibet and felt no regret whatsoever.

"Please don't feel sad for me," were his last words.

The Chinese authorities had declined to hand over Khayang's body to his family and instead cremated the deceased at an undisclosed location in Barkham area. Family acquaintances and the general public were warned against expressing their condolences to Khayang's family.

The same day Khayang passed away, China's official news agency, Xinhua, in a report had said that Choephel and Khaying were out of danger and that the burn injuries they had sustained were not life-threatening.

Leading up to his self-immolation, Choephel had reportedly told his colleagues that the "current atmosphere of repression was unbearable".

Chinese authorities had refused to hand over possession of Choephel's body to his family and issued strict orders to Ngaba public against mourning his death or

expressing condolences to the deceased's family.

Local Tibetans in Ngaba district, going against the orders, had for three days closed down all businesses as a mark of respect and to show solidarity with the self-immolating Tibetans and their families from October 8 - 10.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/protesters-burn-themselves-to-death-in-struggle-for-autonomy-2368132.html>

Protesters burn themselves to death in struggle for autonomy

By Andrew Buncome & Saransh Sehgal, *The Independent*, 10 October 2011

The young monk sits in the front of a truck, the skin on his chest charred and mottled. As the camera pans, you can see that his head is badly burned as well. There are pink splotches on his body where the skin has apparently disappeared entirely and the flesh is exposed. The young man doesn't appear to make a sound.

Lobsang Phuntsog, a Tibetan Buddhist from Ngaba, set himself on fire on the afternoon of March 16 this year in protest over China's continued occupation of his homeland. After a scuffle between monks and police, the young man, believed to be aged 21, was eventually taken to hospital. He died from his burns at around 3am the following morning.

His actions that day, the aftermath of which was captured on video footage seen by The Independent, was the first in a series of self immolations in eastern Tibet that have now turned into nothing less than a wave. In the past two weeks, at least five young Tibetans are known to have set themselves on fire, a macabre and markedly new episode in the struggle for autonomy, and a tactic that could force the Chinese authorities to review their behaviour.

"The monks are taking extreme steps, sending across messages to the world as to the reality and situation inside Tibet," said Kusho Kanyag Tsering, a monk who fled Tibet as a young boy and who now lives in Dharamsala, in northern India. "They [give] their lives to show the suffering of the Tibetan people... They pay [with] their lives for the things they expected and what they want – freedom and justice."

Six of the seven immolations that have been recorded this year have centred on the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, the location of a vociferous anti-Chinese pro-

test by monks in the spring of 2008 that the Chinese crushed with force. Many monks were killed. Since then, the authorities have tightened security and put in place measures the monks say stops their way of life. Messages and footage smuggled out of the region and passed to colleagues in Dharamsala, headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile and home for more than half-a-century to the movement's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, suggest several thousand monks have been forced from the monastery in recent months and that those remaining struggle to conduct their usual religious rituals. Monks have been forced to participate in "patriotic re-education" sessions led by Chinese officials.

"The policies are against the monks' traditional ways which is why the monks get frustrated and are compelled to do such an act," said Lobsang Yeshe, a senior monk at one of the Kirti monastery's sister complexes, established in Dharamsala. "Nowadays, almost one day or the other, we are hearing news of the grim situation that is surrounding the monastery."

The most recent immolations took place last Friday when two teenaged former monks from Kirti set themselves alight in a main street in Ngaba. According to information collated by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), 19-year-old Choephel and 18-year-old Kayang – other reports give different names – clasped their hands together before setting themselves on fire. The flames that engulfed the two men, who had reportedly been disrobed by the Chinese authorities earlier this year, were extinguished by security forces and the teenagers were taken to the Ngaba County People's Hospital. There are no confirmed details about their condition and there are reports one of them may have died.

Kate Saunders, a spokeswoman for the London-based ICT, said reports from Tibet suggested that in the days before the two young men acted, pamphlets had been found distributed in the town. They warned that if Chinese actions continued "more people were prepared to give up their lives in protest". Ms Saunders said: "This has become a life and death struggle. It's about sheer survival."

The incident on Friday followed a similar event a week ago when Kalsang Wangchuk, an 18-year-old monk from Kirti, set himself alight close to a vegetable market in Ngaba, called Aba by the Chinese. He was said to have been holding a photograph of the Dalai Lama and shouted slogans and he set himself on fire, reportedly incurring serious burns to his chest before the flames were extinguished. Before that, two more young monks from the monastery, Lobsang Kalsang and Lobsang Konchok, both believed to be aged either 18 or 19, set

themselves on fire on September 26. They had reportedly waved a Tibetan flag and chanted “Love live the Dalai Lama”. Activists say their condition and location is unknown.

While the flurry of immolations has centred on Kirti, in August, 29-year-old Tsewang Norbu drank petrol, sprayed it on himself and set himself on fire in Tawa, located around 100 miles from Kirti. On that occasion the monk was reportedly heard shouting various slogans including “We Tibetan people want freedom” and “Long live the Dalai Lama” before he lit the flame. He is believed to have died at the scene.

Observers believe the self-immolations represent a distinct new chapter in the struggle by Tibetans against Chinese rule that has continued since Beijing seized control in after 1950. With the exception of an incident in Delhi in 1996 and one in Tibet two years ago – that itself at Kirti - there is no known history of self-immolation and suicide is deeply frowned upon.

“It is now evident there are many courageous young Tibetans who are determined to draw global attention to one of the world’s greatest and longest-standing human rights crises, no matter the cost to themselves,” said Stephanie Brigden, director of Free Tibet, a campaign group. “Tibetans are sharing news of this in online chat rooms and through word-of-mouth, images are being exchanged via text messages; Tibetans are determined that these acts do not go unnoticed.”

If the immolations continue, they will present a challenge not just for the Chinese authorities, who have yet to comment on the most recent incidents, but for the broader Tibetan community. During his years as both the spiritual and political leader of Tibetan Buddhists, the latter a position he handed over to an elected prime minister earlier this year, the Dalai Lama has always promoted a moderate, non-violent “middle way”. Last night, a spokesman for Nobel laureate said he was fully aware of the immolations and “concerned” but had yet to make a public statement.

But Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the Karmapa, the third most senior figure within the Tibetan Buddhist community, has spoken on the issue. He recently told Time magazine: “Monks take a vow that says they are not allowed to end their lives. But on the other hand, these actions are not for an individual, they are for a people.”

Beyond the immediate provocations, experts say Tibetans have grown increas-

ingly frustrated and upset at the encroachment upon their culture inside Tibet and the lack of progress during talks with Chinese officials. Personal attacks upon the Dalai Lama, made with increasing frequency since 1994, also cause anxiety.

But it seems likely the most direct cause of the immolations is recent Chinese behaviour at Kirti and elsewhere. Robert Barnett, director of the Modern Tibet Studies Programme at Columbia university in New York, said: "It's certainly something new, there is no question about it. We have seen no precedent for this. This is a new development."

Already, the immolations, deeply distressing for the Tibetan community and its supporters are having repercussions. More than a dozen young Tibetans were arrested yesterday while protesting outside the Chinese embassy in Delhi. In Dharamsala meanwhile, there have been candle-lit vigils.

Lobsang Wangyal, a Tibetan entrepreneur who lives in the town in the foothills of the Himalayas, said of what was happening in Tibet: "It is a desperate act by people who are suffering inside Tibet. It only reflects total failure of Chinese government policies. The monks are just asking simple things - to pray and to live with their own culture."

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30148&t=1>

Khaying passes away in hospital, China says no condolences

By Sherab Woese, *Phayul*, October 11, 2011

DHARAMSHALA, October 11: Khaying, a Tibetan in his late teens, who set himself on fire protesting Chinese rule over Tibet last week, succumbed to his injuries on October 8 at around 1 pm local time.

In his last moments, Khaying told his attendants in the hospital that he felt gratified with his act of self immolation for the cause of Tibet and felt no regret whatsoever.

"Please don't feel sad for me," were reportedly his last words.

Khaying along with Choephel, both former monks of Kirti monastery, had on October 7 set themselves ablaze in the central town of Ngaba, eastern Tibet protesting China's repressive policies and occupation of Tibet.

With hands joined in prayers, both of them had called for Tibetans to unite and rise up against the Chinese regime and raised slogans for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. Eyewitnesses told sources in exile that Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene and indiscriminately beat the two while dousing the fire.

Confirming the report, the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, in a release yesterday said that the Chinese authorities declined to hand over Khaying's body to his family and instead cremated the deceased at an undisclosed location in Barkham area.

Following Khaying's martyrdom and the multiple instances of self immolation by Tibetans in the last few months, the release said that the general public of Ngaba district closed down all businesses for three days from October 8 – 10 in mark of respect and to show solidarity with their sacrifices.

The report also said that family acquaintances and the general public have been warned from expressing their condolences to Khaying's family.

"Chinese security personnel are closely guarding Khaying's house and have warned that people mourning Khaying's death or expressing condolences would face arrest," the release said.

Leading up to his self immolation on October 7, Choephel, who is currently being described in critical condition had reportedly told his colleagues that the "current atmosphere of repression was unbearable".

According to the release, monk Kesang Wangchuk, who had set himself ablaze on October 3 in Ngaba in another protest against Beijing's rule over Tibet, is currently admitted in a hospital in Ngaba district.

"Kesang Wangchuk, despite his injuries is facing incessant interrogation sessions and is being subjected to indiscriminate beatings," the release said.

The same day Khaying passed away, China's official news agency, Xinhua, in a report had said that Choephel and Khaying were out of danger and that the burn injuries they had sustained were not life-threatening.

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic/463af2212,467bcd82,4ea960be28,0,RFA,,,html>

Tibet: Town mourns over self-immolation

RFA, 2011-10-10

A town in southwestern Sichuan province which has become the focus of Tibetan self-immolation protests was at a near standstill as people mourned the death of one of two teenagers who set themselves alight in protest against Chinese rule, sources said Monday.

Residents of Ngaba shut down their shops and restaurants for three days from Saturday following the self-immolation on Friday of Khaying, 18, and Choephel, 19, both from Kirti monastery under siege by Chinese authorities.

Khaying died on Saturday while Choephel is said to be in serious condition, the sources said, clarifying initial reports last week that that Choephel had succumbed to serious burns on his body.

They were the latest among seven Tibetans who have set themselves alight this year in a bid to protest against Chinese rule in Tibetan populated areas and to highlight human rights abuses allegedly committed by Chinese security forces.

Following Khaying's death, "all the Tibetan shops and restaurants in Ngaba area closed their shutters and paid respect to the protesters," a Tibetan from Ngaba, who chose to remain anonymous, told RFA.

Most of the Ngaba residents also visited temples and monasteries "to pray for the deceased soul and the prayers continued for three days," said Kanyag Tsering, a monk at Kirti's sister monastery in Dharamsala in northern India.

Body request denied

Tsering also said that Chinese authorities refused to give the body of Khaying to his family members, cremating him and only providing the ashes to them.

"The relatives demanded his body to conduct the death rituals but the authorities denied the request," the Tibetan who spoke to RFA said.

Khaying's family was allowed to invite only five monks to perform the last rites.

"Around 10 Chinese [security officials] were put on guard outside his house. Friends and supporters who wanted to reach the family of Khaying to pay their condolences were barred from visiting the family," Tsering said.

On Monday, Kirti monastery monks wanted to approach Khaying's family to offer prayers but "the elders from their clan requested the monks not go to Khaying's house because the Chinese had threatened to create problems for the family," Tsering said.

"So, the monks prayed from afar."

Khaying had said while receiving treatment in hospital that he wanted to sacrifice his life "for the cause of Tibet" and called on the people of Ngaba "not to worry about his death," Tsering said.

"Similarly, Choephel, who is said to be in serious condition, had also mentioned about the sacrifices made by Tibetan monks for the cause of Tibet to several people a few days before his self-immolation.

"He also talked about the intolerable situation in Ngaba," Tsering said

Alarming trend

Recent self-immolations by desperate Tibetan monks from Ngaba and elsewhere in Tibetan regions of Sichuan signal an alarming trend and highlight unrelenting Chinese actions to curb religious rights, according to human rights groups.

On Oct. 3, a Tibetan monk from Kirti set himself on fire while three other monks from the same monastery set themselves ablaze earlier in a trend that began in March this year and that led to a security crackdown on the monastery.

According to Free Tibet, only one monk in Tibet was known to have set fire to himself before this year.

International rights groups have called on Beijing to review its Tibetan policies to halt the worrying trend of self-immolation, which experts say is the worst form of killing and goes against all the principles of Tibetan Buddhism

<http://www.tibetanreview.net/news.php?id=9702>

Fourth of seven self-immolation Tibetan protesters dead

TibetanReview.net, October 13, 2011

The second of the two former monks of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County, Sichuan Province, who set themselves on fire on Oct 7 as they protested against

China's brutal repression in their homeland has died, bringing to four the number of such incendiary deaths in Tibet this year. Choephel, 19, succumbed to his burn injury at a hospital in Barkham county of Ngaba Prefecture at around 2:00 pm Beijing Time on Oct 11, said Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Oct 12.

His death followed that of his protesting partner Khaying, 18, who died on Oct 8.

China's official Xinhua news agency had earlier said the two were only slightly injured by fire. The question therefore arises whether the two deaths were due to the brutality of the police beating which followed the incident.

As in Choephel's case, the Chinese police were reported to have denied a family request for the return of Choephel's body for the purposes of performing the last rites. They were reported to have permitted only five monks to be invited to perform the death rituals while the Tibetan public was warned against making any show of mourning or offering condolences over the death.

A local Chinese official had, however, told the AFP Oct 12 that both Khaying and Choephel were still in hospital receiving treatment. "I have no information on whether they are in life-threatening conditions," the official was quoted as saying on condition of anonymity. "But they have achieved nothing, it will not influence government policy decisions."

The conditions of three other Tibetans who had also immolated themselves in two separate incidents on Sep 26 and Oct 3 remain unknown. A factsheet posted on Tibet.net Oct 12 by the exile Tibetan administration said they were in hospital.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30152&t=1>

Second death in two days, Choephel passes away

By Sherab Woeser, *Phayul*, October 12, 2011

DHARAMSHALA, October 12: Choephel, the 19-year old former monk of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba, eastern Tibet, succumbed to his injuries in a Chinese government hospital in Barkham area at around 2 pm local time yesterday.

Choephel along with Khaying had set themselves ablaze in the central town of Ngaba, eastern Tibet on October 7, protesting China's repressive policies and

continued occupation of Tibet. Khaying attained martyrdom in the same hospital a day before on October 10.

With hands joined in prayers, both of them had called for Tibetans to unite and rise up against the Chinese regime and raised slogans for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. Eyewitnesses told sources in exile that Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene and indiscriminately beat the two while dousing the fire.

Leading up to his self-immolation, Choephel had reportedly told his colleagues that the "current atmosphere of repression was unbearable".

According to the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, Chinese authorities have refused to hand over possession of the deceased's body to his family.

"Choephel's family has been ordered to limit the number of monks performing the customary last rite prayers at their home to five," the monastery said in a release.

"Similar to the earlier instances of Phuntsog's death in March and Khaying's passing away, the Chinese authorities have issued strict orders to Ngaba public against mourning Choephel's death or expressing condolences to the deceased's family," the release said.

The local Tibetans in the Ngaba district, going against the orders, had for three days closed down all businesses as a mark of respect and to show solidarity with the self-immolating Tibetans and their families.

Since March this year, seven Tibetans have been forced to commit the ultimate sacrifice of torching their bodies as a last resort of peaceful action against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet.

Lobsang Phuntsog, Tsewang Norbu, Khaying, and Choephel have all succumbed to their injuries while Kesang Wangchuk, Lobsang Kalsang and Lobsang Kunchok are still in critical condition.

Norbu Damdul

Age: 19

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 15 October 2011

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Another Self-Immolation; Serious Concerns about Increased Incidents

TCHRD Press Release, 15 October, Dharamsala

We have confirmed reports from Tibet that at around 11:50 this morning (15 October 2011) one more unfortunate incident of self-immolation occurred in the Ngaba region. This is the eighth incidence of self-immolation in Tibet this year.

Norbu Damdul, who is around 19 years of age, set himself on fire in the Ngaba town market. He was seen shouting slogans such as 'Freedom in Tibet' and 'Return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.' Chinese police, who routinely patrol in the area, rushed to the scene where they extinguished the fire and took him away in a police car.

Eyewitnesses say that Damdul was severely burned but did not die at the scene. We are awaiting information regarding his current medical condition.

A former Kirti monk, Damdul left his monastery in June 2010. He is from Choeje Township in Ngaba County.

As a result of the repressive policies put in place by Chinese government authorities around Kirti Monastery, the situation has become so desperate that Tibet are increasingly turning to self-immolation as the only available form of protest. Unless local authorities ease the restrictions they have placed on local people, there are serious concerns that self-immolations may continue to occur more frequently.

<http://www.tibetanreview.net/news.php?showfooter=1&cp=3&id=9718>

Yet another self-immolation, the 7th, in eastern Tibet

TibetanReview.net, Oct 17, 2011

In a continuing trend of Tibetan youngsters taking recourse to ever more desperate protests in the face of hardening Chinese repression, there has been yet another self-immolation protest in eastern Tibet. Norbu Damdul, a 19-year-old Tibetan, set himself on fire and ran in flames in the centre of Ngaba town, Sichuan Province, about midday on Oct 15, shouting “freedom for Tibet,” reported *REA.org* and other sources Oct 15.

“I heard loud shouts of ‘Freedom for Tibet’ and ‘Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet’ coming from behind me. When I looked back, I saw a person on fire running towards us,” *REA.org* quoted one of the eyewitnesses as saying. It added that Chinese police chased the boy as he ran in flames over a distance before they extinguished the fire, beat him up, bundled him into a car and sped away.

There was no information on the condition of the victim, a resident of Choeje Township in Ngaba County. Like Choephel, 19, and Khaying, 18, who immolated themselves while protesting on Oct 7 in the same area, Norbu Dramdul is also a former monk of the local Kirti Monastery, which has been under particularly heightened Chinese repression since Mar 16 when the first self-immolation protest of this year took place, carried out by a 21-year-old monk named Phuntsok.

The latest in a string of six self-immolation protests this year, involving eight youngsters, came as Tibetans and supporters across the free world prepared to observe a day of fasting and prayers on Oct 19 after the previous incidents.

A crowd of Tibetans was reported to have collected at the scene after the incident, to be dispersed at gunpoint shortly later by a strong contingent of Chinese security forces who enforced a security clampdown. All traffic going in or out of the county was reported to have been blocked immediately.

Eighth self-immolation rocks Tibetan town in China

Asia-Pacific News, Oct 16, 2011

Beijing - A former Tibetan Buddhist monk has self-immolated in a restive area of south-western China, the eighth such protest this year, Tibetan exile groups

said on Sunday.

The monk set fire to himself around midday Saturday in Aba town in Sichuan province, shouting slogans including 'Freedom in Tibet' and 'Return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet,' the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy quoted witnesses as saying.

Norbu Damdul, aged about 19, suffered serious burns but was still alive after police extinguished the fire and took him away, said the group, which is based in the Indian town of Dharamsala.

London-based Free Tibet published a similar report on its website.

Both groups said Norbu Damdul had been a monk at the Kirti monastery near Aba, which is known as Ngaba in Tibetan, until June 2010.

'This is the eighth self-immolation in protest at the persecution of Tibetans under Chinese rule since March this year,' Stephanie Bridgen, the international director of Free Tibet, said in a statement.

'It provides further evidence that Tibetans now feel that setting fire to themselves is their only recourse,' Bridgen said.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy said self-immolation was seen as the 'only available form of protest' in the face of 'repressive policies put in place by Chinese government authorities' in Aba, especially at the monastery.

'Unless local authorities ease the restrictions they have placed on local people, there are serious concerns that self-immolations may continue to occur more frequently,' the group said.

It said two more former Kirti monks died last week following their joint self-immolation in Aba on October 7.

Exiled Tibetans held a rally on Friday in Dharamsala to urge the Chinese government to end its crackdown in Aba.

US-based Human Rights Watch also appealed last week for China to end its 'excessive restrictions' on Tibetan monastic and lay communities in Sichuan province.

Since widespread anti-Chinese protests erupted in Sichuan and other Tibetan areas of China in early 2008, the government had used 'brutal security raids,

arbitrary detentions of monks, increased surveillance within monasteries, and a permanent police presence inside monasteries to monitor religious activities,' Human Rights Watch said.

In another sign of unrest, about 200 Tibetans protested earlier this month in Sichuan's Seda county, known as Serthar in Tibetan.

They called for the Dalai Lama's return and demanded freedom for Tibet after a large Tibetan flag and a photograph of the Dalai Lama were removed from a public building in Seda and thrown into the street, reports said.

The Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's highest spiritual leader, has lived in exile since he fled to India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule of Tibet.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Norbu-Damdul-dies:-three-months-ago-he-set-himself-on-fire-for-Tibetan-freedom-23667.html>

Norbu Damdul dies: three months ago he set himself on fire for Tibetan freedom

Asia News, 01/11/2012

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - Norbu Damdul, the Tibetan Monk from Kirti who had set himself on fire October 15, 2011 is dead. The death occurred on January 5 in a hospital in Barkham, Ngaba, Tibetan Autonomous Region. Norbu was only 19 years old. Setting himself on fire he had shouted "Freedom for Tibet" and "Let the Dalai Lama return."

Since his self-immolation 3 months ago, the young monk had disappeared in police custody, and nobody knew anything about his condition. At his death, the Chinese authorities refused to return the body of the young man to his family, to celebrate the last religious rituals. After they had cremated his remains, Beijing officials delivered his ashes to family members.

Since March 2011, there have been altogether 15 cases of self-immolation. In these early days of 2012, three monks have already tried to commit suicide by setting themselves on fire demanding freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama. Of these, two have died while the third was seriously injured. (NC)

http://www.tchrd.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=153:norbu-damdul-passes-away-&catid=70:2012-news&Itemid=162

Norbu Damdul Passes Away

TCHRD, Thursday, 12 January 2012

Norbu Damdul, who self-immolated on 15 October 2011, passed away on 5 January 2012 in a hospital in Barkham, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Region. A former Kirti monk, Norbu Damdul (aged around 19) was taken away by the Chinese officials after he set himself on fire in Ngaba. Since then, for nearly three months, his whereabouts and information about his medical condition remained unknown. As eyewitnesses had said earlier, Damdul was severely burned but did not die at the scene. After the death of Norbu Damdul in a Barkham hospital, the Chinese authorities refused to hand over the possession of the body to the family, to perform last religious rituals. The Chinese authorities cremated the body and only the ash was given to Damdul's family.

Tenzin Wangmo

Age: 20

Occupation: Nun

Date of self-immolation: 17 October 2011

Place: Sumdo Bridge, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Ninth Tibetan, a Nun, Immolates Herself in Anti-China Protest

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, October 17, 2011

BEIJING — A Tibetan nun killed herself Monday by setting herself on fire in a Tibetan town in western China while calling for religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, according to a statement by an advocacy group based in London.

The nun, Tenzin Wangmo, 20, was the ninth Tibetan to commit self-immolation since March, the fifth of those to die, and the first Tibetan woman to kill herself in this way, said the group, Free Tibet. The self-immolations have all taken place in restive Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province. All the previous acts involved monks or former monks; the most recent one took place on Saturday, when a 19-year-old former monk from Kirti Monastery set himself on fire but lived.

Kirti is in the town of Aba, known as Ngaba in Tibetan, and is the focal point of a long-running repression by Chinese security forces. Kirti was involved in the widespread Tibetan uprising of 2008, and security around the monastery has tightened considerably since then. Seven of the eight monks who committed self-immolation this year came from Kirti.

Tenzin's nunnery, called Dechen Chokorling, was just three kilometers outside Aba and near Kirti. Tenzin set herself on fire outside the nunnery around 1 p.m. on Monday, said the report by Free Tibet, which advocates for Tibetan independence and has functioned as an outlet for people inside the Tibetan areas to report news.

"The acts of self-immolation are not taking place in isolation, protests have

been reported in the surrounding region and calls for wider protests are growing,” said Stephanie Brigden, director of Free Tibet.

The group also reported that two Tibetans were shot and wounded by security forces during a protest on Sunday outside a police station in the town of Kege, known in Tibetan as Khekor. The town is located in the prefecture of Ganzi, or Kandze in Tibetan. A 29-year-old monk in Ganzi killed himself in August by setting himself on fire.

Free Tibet identified the two Tibetans wounded on Sunday as Dawa and Druklo. One was shot in the leg and the other in the torso, though it is unclear who suffered what injury. It is also unclear why security forces opened fire. The condition of the two Tibetans was unknown early Tuesday morning.

Tibetan nun ‘dies in fire protest’ near China monastery

BBC News, 18 October 2011

A Tibetan nun has set herself on fire near a restive monastery in western China, in the ninth such incident in recent months, reports say.

The Free Tibet group said the 20-year-old nun, Tenzin Wangmo, died on Monday in Sichuan province’s Aba county.

A witness told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that she called for freedom for Tibet before she set herself on fire.

Aba county is home to the Kirti monastery, the scene of repeated protests against Beijing’s rule.

Seven monks from the monastery, which lies in an ethnic Tibetan area of Sichuan province, have set themselves on fire there in recent months. An eighth monk set himself on fire in another part of Sichuan province.

China has since jailed three monks accused of assisting in one self-immolation and maintains a heavy security presence in Aba town.

‘Protests growing’

Reports said the young nun set fire to herself after midday.

“A nun killed herself by setting her body on fire,” Aba Jigme, a resident, told RFA. “But she died on the spot after calling for freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama.”

He said she chose to do it away from the centre of town because of the heavy Chinese security presence.

On Wednesday the Tibetan exile community is to hold a prayer ceremony for those who have set themselves on fire.

In a statement, Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said that unrest in Tibet was “escalating and widening”.

“The acts of self-immolation are not taking place in isolation, protests have been reported in the surrounding region and calls for wider protests are growing,” she said.

Free Tibet also reported that two Tibetans were shot by Chinese troops during a protest outside a police station in another part of Sichuan province on 16 October.

Their condition was not known and it was not clear why they were shot, the group said.

This report cannot be confirmed. Foreign media cannot gain access to restive ethnic Tibetan areas and Chinese state media often do not report these incidents.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin told a regular news briefing he had no information about the nun’s case.

“We believe that promoting and encouraging harm to life is immoral,” he said.

Tibetan nun dies after setting self ablaze

By Elizabeth Flock, *The Washington Post*, 18 October 2011

A Tibetan nun has died after setting herself on fire, becoming the first woman known to have self-immolated in the region, BBC reports. She had called for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama before she died.

Her death marks the ninth incident of self-immolation in recent months, eight of which have happened in the Kirti monastery, a monastery in Sichuan province that has been the site of repeated protests against China’s rule of Tibet.

The incidents show unrest in the country is growing. But Tibetan activists say it’s striking that this many monks and a nun have chosen self-immolation as their form of protest.

The term self-immolation first became known to the English-speaking world after Buddhist monks set themselves ablaze in protest of the South Vietnamese regime in 1963.

While Buddhism teaches against violence, self-immolation is approved of in some forms of Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhist monks often look to the story of the Bodhisattva Medicine King as example, who in the “Lotus Sutra” set his body aflame and demonstrated that the body was unnecessary. Buddhism Today explains:

Self-immolation, much like an extreme renunciant might abstain from food until dying, could be an example of disdain for the body in favor of the life of the mind and wisdom.

The Western media’s coverage of self-immolation has also turned it into a dramatic, newsy form of protest, presenting the incidents as suicides for the greater good.

While self-immolation looks very painful — and burning vital tissue certainly can be — a person who goes into shock or asphyxiates may not feel anything after the first few moments.

International Campaign for Tibet researcher Zorgyi explained earlier this month that whether the self-immolation was painful or not, the increasing trend at Kirti monastery is an indicator of how badly Tibetans are suffering.

Free Tibet: Nun self-immolates in protest of Chinese policies

By Andrew Moran, *The Digital Journal*, Oct 18, 2011

Beijing - Tenzin Wangmo, a 20-year-old Tibetan nun, has been the first woman to set herself on fire in protest of the Chinese government’s policies towards Tibet. Wangmo is the ninth person to self-immolate as a plea for religious freedom and Dalai Lama’s return.

Digital Journal has reported in the past of many Tibetans self-immolating as a form of protest against the government of China and their policies towards Tibet. One of the recent cases occurred last month, where two Tibetan monks set themselves ablaze over China wanting to choose the next Dalai Lama.

The London-based Free Tibet campaign organization issued a press release

Monday where it announced that unrest and violence continues. Two Tibetans were shot by Chinese authorities for reasons unknown and one Tibetan nun set herself on fire.

The two Tibetans, Dawa, who was shot in the leg, and Druklo, who was shot in the torso, were fired at over the weekend during a protest outside of a local police station in Khekor Township. Although there are no further details as to the state of their condition, it was reported that the two men were taken away from the scene by the local community.

Meanwhile, three kilometres outside of Ngaba Town, Tenzin Wangmo, a 20-year-old Tibetan nun, set herself ablaze as a call for action for religious freedoms and the return of the Dalai Lama. Wangmo is the first female to self-immolate.

“The unrest in Tibet is escalating and widening. The number and frequency of self-immolations is unprecedented. Tenzin Wangmo is the ninth Tibetan to self-immolate and the first woman. Information from Tibet suggests there are more who are willing to give their lives determined to draw global attention to the persistent and brutal violations Tibetans suffer under Chinese occupation,” said Stephanie Brigden, Free Tibet Director, in the news release.

“The acts of self-immolation are not taking place in isolation, protests have been reported in the surrounding region and calls for wider protests are growing. China has already responded with force in one instance we have grave concerns that greater force may be deployed if protests spread.”

China continues to receive harsh criticism from Western nations and human rights groups for their treatment towards Tibetans. Chinese authorities jailed three monks for at least 10 years for helping one monk burn himself to death.

Tibetan nun dies after setting herself on fire in China in protest for greater religious freedom

By WIL LONGBOTTOM, *Mail Online*, 19 October 2011

A Tibetan nun has burnt to death after setting herself on fire in western China in a protest for greater religious freedom.

Free Tibet said the nun, 20-year-old Tenzin Wangmo, set herself alight outside Dechen Chokorling convent in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture.

The group said she chanted slogans and called for the return of Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, before torching herself.

Protest: Tibetan Buddhist monks take part in a rally in New Delhi. A 20-year-old nun has today died after setting herself alight in a protest for religious freedom in China.

It is the latest in a series of self-immolations among the region's Buddhist clergy.

Although there is no tradition of self-immolation as a form of protest in Tibetan society, a total of nine monks and former monks and one nun have set themselves on fire since March in a desperate bid to draw attention to repression of Tibetan Buddhism.

Most ignited the flames while calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama, who fled to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

Aged in their late teens and twenties, at least five died from their injuries, while the condition of the other four is not known.

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement: 'The acts of self-immolation are not taking place in isolation, protests have been reported in the surrounding region and calls for wider protests are growing.'

Crackdown: Chinese paramilitary police on the streets of Aba after the self-immolation. The government has blamed the Dalai Lama for not condoning the acts

China's Foreign Ministry last week accused the Dalai Lama's followers of encouraging the self-immolations by not denouncing them.

Spokesman Liu Weimin said today he was still seeking information on the latest incident, but said the government would 'handle this appropriately'.

'We believe the encouragement of such behaviour at the cost of human life is immoral,' he said.

The self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile has described the self-immolations as tragic acts and called for the international community to urge Beijing to open a dialogue on its policies in Tibet and traditional Tibetan regions of western China.

A day-long prayer service for the victims and jailed Tibetan political prisoners

is planned for tomorrow at the Dalai Lama's headquarters in the Indian town of Dharmshala.

In a separate incident, security forces shot two Tibetans during a protest outside a police station.

Tensions have been high across the region since widespread anti-government protests in 2008.

Communist Party spokesmen in Aba said they know nothing of the shooting.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30196&t=1>

Tenzin Wangmo's self immolation marked with candle light vigil

Phayul, Wednesday, October 19, 2011

DHARAMSHALA, October 19: Hundreds of Tibetans and supporters under the aegis of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress (RTYC) and Regional Tibetan Women's Association (RTWA) Dharamshala held a candle light vigil yesterday evening here in the Tibetan exile headquarters.

The marchers walked down from McLeod Ganj chowk to the Martyr Pillar near Tsug-la Khang with candles in their hands, saying prayers for nun Tenzin Wangmo who died after setting herself ablaze in Ngaba eastern Tibet on October 17.

Tenzin Tsundue, the president of the regional chapter of Tibetan Youth Congress, the largest pro-independence group in exile, urged Tibetans "not to let the fiery resistance in Tibet die down in waste".

Since March this year, nine Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet, protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tsundue asked the gathering to spread the news of sacrifices by Tibetans inside Tibet and called upon Tibetans and supporters to participate in the upcoming global protests to show support and solidarity with the plight of the people inside Tibet.

"I urge non-Tibetans also to participate in our protests which are totally based on nonviolence," Tsundue said.

"Participate in our protests, not just because you support us, but because you

believe in non-violence.”

Sonam Dorje, the Dharamshala Settlement Officer reminded the gathering that Dharamshala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration should be the nerve centre of all free Tibet activities.

“When Tibetans inside Tibet plan to stage a demonstration, they have already decided to give up their lives, because they know the consequences,” said Sonam Dorje.

Encouraging Tibetans to take part in the various upcoming activities in India and abroad, the Settlement Officer said, “if people in Tibet can sacrifice their lives, why can’t we sacrifice our time, money and energy.”

Following the self immolation of Tenzin Wangmo, the ninth Tibetan since March, US State Department spokesman Mark Toner on Tuesday said that the State Department is “seriously concerned” about the ongoing crisis in Tibet.

“We would urge China and its leaders to respect the rights of Tibetans, to address some of the policies in these areas, in Tibetan areas, that have created tension, and to protect the Tibetans’ unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity,” Toner said.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/protest-10202011151719.html>

Monks Held Amid Solidarity Rally

REA, 2011-10-20

Tibet’s restive Kirti monastery continues to be the focus of a security clamp-down.

Chinese authorities have arrested two more Tibetan monks from a restive monastery in southwestern Sichuan province as Tibetans displayed solidarity with compatriots who self-immolated in protest against Beijing’s rule, sources said Thursday.

Security has been tightened in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture, where Tibetans gathered at the county town Wednesday wearing traditional attire and reciting prayers for five of the nine people who died after setting themselves ablaze this year.

The two monks were picked up from the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, from where hundreds of their peers had been taken away by security forces since the first self immolation by a young monk at the monastery in March sparked a security crackdown.

“On the night of Oct. 17, Kirti monk Puntsok, aged 28, of the Siriktsang house in Naktsangma village, Cha township, was arrested from his room at the monastery by policemen who beat him as they took him away,” Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe, two monks from Kirti’s sister monastery in India’s Dharamsala hill town, said in a statement to RFA.

“His room was thoroughly searched. His present whereabouts are not known,” they said.

Earlier, on Saturday, another monk Jigme Choepel of Soruma village, Choeje township was taken away.

Their whereabouts and reasons for their arrest are unclear.

Several laypeople were also arrested in Ngaba on Saturday but their names and other details are not known.

Cremated

In the latest self-immolation protest, a Tibetan nun set herself ablaze and died Monday.

Tenzin Wangmo, about 20 years old, called for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader living in exile in India, before succumbing to her burns. She was the first female to self-immolate in recent memory among Tibetans protesting Chinese rule.

“The body of the nun, Tenzin Wangmo, who committed self-immolation protest on Oct. 17 was cremated the same evening by order (from the authorities). So far, the Chinese government has not publicly acknowledged that the incident took place,” Tsering and Yeshe said.

On Wednesday, they said, a large number of townspeople wearing Tibetan dress gathered in the streets of Ngaba county town, reciting prayers and fasting, in a demonstration of solidarity.

“On two occasions they attempted to stage public protests but were unable to do so in unison, and police and soldiers wielding firearms moved to disperse

them,” they said.

A few days ago, Chinese authorities held meetings in every township in Ngaba county to inform the people that monks were disallowed to recite prayers for those who have died as a result of anti-government protest, the monks said.

The authorities said that “local leaders and family members will be held fully responsible,” according to the monks.

<http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-691808>

Tibetan Solidarity and Unity for Self-Immolation Sacrifices

By Tascocal, *CNN I-report*, October 20, 2011, Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles, California – October 19, 2011. All across the globe, Tibetans have jointly organized and united to perform peaceful demonstrations. This day was set as Tibetan Solidarity day and planned by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile and the Cabinet. In Southern California, Tibetans expressed their grave concern over the deteriorating situation inside Tibet and are saddened by the recent tragic acts of self-immolation in Tibet. At the Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles, the Tibetan Community has gathered to hold a candle light vigil and prayer session in Solidarity with Tibetan groups across the globe, to remember and honor all the recent selfless self-immolation sacrifices by Tibetans in Tibet. We condemn the People's Republic of China (PRC) for its ongoing repressive policies against Tibetans, forcing some young Tibetans to take desperate measures, including setting their bodies on fire as an ultimate symbol of protest.

Since March 2011, nine young Tibetans set themselves on fire in anti-China protests. The cases of self-immolation include the following:

- Lobsang Phuntsok, 20, set himself on fire on March 16 to mark the March 2008 uprisings in Tibet. He died the following day due to the burns and beatings by the Chinese Security personnel. That resulted in more protests by the local population in support of his sacrifice.

- Tsewang Norbu, 29, a monk from Nyatso monastery, Kham Tawu, self-immolated and succumbed to his injuries on August 15, 2011.

- Lobsang Kalsang, 18. Lobsang Phuntsok's younger brother, set himself aflame on September 26. He was hospitalized, but no information has been made avail-

able about his condition or whereabouts.

-Lobsang Konchok, 19, set himself on fire along with Lobsang Kalsang on the same day. His condition and whereabouts are also not known.

-Kelsang Wangchuk, 17, a novice monk, set himself on fire on October 3 and sustained serious head injuries during detention. His condition and whereabouts are also unknown.

-Khaying, 18, committed self-immolation on October 7. Khaying was taken to Bharkham hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries the next day. The authorities refused to hand over his body for fear of more public protests. His family received only his ashes and bones.

-Choephel, 19, set himself on fire along with Khaying on the same day and died on October 11.

-Norbu Damdul, 19, a former monk of Kirti Monastery set himself on fire in the Ngaba district market at 11.50 am on October 15, 2011. He was taken away by the police and his condition and whereabouts are still not known.

-Tenzin Wangmo, 20, a nun of Mame Dechen Chokorling nunnery (also known as Mame nunnery) and from Shakoma Village in Ngaba, lit herself at a crossroad near her nunnery around 1 pm on October 17, 2011. She is reported to have died at the scene.

All the victims of self-immolation have raised slogans demanding freedom for Tibet, freedom of religion, language, movement, speech, and an end to discrimination & return of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Dawa Tsering

Age: 38

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 25 October 2011

Place of self-immolation: Kardze, Kham, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Unknown



Yet Another Self-Immolation in Kandze

TCHRD, Tuesday, 25 October 2011

Sources to Tibet report that yet another monk self-immolated in Kandze County, Sichuan Province today (25 October 2011). At around 9.30 a.m Tibet local time, the fifth incident of self-immolation this month, monk Dawa Tsering, poured petrol on his body and set himself afire during the annual religious Cham dance ceremony in Kandze. While on fire, monk Dawa Tsering raised slogans demanding the return of H.H the Dalai Lama, equality, and freedom in Tibet. Other monks who were gathered there for the religious ceremony tried to extinguish the flames and then immediately took the injured monk to Kandze People's Hospital in the monastery car. A Kandze monastery monk, Dawa Tsering, aged around 38, is son of father Delek and mother Dontso. Monk Dawa's health is described critical. Latest reports fear that chances of his survival are very less. Kandze monastery monks have brought him back to the monastery.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/immolate-10252011102725.html>

Sichuan Monk Sets Self Ablaze

RF4, 2011-10-25

A Tibetan monk in a remote region of China's Sichuan province set fire to himself before a large crowd on Tuesday, the 10th self-immolation protest against Chinese rule.

Dawa Tsering, 31, set himself alight during an annual ritual gathering at a monastery in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after calling on Tibetans to

unite against Beijing's rule in Tibetan-majority areas, witnesses said.

"The monk self-immolated in the vicinity of the [Kardze] Monastery, at the monks' usual annual gathering, as the ritual dance was going on," a monk from Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) Monastery in southwestern China told RFA.

"Most of the witnesses were monks, and there weren't many laypeople there at the time," the monk said.

"He was shouting long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama," referring to Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who is living in exile in India.

Dawa Tsering was rushed to the Kardze People's Hospital in a monastery vehicle after the flames were extinguished by fellow monks. Several police officers stationed at the monastery followed the monks to the hospital, and reinforcements arrived later and cordoned off the area, sources said.

A second Kardze monk said the monk had refused any form of medical treatment.

"His head is badly burned, he cannot speak, and he is just lying there, staring, fully covered in bandages," the second monk said.

"His head, neck, nose, were all badly burned and the skin has peeled off. He refused any medication and told the monks to let him die."

Prayer

Meanwhile, an exile Tibetan monk identified as Choegyal from a monastery in southern India said the clothes of some people close to Dawa Tsering, when he doused himself with petrol and set light to himself, had also caught fire.

"Before the self-immolation, the monk offered a [prayer] to the throne of revered Lhanda Lama, he then went to do a incense burning [offering], and put up prayer flags," Choegyal said.

"He then doused himself with kerosene oil over his head; a few of the people standing near him had their clothes catch fire."

Choegyal said Dawa Tsering was taken back to Kardze Monastery after receiving bandages at the hospital.

"At the hospital, he was wrapped up, and was told that he may not survive, so the monks of Kardze Monastery brought him back to the monastery," he added.

Dawa Tsering, a native of nearby Yepa village, had been at Kardze Monastery for seven years prior to his self-immolation.

Kardze has been the scene of repeated Tibetan protests, both by individuals and by small groups, despite the threat of detentions and violent assaults against protesters by Chinese police.

On Aug. 15, Tsewang Norbu, a 29-year-old monk from Kardze's Nyitso Monastery, set fire to himself outside the Tawu county government offices after handing out leaflets calling for human rights for Tibetans and the return of the Dalai Lama.

Nun

Last week, a nun set herself ablaze and died in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture, marking the first female self-immolation case in recent memory among Tibetans resisting Chinese rule.

Tenzin Wangmo, about 20 years old, called for freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader living in exile in India, before succumbing to her burns.

Ten Tibetans, mostly monks from Sichuan's Ngaba prefecture, have self-immolated this year, and at least five have died, saying they wanted to sacrifice their lives to protest rule by Beijing and alleged human rights abuses by Chinese security forces.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30231&t=1>

Fire spreads in Tibet – Monk self immolates in Kardze

By Sherab Woesser, *Phayul*, October 25, 2011

DHARAMSHALA: Phayul is receiving confirmed information from Tibet that another Tibetan monk self-immolated in an apparent protest against China's occupation today.

According to sources in exile, Dawa Tsering a 38 year-old monk from Kardze Monastery in eastern Tibet set himself ablaze at around 9.30 am local time.

A monk from Sera Jey monastery in south India, Lobsang Dakpa, while confirming the news told Phayul that Dawa Tsering self-immolated within the walls

of the Kardze Monastery.

“Dawa Tsering was engulfed in flames as he shouted slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and the re-unification of the Tibetan people,” Dakpa said.

Chinese security personnel who have been stationed in the monastery since the 2008 pan-Tibet uprisings, arrived at the scene and doused the flames.

According to sources, Dawa Tsering refused medical attention and is currently being described in critical condition with severe burn injuries.

“When the Chinese police tried to take Dawa Tsering away, he cried and pleaded not to be taken away,” Dakpa said.

As of now the situation in and around the monastery is being described as tense with monks protecting Dawa Tsering inside the monastery and armed Chinese security guards surrounding the monks and the monastery.

This is the tenth instance since March this year when Tibetans inside Tibet have set themselves on fire demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile and protesting Beijing’s repressive policies in Tibet.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32138>

Recuperating Tibetan self-immolator faces jail threat, Financial difficulties

Phayul, 17 September 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A Tibetan self-immolator, who is reportedly making good recovery from his burn injuries, faces an uncertain future coupled with jail threats and a slim chance of re-entering his monastery.

Dawa Tsering, a monk at the Kardze Monastery in eastern Tibet, set himself on fire within the walls of his Monastery on October 25, 2011 during a religious ceremony. While engulfed in flames, he shouted slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and the re-unification of the Tibetan people.

The Dharamshala based rights group Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in a release today said Dawa Tsering’s health condition is “quite well” and “longs to return back to his monastery” citing an unnamed source with contacts in the region.

“But his future remains unknown and uncertain because he might not be allowed to return back to his monastery. Instead, he would be jailed at any time,” TCHRD said.

In a latest picture released by the group, the severity of Dawa Tsering’s burn injuries is clearly visible.

Soon after his self-immolation protest, Dawa Tsering had refused medical attention and pleaded not to be taken away by the Chinese security personnel.

His family has been taking care of him at their home in Kardze.

“But the family is facing financial problems as they struggle to meet Dawa’s medical expenses,” TCHRD said.

Kardze has witnessed repeated protests since the mass uprisings of 2008. Tsewang Norbu, a 29-year old monk from Nyitso monastery in Kardze passed away on the spot after setting himself ablaze protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet and demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile on August 15, 2011.

A few months later in November, Palden Choetso, a 35-year old Tibetan nun from the Ganden Jangchup Choeling nunnery in the same region, passed away immediately after setting her body on fire demanding the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

In April this year, more than 2000 Tibetans carried out a mass protest in Kardze, demanding the release of around 250 Tibetans who were arrested after Chinese authorities ordered the closure of a locally founded Tibetan organisation called the ‘Dayul Unity Association.’

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, which is currently holding its fourth session in Dharamshala, dedicated the entire proceedings of the first day to deliberate on the critical situation inside Tibet.

Palden Choetso

Age: 35

Occupation: Nun

Date of self-immolation: 3 November 2011

Place: Tawu, Kham, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Horrible video of Tibetan nun in flames on street in latest self-immolation protest against China

By Bavin Allen, *Daily Mail*, 22 November 2011

This is the horrifying moment a nun stood ablaze in a Chinese street having set herself alight in protest at the country's treatment of Tibet.

The video was released by protest group Students for a Free Tibet and is believed to be footage of Palden Choetso, 35, who burned herself to death on November 13.

In the video the Tibetan Buddhist nun stands in the road in Dawu, Ganzi prefecture in Sichuan province, southwest China, self-immolates and then collapses to the ground.

The video, which cannot be independently verified, was smuggled out of the country and given to Students for a Free Tibet, which has released it to the media. It has also been posted on Youtube.

This is the latest in a wave of self-immolations that have taken place as Tibetans make the ultimate sacrifice in a bid to draw the world's attention to their region's plight.

In March this year, a teenage Tibetan monk named Lobsang Rabten fled over the Himalayas to India after a childhood friend set himself ablaze in protest against China's campaign of forced 're-education' at their monastery.

By the time the seventeen-year-old reached the safety of India's Tibetan exile

capital of Dharamsala in October, eleven young monks and nuns had followed his friend Phuntsog's example. At least six have died.

'There are so many ways to protest, but Phuntsog's self-immolation was a completely different strategy,' said Rabten, speaking at a refugee reception centre outside Dharamsala where he had arrived days earlier.

'It really demonstrates his dedication and sincerity towards freedom.'

The wave of self-immolations reveal the desperation among Tibet's youth after 60 years under Beijing's thumb. But it is also a moral and policy dilemma for Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and a new generation of exiled politicians.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 with hundreds of followers and they set up base in Dharamsala, a town in the Himalayan foothills about 400 km (250 miles) north of New Delhi.

The deaths raise theological questions about non-violence and highlight a long-standing schism between the elderly Dalai Lama's softly, softly approach to China and activists who want to fight for independence.

'It's almost regular now, I get these kind of updates, this morning I was woken around 7am by a phone call saying someone, a monk, self-immolated himself,' said Lobsang Sangay, the Tibetan government-in-exile's prime minister.

A Tibetan in Nepal had set fire to himself that day.

Indian born, Harvard educated Sangay is in a tough position - under pressure from his generation of exiles who see no progress from the Dalai Lama's measured approach to China, but also shouldering a huge responsibility not to inflame tensions in Tibet and risk the lives of his compatriots.

'We do not encourage any protests inside Tibet, because we know the consequences,' he said, but added it was his duty to give voice to men and women who chose such drastic steps.

In a sign of increased activism, his government has promoted events in solidarity with a quiet protest movement in Tibet called 'White Wednesday'.

Unlike the self-immolation of street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia that sparked the Arab revolutions, in Tibet no large-scale uprising has followed.

Instead, since 2008, each Wednesday, a day considered auspicious for the Dalai Lama, an unknown number of Tibetans shun Chinese businesses, attend monas-

teries, wear traditional dress and speak in their own language.

Many of the self-immolators, including Phuntsog, were linked to Kirti, a large monastery in western Sichuan that has emerged as a centre of defiance to China's controls.

The internet, digital photography and mobile phones have helped the monks get news and videos of the protests to a sister monastery in Dharamsala, sometimes within hours of an immolation.

China considers the Dalai Lama a dangerous separatist and hopes Tibetan resistance will fade when the 76-six-year-old dies. It says it has brought economic growth and education to a backward society previously ruled by a theocracy.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning Dalai Lama has for years said he seeks autonomy and religious freedom in Tibet, not independence. This "middle way" policy has never convinced Beijing. Many exiles say the fight must be for full independence.

However, for many young Tibetans the use of non-violence is not producing results and one youth leader even suggested that a symbolic suicide was no longer enough to grab the world's attention.

Tenzin Chokey, general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, said: 'How many more lives exactly does the world need?

'Is it the method? Is it too soft for the world? Because you are only taking your own life and not that of others?'

'If we had independence as a goal, and if that is what we push for, the world leaders will also have to respond to the voice of the Tibetan people.'

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30390&t=1>

Palden Choetso's self-immolation video surfaces in exile

Phayul, Monday, November 21, 2011

DHARAMSHALA: Powerful new footages of Tibetan nun Palden Choetso's self-immolation on November 3 in Tawu, eastern Tibet and protests by thousands of Tibetans following her death have been smuggled out of Tibet.

One of the clips shows Palden Choetso, the 35-year-old nun from Geden

Choeling Nunnery in Tawu, standing upright near a busy street with her entire body engulfed in flames. In the short clip (viewer discretion is advised), Palden Choetso is seen standing still without showing any signs of physical pain as Tibetans at the background can be heard offering prayers to the Dalai Lama.

A woman dressed in chuba (Tibetan tradition dress) walks up to Palden Choetso's burning body and throws a khatak (Tibetan white scarf).

In a press statement at the release of the footages, Tenzin Dorjee, Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet said that Tibetans everywhere are passing through an "extremely difficult time."

"This footage shows not only the desperation but also the determination of Tibetans to fight for their freedom at any cost," Dorjee said.

Another clip shows a group of nuns leading a protest following Palden Choetso's self-immolation. In their cries of pain and agony, the nuns could be heard calling Tibet's freedom.

In another clip, thousands of Tibetans are seen carrying out a candle light vigil early in the morning of Palden Choetso's funeral on November 6. The Tibetans carrying candles could be seen waiting in long lines to offer their last respects to Palden Choetso.

In the release, Tawu Lobsang Jinpa, a former political prisoner from Tawu who escaped to India last February noted that the crackdown in Tawu continues with surveillance cameras monitoring every movement of the monks.

"Her ultimate act of nonviolent protest galvanised the entire community to openly and publicly offer their respects and solidarity in spite of China's military clampdown in the region," said Jinpa.

Since March this year, 11 Tibetans have set themselves ablaze protesting China's occupation of Tibet and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

In the release, Tenzin Jigdal, Program Director of SFT, India urged world leaders to "respond to the crisis" in Tibet with multilateral pressure on the Chinese government. "The Tibetans in these videos have risked everything to have their voices heard. Their actions must be a wakeup call that China's repression will only stop if the world intervenes now," said Jigdal.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-11-04/india/30359035_1_tibetan-parliament-in-exile-government-in-exile-free-tibet

In fresh protest, nun immolates self inside Tibet

Times of India, 4 November 2011

SHIMLA: Self-immolation by monks and nuns inside Tibet in protest against China is continuing as a nun, Palden Choetso, immolated herself at a nunnery in Kham Tawu, eastern Tibet, at around 12 noon on Thursday.

She is the 11th Tibetan to set herself on fire in a wave of self-immolation protests that have taken place since March this year.

According to the official website of Tibetan government-in-exile, Palden Choetso, also known as Choesang, (35), from Jangchup Choeling nunnery near Nyitso monastery in Kham, set herself on fire while chanting “Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama”, “Free Tibet” and “Let His Holiness return to Tibet” at a public prayer session held at Tawu Namgyal Stupa. She succumbed to her burn injuries.

With this, six people have so far died inside Tibet, while the condition of five is unknown. Tibetan parliament-in-exile had recently held a day-long special prayer service.

As the news reached McLeodganj, headquarters of exiled government and home of Dalai Lama, Tibetan cabinet (Kashag) issued a statement that as a mark of respect, the Kashag and the Tibetan parliament-in-exile will jointly hold a prayer ceremony for all those departed souls at Tsuklakhang (main monastery), on Friday.

“The Kashag would like to make it clear that it stands in solidarity with people in Tibet who endure continued suppression under the Chinese authorities, whose short-sighted policies have driven eleven Tibetans to set themselves on fire till now,” said the official statement.

Kashag added that instead of addressing the real problems that drive Tibetans to commit self-immolation, Xinhua, the official news organ of the Chinese government, blames Tibetans in exile for instigating such desperate acts.

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/shock-vid-shows-alleged-buddhist-nun-engulfed-in-flames/>

SHOCK VID SHOWS ALLEGED BUDDHIST NUN ENGULFED IN FLAMES

By Billy Hallowell, *The Blaze*, November 22, 2011

BEIJING (The Blaze/AP) — A Tibetan rights group has released graphic video of what it says is a Buddhist nun engulfed in flames on a city street in one of several apparent self-immolation protests against Chinese rule.

The video, released Monday by Students for a Free Tibet, purports to show Palden Choetso, whose death on Nov. 3 in predominantly Tibetan Ganzi prefecture in Sichuan province had previously been reported.

The video shows a woman in nun's robes standing on a street corner covered in bright red flames. She collapses to the ground after about 15 seconds.

Additional footage shows about 10,000 mourners gathering at a monastery for a candlelight vigil on Nov. 6 to pay their respects to the 35-year-old nun while about 1,000 monks and nuns hold prayers inside.

The video also shows Chinese security forces in riot gear shadowing monks and nuns taking part in a protest march, and a column of armored paramilitary police patrol vehicles traveling down a country road. The New York-based Students of a Free Tibet said it obtained the video from sources in the region.

China restricts journalists' access to Tibetan areas of western China and to Tibet itself, and it is nearly impossible to verify statements about conditions there.

At least 11 monks, nuns, and former monks have self-immolated this year in what are seen as acts of desperation in the face of tightening controls over Tibetan life and Buddhist culture.

Most ignited the flames while calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

China claims Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries.

Authorities routinely deny Tibetan claims of repression, although they have

confirmed some cases of self-immolations and accused supporters of the Dalai Lama of encouraging such acts. The Dalai Lama and representatives of the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile in India say they oppose all violence.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/self-immolations-in-chinas-tibetan-areas-mark-a-shift-in-the-tibet-movement-138556309/151459.html>

Self-Immolations in China's Tibetan Areas Mark Shift in Tibet Movement

Voice of America, February 01, 2012

Since last March, at least 16 Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire in protest of Chinese government policies.

Although initially these self-immolations were largely isolated to a Tibetan area in southwestern China, they have spread and grown in number. Between March and the end of September last year, four Tibetans set themselves on fire in protest. From October until the end of last month, another 12 followed in their footsteps. Four occurred in January alone.

Very few of these self destructive acts have been caught on camera, but one self-immolation that has made it to the outside world was that of Palden Choetso, a nun from a Tibetan area in southwestern China's Sichuan province. In the video, she stands as the flames engulf her body and she later falls to the ground.

Palden Choetso set herself on fire in November and was the 11th Tibetan to resort to this extreme form of protest.

In the wake of her death, nuns rallied to mark her sacrifice. And between their cries of despair came calls for Tibetan independence from China. A candlelight vigil was held and Tibetans formed long lines to pay their respects.

Robbie Barnett, a Tibet specialist at Columbia University in New York, says that as the number of self-immolations grows and spreads to more areas, Tibetan patience in China appears to be running out.

"There is more nationalism in these Tibetan areas than there was probably at any time in history. And this has come probably as a result of bad Chinese policies that have gotten more tough and more aggressive in the last 15 years especially."

The wave of self-immolations during the past year began in March, when a 20-year-old monk Phuntsong set himself on fire to mark the third anniversary of a bloody Chinese crackdown on protests at the Kirti monastery in Aba.

But Phuntsong's self-immolation was not the first. The precedent for this form of protest was set in February 2009, when a monk from the same monastery set himself on fire.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet says that monk, named Tapey, self-immolated after local authorities banned monks at the monastery from observing a traditional prayer festival during the Tibetan New Year. During the past year, six of the first eight self-immolations were carried out by Kirti monks, but gradually the incidents have spread.

Steve Marshall, a senior advisor for the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, has spent more than two decades researching human rights violations in Tibet.

"What we're having as these immolations move out, we are having precedents set in more and more counties," Marshall said. "We're seeing precedents established for self-immolation and this is something Tibetans are going to remember for a long, long time."

China has tightened security in Tibetan areas where the immolations have occurred and branded those who burn themselves to death as terrorists.

Beijing also has accused Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, of supporting the acts, an accusation the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile deny.

The head of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Lobsang Sangay, says his administration does not encourage any form of protest in China because of the consequences of such actions.

"If you protest in Tibet, more often than not you get arrested or beaten up, sometimes tortured. Sometimes you disappear; sometimes you die."

Acts such as self-immolation, Lobsang and analysts say, show how desperate Tibetans in China have become.

In Aba and other Tibetan areas, an increase in religious regulations in recent years has put more pressure on monks and nuns, micromanaging their lives and limiting their freedom of movement, says Steve Marshall of the U.S. Congressio-

nal-Executive Commission on China.

“These get down to a level of detail [such as] what kind of a ringtone should you have on your phone, what TV programs can you see, can you have a picture of the Dalai Lama. Very, very petty details about daily life for monks and nuns. More importantly, they control things like can you go anywhere else to hear religious teaching. And if you do go somewhere else, you will have to have permission.”

Columbia University’s Robbie Barnett says self-immolations also mark a departure from the past, when the situation in Tibet was largely protested by exiles and the Dalai Lama.

“The immolations are marking a very important change, where what is going to happen for the future in Tibet is going to be decided by the decisions of the people inside Tibet,” Barnett said. “And these immolations are a very visible, very tragic kind of decision, but they are a political statement.”

It is unlikely, analysts say, that protests against Chinese policies in Tibetan areas and self-immolations will end any time soon, especially when the Beijing government’s response so far has been to increase security and the repression of human rights.

Thousands Gather over Nun’s Death

REA, 2011-11-06

Thousands of Tibetans gathered on Sunday near a monastery in China’s Sichuan province for the cremation of a nun who died last week in the 11th self-immolation incident in Tibetan-populated areas this year.

Palden Choetso, a 35-year-old nun from a nunnery in Tawu (in Chinese, Daofu) county in Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) prefecture, set herself on fire while chanting slogans calling for freedom for Tibet.

On Sunday, several thousand Tibetans gathered near the Tawu Nyitso monastery as monks and nuns held prayers inside.

Separately on Friday, a Tibetan exile set himself on fire in front of the Chinese embassy in India’s capital New Delhi in protest against Chinese policies in the region.

Police intervened and put out the fire. The protester, named by fellow activists as Sherab Tshedor, 25, suffered minor burns.

Tshedor had written a statement before the incident calling for worldwide support for Tibetans against the “ongoing repressive measures” imposed by China.

Tibetan regions have seen a crackdown on monasteries and harassment of monks by Chinese authorities.

On the same day as the demonstration in New Delhi, China urged condemnation of the self-immolations.

“Not condemning self-immolations but playing them up and inciting others to follow examples is challenging the common conscience and moral bottom line of humankind,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hong Lei said, according to Agence France-Presse.

He added that the suicide attempts are “related to separatist forces overseas.”

The U.S. State Department urged China to address policies contributing to tensions among Tibetans.

Spokesman Victoria Nuland said Friday, “We have consistently and directly raised with the Chinese government our concerns about Tibetan self-immolations and we have repeatedly urged the Chinese government to address its counter-productive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions.”

Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama expressed sadness about the self-immolations.

“Speaking as an ordinary Tibetan and a Buddhist monk, these incidents of self-immolation are very very sad,” the Dalai Lama said at a press conference while traveling in Japan on Friday.

Who is fanning Tibet’s flames?

By Damian Grammaticas, *BBC*, 7 November 2011

It was just a few minutes to one in the afternoon last Thursday.

Standing at a road junction in a town in Sichuan, in south-western China, was a young woman.

Without warning, she doused herself in petrol - she may even have drunk some

- and then set fire to herself.

Tibetans say her name was Palden Choetso; she was 35 years old and had been a Tibetan Buddhist nun since the age of 20. Official Chinese reports gave her name in Chinese as Qiu Xiang.

Her death, it is thought, was swift and, one can only imagine, agonising.

So what drives someone to such an awful, desperate step? In fact, what drives 11 people to willingly burn themselves like this?

‘Desperate situation’

That is what has happened so far this year in Aba and Garze (known in Tibetan as Ngaba and Kardze), both Tibetan areas of Sichuan.

Two of those who set fire to themselves have been nuns; nine of them were men, monks or former monks. Six of the eleven have died, the fate of the others is not know.

Palden Choetso (or Qiu Xiang) was the oldest; the youngest was 18.

This wave of self-immolations is unprecedented. So what is happening in these Tibetan communities? Who or what is fanning the flames?

China is keeping foreign journalists out of the areas. Tibet’s exiled leadership says those who set fire to themselves shouted slogans as they did so: “Long live his holiness the Dalai Lama”, “Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet”, and “Freedom for Tibet”.

On Monday the Dalai Lama, speaking in Japan, said: “Some kind of cultural genocide is taking place... that is why you see these sorts of sad incidents happen, due to the desperateness of the situation.”

Tibet’s Prime Minister-in-exile Lobsang Sangay has been more explicit. “The monks and nuns who immolated themselves were sacrificing their bodies to draw the world’s attention to Chinese repression in Tibet,” he said.

“While the leadership in exile does not encourage self-immolation,” Mr Sangay added, “we must focus on the causes... the continuing occupation of Tibet and the Chinese policies of cultural repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction.”

‘Inciting’

Unsurprisingly, China has pointed the finger straight back. The Xinhua news agency said of Qiu Xiang’s death that “initial investigation showed the case was masterminded and instigated by the Dalai Lama clique, which has plotted a chain of self-immolations in the past months for splitting motives”.

China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei criticised the exiled leaders for “refusing to denounce the self-immolations”, charging that instead “they are publicising these events, and inciting further immolations”.

The US Department of State has weighed in too, saying it has “repeatedly urged the Chinese government to address its counter-productive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions”.

Amid the finger-pointing one thing is clear. The immolations have gone on and on.

The first was by a 20-year-old monk called Phuntsog in March. China responded by deploying thousands of armed police, locking down monasteries, pressuring many monks to undergo “patriotic re-education”, and shipping hundreds more away to an unknown fate.

But none of that has stopped the burning. There is, it seems despair among some Tibetans. Why else would a 20-year-old, or a 35-year-old, choose - willingly, it seems - to die in petrol-fuelled flames lit by their own hands?

Are they a few manipulated by leaders outside Tibet or are they indicative of broader discontent?

China says it is working to bring progress and development to Tibetan areas. It is hoping those, and a firm hand when it comes to security, will end the tensions. But what if its policies are not working?

The question we should perhaps be asking then is not so much who is fanning the flames, but rather what will douse them?

Tenzin Phuntsok

Age: 40

Occupation: Monk (former)

Date of self-immolation: 1 December 2011

Place: Chamdo, Kham, Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Tenzin Phuntsok:

If Khenpo Lodoe Rapsel, Namsey Sonam and all the monks and nuns of Karma Gon Monastery, the true and un-mistakable practitioners of Buddhist dharma, have to endure torture and imprisonment like this, then it is better for all of us at Karma Gon Monastery to die. I, the despicable Tenzin Phuntsok, write this with loyalty.

Brothers and sisters, don't be sad and don't lose your courage. My Dharma friends, think about our two khenpos and the monks and nuns who are holders of the Dharma practice. How can we believe in these rules that restrict the freedom of religion? I, Tenzin Phuntsok, wrote this.

Dharma friends in Karma Gon Monastery, it is useless just to live thinking about our beloved khenpos and the monks and nuns. Stand up! Clinging to taste of the eight worldly concerns, beings run away from these as they would from their enemies, I bow before the Buddha, who cannot be placated by small pleasures. I, the sorrow-filled, loathsome man called Tenzin Phuntsok wrote this.

When I think about the suffering throughout Tibet, and especially the pain at Karma Gon Monastery, there is no way that I can go on living.'

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

A 12th self-immolation, first in Tibet proper, poses test for China

By Keith B. Richburg, *The Washington Post*, 2 December 2011

SHANGHAI — A former Tibetan monk set himself on fire Thursday in the Chinese-ruled Tibetan autonomous region, exiles and outside advocacy groups said. It was the latest in a series of self-immolations that are challenging Beijing's

effort to subdue dissent in far western China, and the first in Tibet proper.

According to the reports, which could not be independently verified, Tenzin Phuntsog, 46, formerly of the Karma monastery in the town of Chamdo, ignited himself near the monastery. He survived and is being treated at a hospital, the reports said.

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/12th-tibetan-self-immolation-occurs-amid-harsh-repression-153617.html>

12th Tibetan Self-Immolation Occurs Amid Harsh Repression

By Cheryl Chen & Jane Lin, *The Epoch Times* Staff

The tragic news of a twelfth self-immolation case by a Tibetan monk in China this year was published simultaneously with photos posted on several websites showing how Chinese security forces have been cracking down on Tibetans in a manner that is reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution.

Forty-six-year-old Tenzin Phuntsok, a former Tibetan monk, was hospitalized after setting himself on fire on Dec. 1. It was the first self-immolation case in the Tibetan autonomous region, and the twelfth case in China this year.

Phuntsok set himself on fire in the Chamdo area of Tibet to protest the arrest by Chinese authorities of over 70 Tibetan monks from the Karma Monastery, according to Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Chinese authorities have accused the temple of causing an explosion in Karma Township in late October and arrested more than 70 monks, with many more being forced to flee to the mountains, Sang Jey Kep, editor of Tibet Bulletin, published by the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala, India, told RFA. Tenzin Phuntsok self-immolated to protest the Chinese authorities' tight control over the temple and the area, Sang said.

Sang Jey Kep said police put out the fire and sent Tenzin Phuntsok to a hospital, but his current condition is unclear.

Since March 2011, twelve Tibetan monks or nuns have set themselves on fire to protest Beijing's repressive Tibet policy. At least six of the self-immolators have died.

In an interview with BBC Chinese, Lobsang Sangay, the Prime Minister of Tibet's government-in-exile, said the recent self-immolation protests reflect the desperation of Tibetans under Chinese communist rule.

Chinese authorities have instituted a series of repressive measures in Tibetan monasteries, including forcing the monks to criticize the Dalai Lama, Sangay said.

The Chinese regime has accused the Dalai Lama of supporting and encouraging the self-immolations. But Sangay denied the accusation, saying that both the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile have clearly discouraged self-immolation. Sangay said he hopes that diplomats and international media will be able to enter some monasteries to conduct investigations.

Cultural Revolution Style Crackdown

Since the March 2008 protests, the region has been under heavy security clamp-down and foreign journalists are barred from independently traveling to the Tibetan autonomous region or the Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province.

Beginning Dec. 2, several websites, including Free Tibet and Voice of Tibet, have posted photos showing Chinese security forces punishing Tibetans in crackdowns reminiscent of the public shaming used during the Cultural Revolution. Photos show Tibetan monks with their heads being forced down, and with placards on their chests bearing their names and alleged crimes, i.e. "separatist" or "assembling to attack state institutions," while being escorted away by Chinese police.

The websites did not give the sources of these photos, except for backchina.com, which indicated that the photos were from a Chinese military forum.

Free Tibet posted photos that had been republished on Boxun.com, a Chinese language website based in the U.S. The Boxun article said the photos were taken in the Tibetan areas of Kandze autonomous prefecture and Ngaba autonomous prefecture of Sichuan Province. The photos had originally been posted on a Chinese military forum.

Voice of Tibet published the same set of photos from Tibetan writer and activist Tsering Woesser's blog, who had republished them. Woesser said the Tibetans in the photos were arrested for "separatism" or "assembling to attack state institutions," the same charges Chinese authorities used when they arrested Tibetans

earlier this year.

Woesser dates the photos to either 2011 or in 2008, after the protests in March. She said, judging from the street signs and landscape, the photos were most likely taken in Ngaba Town of Sichuan Province, where eight Tibetan monks and one nun have self-immolated.

The Terrible Winter of 1968: A Memoir of China's Cultural Revolution, Part I

According to Woesser, from March of 2008 to Oct. 17, 2011, 34 Tibetans in Ngaba autonomous prefecture have died from either self-immolation or from being beaten and tortured by Chinese security forces. Three hundred monks from Kirti Monastery in Ngaba were arrested after the March 16, 2008 protest, in which a young Tibetan monk also self-immolated and eventually died. Another 619 were arrested and 108 sentenced.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30451&t=1>

Fiery sacrifice by a Tibetan in Chamdo

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, Friday, December 02, 2011

DHARAMSHALA, December 2: Various sources are now confirming that another Tibetan has set himself ablaze in Tibet in an apparent protest against the continued Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Tenzin Phuntsok, a former monk in his forties, reportedly self-immolated in Chamdo area of Tibet on Thursday. Tenzin Phuntsok is believed to have survived the self-immolation and has been taken to a local hospital.

No other details are available at the time of reporting.

Tenzin Phuntsok is being described as a former monk of the Karma monastery in Chamdo.

The entire Chamdo region, especially the Karma monastery have been facing increased repression after unconfirmed reports emerged of a bomb blast at a Chinese government building in Chamdo on October 26.

No casualties had been reported, although, following the blast, the Karma monastery was locked down and strict restrictions were placed on its monks.

Kelsang Gyaltsen, a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile had told Phayul that the blast could be a plot to frame false charges against Tibetans.

“In 2001, China did the same thing, they falsely accused and jailed Trulku Tenzin Delek, an influential Tibetan religious leader on charges of a bomb blast,” he said.

The Karma monastery located on the eastern bank of the Dzachu river in Chamdo was founded by the first Gyalwang Karmapa, the head of Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism in the 12th century.

Repression has been intense in Chamdo, particularly since the 2008 pan-Tibet protests. The area witnessed a dramatic tightening of security and the imposition of ‘emergency’ measures by the authorities according to a notice of strategies issued by Chinese government officials in Chamdo in 2009.

The 17th Gyalwang Karmapa in a statement had called the desperate acts of self-immolation being carried out by people with pure motivation as a “cry against the injustice and repression under which they live.”

While urging the Chinese leadership to “heed to Tibetans’ legitimate demands,” Gyalwang Karmapa said that Beijing “needs to seriously review its policies towards Tibetans and other minorities.”

This is the twelfth known case of self-immolation in Tibet since March this year.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30462&t=1>

Tibetan Parliament condemns China over continuing self-immolations

Phayul, Saturday, December 03, 2011

DHARAMSHALA December 3: Following the self-immolation of Tenzin Phuntsok in Chamdo region of Tibet, the Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-exile once again blamed China’s “repressive policies” for pushing Tibetans to the extreme of setting their bodies on fire.

“If the Chinese government fails to end its repressive policies and oppression on Tibetans, the situation in Tibet is bound to become more critical,” the Tibetan Parliament said in a release Friday.

Tenzin Phuntsok, 46, a former monk of Karma monastery in Chamdo, set himself on fire on Thursday, in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

The Dharamshala based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in a release said that Tenzin Phuntsok "shouted slogans and distributed leaflets" before setting himself on fire.

"We demand an investigative team to be immediately allowed inside Tibet to assess the ground situation and urge for urgent measures to resolve the sufferings of the Tibetans inside Tibet," the exile parliament added.

The Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, Dharamshala and Tibetan Women's Association jointly organised a candle light vigil yesterday evening here in town in honour of Tenzin Phuntsok.

Hundreds of Tibetans and foreigners joined the candle light march.

"We condemn the Chinese government for their repressive policies and faulty security measures in Tibet," said Monlam Tharchin, a member of the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile while speaking at the candle light vigil.

"Eyewitnesses in Tibet say that in the fire that enveloped his body, one of Tenzin Phuntsok's arms was almost falling down," said Tharchin, confirming earlier reports of severe burn injuries suffered by Tenzin Phuntsok, leaving little hope of survival.

"We are in constant touch with Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay and Speaker Penpa Tsering who are currently in Europe, taking up the critical situation in Tibet with various governmental and non-governmental leaders," said the Tibetan parliamentarian.

In a letter of condolence sent to the Central Tibetan Administration, the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism expressed "solidarity" with the Tibetans on the recent cases of "tragic self-immolations" in Tibet.

"We stand firmly behind non-violence and wholeheartedly oppose the use of military forces as a solution to any conflict in the world," the letter stated.

This is the twelfth known case of self-immolation in Tibet since March this year.

<http://tibet.net/2011/12/09/tenzin-phuntsok-dies-of-self-immolation-injuries/>

Tenzin Phuntsok Dies of Self-immolation Injuries

Tibet.net, December 9, 2011 10:40 pm

DHARAMSHALA: Tenzin Phuntsok, a former Tibetan monk who self-immolated in protest against the Chinese government in Chamdo in eastern Tibet on 1 December, has succumbed to his injuries, reports coming out of Tibet says.

Tenzin Phuntsok shouted long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama after setting himself on fire.

He died at a hospital in Chamdo on 6 December. Currently, his last rites are being performed at nearby monasteries.

A group of concerned Tibetans had earlier approached the hospital to inquire about his body. The hospital authorities had informed them that the body had been handed over to his family members but the family members denied receiving Tenzin Phuntsok's body from the hospital.

The wife of the deceased has also been arrested by the police, while the rest of his family are kept under a strict surveillance.

Tennyi

Age: 20

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 6 January 2012

Place: Ngaba County, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tsultrim

Age: 20

Occupation: Monk (former)

Date of self-immolation: 6 January 2012

Place: Ngaba County, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile Calls For More International Pressure on China

Tibet.net, January 10, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In a press release issued today, the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile called for more international pressure on China after three more instances of self-immolation in Tibet this new year.

‘The drastic actions taken by the protesters reflect the failed policies of the Chinese government in Tibet. We urge the United Nations and the world community to exert more pressure on China to reform its failed policies especially with regard to human rights in Tibet’, the press release said.

‘Tsultrim and Tennyi, both in their early 20s, self-immolated on 6 January in Ngaba, eastern Tibet calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet’.

Tsultrim died on the spot while Tennyi died the following morning from injuries sustained from the self-immolation.

‘Another Tibetan, Sonam Wangyal/Sopa Rinpoche,(42), a venerated spiritual

figure from Golok Darlag county in eastern Tibet, died after he set himself on fire on 8 January. He was also calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the restoration of freedom for Tibet', the press release noted.

Norbu Damdul, who set himself on fire in Ngaba on 15 October 2011 also passed away on 5 January. His last remains, after being cremated had been handed over to his family by the Chinese police, the press statement further said.

A total of 15 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government in Tibet since March 2011. Out of which 11 have died and the rest were severely injured or their whereabouts are yet to be ascertained.

<http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/tibet/2781-photos-of-self-immolators-were-received-half-a-year-later->

Photos of Self-Immolators Were Received Half a Year Later

By Ruta Vilkaite, *The Tibet Post International*, Friday, 17 August 2012

Dharamshala: At the beginning of this year, on the 6th of January, 20 years old Tibetans, Lobsang Tsultrim and Tennyi, have self-sacrificed in Ngaba County City, north-eastern Tibet.

The photo of Lobsang Tsultrim was sent to the news channels while the photo of Tennyi was never received.

However yesterday, 15th of August, one of the unconfirmed sources has sent the photo and additional information about the latter self-immolator to the coordinator of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala.

Tennyi was bought up in Upper Tawar village in Ngaba County by father Yarphe. During his childhood years, Tennyi had joined Kirti Monastery in Tibet where he served as monk. Just a few years ago, he decided to give up monk's life and became a lay person.

Another photo of self-immolator Rigzin Dorjee, who was also known as Rigbey, was sent by the same unidentified source which later was forwarded to the Tibet Post International by the Kirti Monastery's media coordinator.

Rigzin Dorjee set himself on fire on the 8th of February 2012 and, almost two weeks later, passed away in Barkham City, the center of Ngaba Region. Rigzin

Dorjee was a son of Tsnnkho and Dhungkar.

The communist authorities of the Chinese government have introduced strict control on the news media and other forms of communication throughout the Tibet, when dealing with situation in the region. It does make it hard, and sometimes even impossible, to retrieve latest information about self-immolations and other important incidents in the country.

China also banned foreign media journalists from reporting from the Himalayan region. The authoritarian government banned reporters whose reports this government finds objectionable and sees as besmirching to its so called global image.

There is no freedom of press in Tibet for the past six decades. Lately, Hu's regime has imposed even more restrictions on the use of internet, text messaging, telephone calls, music publishing, and photocopying. This year China once again has been coloured black in the Freedom of the Press Worldwide map, which indicates 'very serious situation'.

Sonam Wangyal aka Lama Soepa

Age: 40s

Occupation: Monk/Social worker

Date of self-immolation: 8 January 2012

Place: Darlag county town, Golog, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Lama Soepa:

To all the six million Tibetans – including those living in exile – I am grateful to Pawo Thupten Ngodup and all other Tibetan heroes who have sacrificed their lives for Tibet and for the reunification of the Tibetan people. Though I am in my forties, until now I have not had their courage. But I have tried my best to teach all traditional fields of knowledge to others, including Buddhism.

This is the twenty-first century, and this is the year in which so many Tibetan heroes have died. I am sacrificing my body both to stand in solidarity with them in flesh and blood, and to seek repentance through this highest tantric honour of offering one's body. This is not to seek personal fame or glory.

I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering, and to lead them – each of whom has been our mother in the past and yet by ignorance has been led to commit immoral acts – to the Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light. My offering of light is for all living beings, even as insignificant as lice and nits, to dispel their pain and to guide them to the state of enlightenment. I offer this sacrifice as a token long-life offering to our root guru, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and all other spiritual teachers and lamas.

I am taking this action neither for myself nor to fulfill a personal desire nor to earn recognition. I am sacrificing my body with the firm conviction and a pure heart just as the Buddha bravely gave his body to a hungry tigress [to prevent her from eating her cubs]. All the Tibetan heroes too have sacrificed their lives with similar principles. But in practical terms, their lives may have ended with some sort of anger. Therefore, to guide their souls on the path to enlightenment, I offer prayers that may lead all of them to Buddhahood.

May all spiritual teachers and lamas inside Tibet and in exile live long. Especially, I pray that His Holiness the Dalai Lama will return to Tibet and remain as Tibet's temporal and spiritual leader.' (Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Tibetan monk's body paraded after self-immolation in China

The Associated Press, 9 Jan. 2012

BEIJING: The body of a Tibetan monk who died after setting himself on fire was paraded through the streets in northwestern China, a report said on Monday, in the latest in a series of self-immolation protests against Chinese rule.

US broadcaster Radio Free Asia said hundreds of angry Tibetans forced police to hand over the remains of the 42-year-old monk, named Sopa, then carried them through the streets in Dari county in Qinghai province.

It said the monk died Sunday morning after drinking kerosene and throwing it over his body. Radio Free Asia quote a source as saying Sopa's "body exploded in pieces" before police took it away.

Two other men set themselves on fire Friday in Sichuan province. At least 15 monks, nuns and former monks are now believed to have set themselves on fire in the past year. Most have chanted for Tibetan freedom and the return of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

Radio Free Asia said police first refused to give up the body but relented after "the protesters smashed windows and doors of the local police station," according to another source.

It quoted a third source as saying only the head and chest parts were intact.

The official Xinhua News Agency confirmed Sunday's death, and identified the monk as Nyage Sonamdrugyu, 40. It said his body was returned to his relatives so a traditional funeral could be held.

Calls on Monday to the Communist Party's propaganda department, the Public Security Bureau and the government in Dari county rang unanswered. The county is in Golog prefecture, and calls to the prefecture level party, public security and government offices also rang unanswered.

Radio Free Asia said security in the area has been tightened.

Most of the self-immolations have occurred in traditionally Tibetan areas of Sichuan that have been hotbeds of opposition to central government control. The area where Sopa reportedly set himself on fire Sunday is just north of Sichuan.

Friday's incidents, which occurred in Sichuan's Aba prefecture, were confirmed

by Xinhua. One of the men died, according to the London-based Free Tibet group, which said the men were protesting tight Chinese control over Tibetan life and culture.

China chooses Buddhist leaders in Tibet and wants to pick a pro-Beijing successor to the Dalai Lama, whom China considers to be a separatist. China says Tibet has been part of its territory for centuries, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for most of that time.

The latest self-immolations come as Xinhua reported late Sunday that senior officials from Tibet “have pledged stepped-up efforts to strengthen the management of monasteries in the fight against the Dalai Lama group.”

It quoted Basang Toinzhub, a senior political adviser in Tibet, as saying the top priority was to maintain stability and promote harmony.

Basang said the focus this year will be on helping the government strengthen management of monasteries “to push forward the patriotic and legal education among monks and nuns.”

China routinely blames supporters of the Dalai Lama for encouraging acts of opposition. Xinhua cited a Tibetan expert as saying “the Dalai Lama clique” had “instigated and enticed” the two men to set themselves on fire Friday.

The Dalai Lama and representatives of the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile say they oppose all violence.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30676&t=1>

Tibet is burning – Third self-immolation in three days

Phayul, Monday, January 09, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, January 9: Just a day after two Tibetans set their bodies on fire in eastern Tibet, another Tibetan, a reincarnate lama set himself ablaze on January 8, Sunday.

Sonam Wangyal (Sopa), a respected spiritual figure in his early forties from Golok in eastern Tibet passed away on the spot after drinking and spraying kerosene all over his body before lighting himself up according to sources in exile.

Citing sources in Tibet, RFA said that Sopa self-immolated in front of the po-

lice station of Darlag (in Chinese, Dari) county in Golog after shouting slogans calling for Tibet's freedom and the long life of Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama – demands which have been common to all the 15 Tibetans who have self-immolated in Tibet since March 2011.

In leaflets that Sonam Wangyal distributed just before he set himself ablaze, he stated his fiery sacrifice was not for his “personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans,” RFA said quoting a source from inside Tibet.

“The Tibetans should not lose their determination. The day of happiness will come for sure. For the Dalai Lama to live long, the Tibetans should not lose track of their path,” Sonam Wangyal said in his last statement.

After Chinese security personnel confiscated his charred body, several hundred Tibetans reportedly marched to the police station to demand his remains.

According to the Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), around 2,000 local Tibetans held a candlelight vigil urging the local police authorities to release his body.

“The local police averted further tension by agreeing to do so,” the CTA report said.

RFA has reported that Chinese security forces are pouring into Darlag “amid indications that thousands of Tibetans are planning to turn up for a memorial service this week for Sopa at a monastery where he had served”.

“Chinese authorities tightened security in Darlag, deploying additional security forces from the main town of Golog, as posters praising Sopa's act and calling for a boycott of Chinese goods appeared in the county,” RFA report said.

At Bodh Gaya, the venue for the ongoing 32nd Kalachakra teachings, Tibetan pilgrims and refugees from Golok who have gathered here for the ten-day teachings organised a candle light in the evening to show support and solidarity with the plight of people inside Tibet, especially with the family of Sonam Wangyal.

China: ‘Tibetan monk’s body paraded after self-immolation’

By Tania Branigan in Beijing, *Guardian*, 9 Jan. 2012

The body of a monk who burned himself to death has been paraded through the streets of a town in north-west China by hundreds of Tibetans, it has been

reported.

The dead man was the third Tibetan to set fire to himself in three days and the 15th over the last year. The monk – named as 42-year-old Sopa – was from Qinghai province, previously untouched by the spate of self-immolations.

Citing an unnamed source inside Tibet, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that he climbed a local hill to burn incense and pray before distributing leaflets saying he would act “not for his personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans”.

Another source told RFA that hundreds of Tibetans later marched to the police station in Dari, Golok prefecture, where officials had taken his body. The police initially refused demands to hand over the remains, but relented after protesters smashed windows and doors.

RFA said security in the area was tightened after the incident. It was not possible to verify the protest independently. Calls to the police and government in Dari rang unanswered. But Agence France Presse said official news agency Xinhua had confirmed the death, although they identified the man as Nyage Sonamdrugyu, aged 40.

Most of the previous cases took place in Sichuan province’s Aba county, where tensions between authorities and the large Tibetan population have run high since the unrest of 2008.

Witnesses have said several of those who self-immolated chanted for Tibetan freedom and called for the return of the Dalai Lama, their exiled spiritual leader.

Xinhua confirmed this weekend that two men had set fire to themselves in Aba on Friday, with one dying while the other suffered serious burns.

It quoted a Tibetan expert who said the “Dalai Lama clique” had “instigated and enticed” the men to self-immolate.

The Dalai Lama has denied Chinese accusations that he has encouraged such acts and blamed Chinese policies.

The Karmapa, a senior religious figure viewed as a possible successor to the Dalai Lama, has gone further by urging Tibetans to stop self-immolation.

In an indication of the growing anxiety among officials, Xinhua announced on Monday that senior officials in Tibet had promised “stepped-up efforts to

strengthen the management of monasteries in the fight against the Dalai Lama group”.

Basang Toinzhub, a senior political adviser in the region, said advisers would help the government push forward patriotic and legal education among monks and nuns – one of the policies critics say has fostered resentment among the clergy.

His remarks came a day after Chen Quanguo, Tibet’s Communist party chief, made a similar promise.

Rinpoche dead in latest self-immolation protest in Tibet

TibetanReview.net, January 11 2012

Even before any reasonable amounts of details, including the names, of the two Tibetan youths, including a monk, who immolated themselves while protesting against Chinese rule in Ngaba County of Sichuan Province on Jan 6 emerged, there has been yet another report of a similar self-immolation protest. The new incident took place in Darlag (Chinese: Dari) County of Golog Prefecture in Qinghai Province on Jan 8 and involved a respected 42-year-old monk named Sonam Wangyal, or Sopa Rinpoche, who died on the scene, reported *RFA.org* (Radio Free Asia, Washington) and other sources Jan 8. It cited witnesses as saying hundreds of angry Tibetans forced the Chinese authorities to return his body, which they then paraded in the streets.

RFA said the revered monk set himself on fire and died in front of the Darlag county police station after shouting slogans calling for Tibet’s freedom and shouting long life for the Dalai Lama. China’s official *Xinhua* news agency Jan 9 confirmed the incident and the death, saying Nyage Sonamdrugyu, 40, set himself ablaze at about 4:19AM at an intersection in the town of Gyumai, the county seat of Darlag. It said Sonamdrugyu, known among local believers as “the Living Buddha Sopa”, belonged to Nyanmo Monastery of Golog Prefecture.

Sopa, a Rinpoche (refers to a respected and learned Lama who may be a tulku as well) who ran an old people’s home and an orphanage in the county, was said to have climbed a hill, performed an incense burning ceremony, and then distributed leaflets saying he was carrying out the self-immolation “not for his personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans.”

He had further written: “The Tibetans should not lose their determination. The day of happiness will come for sure. For the Dalai Lama to live long, the Tibetans should not lose track of their path.”

He then gulped down mouthfuls of kerosene as well as poured the inflammable liquid over his body before setting himself on fire. “His body exploded in pieces [and the remains were] taken away by police,” the report cited sources as saying. Only his head and chest were reported to be intact.

The Darlag police were reported to have initially resisted when several hundred angry Tibetans turned up to demand his body, relenting only after they smashed windows and doors of the police station. The Tibetans paraded through the streets what had remained of the deceased Rinpoche’s body.

The *Xinhua* report simply said the body was returned to his relatives so they may hold a funeral in accordance with local traditions.

With deployment of additional forces from Golog Prefecture, authorities were reported to have tightened security in the county as posters praising Sopa’s sacrifice and calling for a boycott of Chinese goods appeared. “Sopa Rinpoche has done this act for the freedom and peace of Tibet,” one poster was quoted as saying. Making a phone call to the county was said to have become difficult.

Nevertheless, Tibetans said to have planned to organized a large prayer service involving about 2,000 people at Sopa’s monastery.

Sopa’s action brings to 16 the number of Tibetans who had immolated themselves in protest against Chinese rule since Feb 27, 2009. He became the 15th self-immolation protesters in Tibet over the last 10 months and the third in the last three days.

http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=44397

High profile Buddhist monk sets himself alight in Tibet

Catholic Online (NEWS CONSORTIUM), 13 Jan. 2012

BEIJING - Earlier this week, a high-profile Buddhist monk set himself alight in the northeastern province of Qinghai. The monk was identified as Sonam Wangyal, and he is the oldest monk to immolate himself in the recent wave of protests. Wangyal was reportedly in his early forties.

His immolation is notable because he is the oldest and most well esteemed monk to protest in this way. Local Tibetans referred to him as the “Living Buddha Sopa.” Buddhism frowns upon suicide, but there is a tradition of self-sacrifice in Buddhism, especially when it is for the benefit of others.

According to witnesses, Wangyal handed out leaflets to the public and had wrote that he was acting “not for personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans.” He then sat down in a hotel courtyard and drank kerosene before dousing himself. He then set himself alight. His body exploded and he died instantly.

Following his death, a crowd of at least 2,000 Tibetans gathered to hold a candlelight vigil urging the police to release his body. According to police authorities, his body has since been handed over to relatives.

Unfortunately, the situation does not appear to be improving. Just hours after the immolation, Chinese officials pledged to strengthen efforts to quell the monasteries and supporters of the Dali Lama. A report from Xinhua said that officials must “push forward the patriotic and legal education among monks and nuns. and dissuade them from being duped by separatist forces.”

For now, people are concerned that the self-immolations and the government’s pledge to crack-down on pro-Tibetan protests will only increase the tensions and lead to yet more immolations. Certainly, the self-sacrifice of a spiritual leader will have a wide impact across the region.

Ultimately, experts believe the situation will continue to worsen as each side tries to increase pressure on the other. It is almost certain that the self-immolation of Wangyal will not be the last.

Thousands Attend Funeral

Radio Free Asia, 2012-01-09

Defying a security clampdown, thousands of Tibetans gathered on Monday in a Tibetan region of China’s Qinghai province to honor a respected religious leader who died in a self-immolation protest against rule by Beijing.

The high-ranking lama, called Sopa and aged 42, set himself ablaze and died on Sunday in front of the police station of Darlag (in Chinese, Dari) county in the Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after shouting slogans calling for

freedom for Tibet.

The Chinese authorities at first refused to hand over Sopa's body to his relatives but relented after hundreds of angry Tibetans smashed windows and doors of the local police station.

Sopa's death came two days after two Tibetan monks set themselves on fire in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture on Jan. 6 to protest Chinese rule and call for the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. Sources confirmed Monday that both had died.

"Today, Jan. 9, a few thousand Tibetans from Darlag and Gade (in Chinese, Gande) counties gathered in Darlag town and prayed for the late Sopa Tulku," said a Tibetan from the area, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Tulku" is a Tibetan honorific term denoting a reincarnate lama, called a "Living Buddha" by Chinese.

"The members of the [local] monasteries and elder members of the Tibetan community decided that the funeral rituals for the late Sopa Tulku, also called Sonam Wangyal, would be performed by Bhayen monastery in Darlag county," the man said.

'Great loss'

Sopa had founded a home for about 100 elderly Tibetans in Gade county and an orphanage in Darlag, the man said.

"Now, those orphans will have no one to look after them. Sopa Tulku's death is a great loss for Tibet, and especially for Golog," he added, before his call was cut off.

Sopa was born in Gade and was a respected high-ranking lama of Gade's Dungkyob monastery, a second Tibetan source in the area said, also speaking on condition of anonymity.

He is survived by a brother, the source said, adding that other details concerning his family are unknown.

Following Sopa's self-immolation, Chinese authorities tightened security in Darlag, deploying additional security forces from the main town of Golog, as posters praising Sopa's act and calling for a boycott of Chinese goods appeared in the county, sources said.

“Over 50 vehicles carrying [Chinese] security forces have now arrived in Darlag town,” one Tibetan source said.

“The town is full of armed police who are trying to intimidate the local Tibetans,” he said.

Meanwhile, Tibetan sources in exile identified the two monks who died on Jan. 6 as Tenyi and Tsultrim, both in their 20s.

“Tenyi died that day, and Tsultrim died during the night of Jan. 7,” said Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshi, monks at the Kirti branch monastery in Dharamsala, India.

Another monk, Norbu Damdul, who self-immolated on Oct. 15, died on Jan. 5 at a hospital in Barkham (in Chinese, Ma’erkang) county in China’s restive Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county in Sichuan, they said.

Accusation

Fifteen Tibetan monks and nuns have set fire to themselves since March 2011 to protest Beijing’s rule over Tibetan areas. A sixteenth, a monk named Tapey, set himself ablaze in 2009.

Chinese authorities have blamed the Dalai Lama for the fiery protests, accusing him of encouraging the self-immolations which, they say, run contrary to Buddhist teachings.

The Dalai Lama has denied the charge, blaming instead what he has called China’s “ruthless and illogical” policy toward Tibet.

Following the twin self-immolations on Friday, the Central Tibetan Administration, Tibet’s exile government based in Dharamsala, India, highlighted “the Dalai Lama’s statement that as a Buddhist, life is precious and thus, he has always discouraged drastic actions inside and outside of Tibet, as he did during the peaceful protests in 2008 and several unto-death hunger strikes in exile.”

It added that the exile government does not encourage protests inside Tibet due to “harsh consequences in the hands of the Chinese authorities.”

“The People’s Republic of China government is solely to be blamed for these incidents of self-immolation. It must take full responsibility and immediately take measures to end these unfortunate incidents by adopting liberal policies for Tibet and [the] Tibetan people,” it said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department said it is “seriously concerned” by reports of the latest three protest deaths.

“The U.S. government has consistently and directly raised with the Chinese government this issue of Tibetan self-immolations,” State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland told reporters on Monday.

“These actions clearly represent enormous anger, enormous frustration, with regard to the severe restrictions on human rights, including religious freedom, inside China.”

“We have called the Chinese government policies counterproductive, and have urged the Chinese government to have a productive dialogue, to loosen up in Tibet and allow journalists and diplomats and other observers to report accurately, and to respect the human rights of all their citizens,” Nuland said.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/01/china-getting-worse-in-tibet/>

China: Getting Worse in Tibet

By Emily-Anne Owen, *Inter Press service*

BEIJING, Jan 13 2012 (IPS) - A Tibetan ‘Living Buddha’ who set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule died this week, sparking a vigil of thousands of Tibetans and creating fears that self-immolations are spreading.

The monk is the third Tibetan to have burned himself to death in 2012, and the 15th since March last year. Nine of the 15, two of whom were nuns, have died.

Sonam Wangyal, a monk in his early forties, set himself alight last Sunday in the northeastern province Qinghai and was reported dead on Monday.

In a sign that the recent unprecedented wave of Tibetan self-immolations is spreading, this was the first incident in Qinghai. The majority of immolations have occurred in Sichuan’s Aba prefecture, the site of an important Tibetan monastery that has experienced increasingly harsh crackdowns.

Referred to by local Tibetans as the ‘Living Buddha Sopa’, Sonam Wangyal is the first reincarnate lama to have turned the flame on himself, and the oldest Tibetan to have died so far. Most so far have been in their twenties or teens.

Earlier this month two Tibetans named Tsultrim and Tennyi, both aged around

20, died after setting themselves on fire in the courtyard of a hotel in Ngaba County, Sichuan province. As they burnt themselves, they shouted out, 'His Holiness the Dalai Lama must return to Tibet' and 'May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for 10,000 years!'

Suicide is frowned upon in Tibetan Buddhism, but there is a tradition of self-sacrifice for the 'benefit of others', advocacy groups say.

"Sunday's self-immolation was the first by a reincarnate lama. This was someone who is older, a mature person and an esteemed figure in his community. He would have been acutely aware of the ramifications for such an act in Tibetan Buddhism, and still chose to take his life in this way," Kate Saunders, communications director for the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), tells IPS.

Radio Free Asia reported that the monk wrote he was acting "not for personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans" in leaflets he handed out prior to setting himself on fire.

He then drank kerosene and doused himself in it before setting himself alight. "His body exploded in pieces (and the remains were) taken away by police," said Radio Free Asia.

According to the Tibetan exile government in Dharmasala, India, thousands of locals staged a candlelight vigil demanding the release of his body following its confiscation by the police.

"Due to his position as a local spiritual leader, approximately 2,000 local Tibetans are said to have held a candlelight vigil urging the local police authorities to release his body," the exile government said in a statement. The state-run Xinhua News Agency has since reported that the body has been handed to relatives.

"On the afternoon of Jan. 9, many fully-armed policemen showed up in the town, with guns, sticks, shields etc. The policemen dispersed the people demonstrating and did not allow the people to mourn in the temple," Tsering Woesser, the Tibetan activist and author, wrote on her blog.

Earlier this week there were further signs of Tibetan unrest in a separate incident when a man was shot dead by police, sparking fierce protests in Gansu province, located in China's northwest.

Xinhua reported that the man, Gurgo Tsering, was killed accidentally by police after he allegedly stole from a construction site.

ICT, however, cites local sources who claim the Tibetan died after police fired through the windows of his friend's house. According to Radio Free Asia, Tibetans then attacked a local police station before police fired tear gas to stop the assault.

Both the immolations and protests have occurred during a growing period of unease between the government and Tibetan populations in China. Following protests in the 2008 Beijing Olympic year, the Communist Party has overseen a severe clampdown on religious freedom among Tibetans, who view their rightful leader as the exiled Dalai Lama.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for inciting unrest and has called the immolations "terrorism in disguise".

Just hours after Sonam Wangyal's self-immolation, Xinhua wrote that senior officials had "pledged stepped-up efforts to strengthen the management of monasteries in the fight against the Dalai Lama group."

Officials must "push forward the patriotic and legal education among monks and nuns... and dissuade them from being duped by separatist forces," it said.

The newswire also reported that Sonam Wangyal set himself alight after a clandestine love affair with a local woman was discovered.

"(Crackdowns) are certainly counterproductive, but the Chinese have been at loss how to handle the Tibetans for the past 60 years," Claude Arpi, author of *The Fate of Tibet: When Big Insects Eat Small Insects*, tells IPS. "Today, the 'collective' leadership in Beijing believes that the more they will relax their grip, the worse will the situation become."

For now there are fears that the death of the 'Living Buddha' will only lead to more protests and subsequent crackdowns.

"(The Living Buddha) is a religious leader who enjoys a much higher reputation and a greater influence than a normal monk. (His) death is different from a normal monk's. It brings much greater shock and influence to Tibetans," Woesser tells IPS.

"The increasing deaths of monks means the situation of Tibetan areas is getting worse and worse."

<http://news.outlookindia.com/printitem.aspx?747373>

'Put Pressure on China to Reform Human Right Policies'

Outlook India, Dharamsala, Jan 11, 2012

Amid reports of three more self-immolations by Buddhist monks in Tibet this year, Tibetan government-in-exile today appealed to the international community to exert pressure on China to reform its “failed” human right policies.

“The drastic actions taken by the protesters reflect the failed policies of the Chinese government in Tibet. We urge the United Nations and the world community to exert more pressure on China to reform its failed policies especially with regard to human rights in Tibet,” a spokesman of the government-in-exile said in a statement here.

Two Buddhist monks -- Tsultrim and Tennyi -- both in their early 20s, self-immolated on January 6 in Ngaba, eastern Tibet calling for the return of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Tsultrim died on the spot while Tennyi died the following morning from burn injuries sustained from the self-immolation.

Another Tibetan, Sonam Wangyal/Sopa Rinpoche (42), a venerated spiritual figure from Golok Darlag county in eastern Tibet, died after he set himself on fire on January 8.

He was also demanding freedom for Tibet.

Norbu Damdul, who set himself on fire in Ngaba on October 15 last year also passed away on January 5.

A total of 15 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government in Tibet since March 2011. Out of which 11 have died and the rest were severely injured or their whereabouts are yet to be ascertained.

Exile Tibetan Parliament urges an end to repression in Tibet

VOA Tibetan, 10 January 2012

In a press statement issued yesterday, The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile called on China to stop its repressive policies in Tibet in order to prevent further self-

immolations.

In the first week of 2012, Tibet witnessed three self-immolations. Tsultrim and Tennyi, both in their early 20s, self-immolated on 6 January in Ngaba (Chinese-Aba), calling for the 'Return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet'. And on January 8th, Sonam Wangyal, known affectionately as Sopa Tulku or Sopa Tulku, aged 42, a venerated spiritual figure and abbot of Tongkyap Monastery in Golok Darlag county set himself on fire. All three of them succumbed to their injuries.

Geshe Monlam Tharchin, standing committee member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile called on China to hear the demands of these three Tibetans and the other 13 who have self-immolated since 2009, and to let Tibetan exercise freedom of religion and expression. He also urged China to allow international fact finding groups to visit the areas where the self-immolations have taken place.

The press statement included the fact that Norbu Damdul, who self-immolated in Ngaba on October 15, 2011, had died on 5 January.

Geshe Monlam Tharchin applauds the US statement on the issue of self-immolations and urges the United Nations and the world community to exert more pressure on China to reform its failed policies.

Lobsang Jamyang

Age: 20

Occupation: former monk

Date of self-immolation: 14 January 2012

Place: Ngaba County, Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/tibetan-suicides-are-tinder-for-future-unrest-in-china>

Tibetan suicides are tinder for future unrest in China

By Greg Bruno, *The National*, 27 Feb. 2012

On the day in January when Lobsang Jamyang struck the match that took his life, the former Tibetan monk paid the world a subtle goodbye. He ate vegetarian food, visited his old monastery to circle it in prayer, and counselled a recently divorced couple to get back together.

Then, after drinking a bottle of petrol, his quiet preparations became a visceral act of political protest. “When he was on fire,” one of his friends told me recently over tea, “he exploded”.

Twenty-two similar acts of Tibetan defiance - from the first in March to the most recent last week - have happened in the last year. Tibetans, who have lived under Chinese rule for six decades, have embraced a grisly and desperate method - self-immolation - to demonstrate a renewed anger towards Beijing’s religious, economic and cultural repression. In modern Tibet, the first instance of self-immolation occurred in 2009; in the past year, it has become a relative epidemic. The question is, how will it end?

For Beijing, the answer is force. Thousands of paramilitary police have flooded Sichuan and Qinghai provinces in China’s Tibetan region, and Communist Party officials have condemned suicidal monks as anarchists, terrorists and rebels. In December, one party official compared protesters to “rats” born of “weasels”.

What Chinese authorities seem to fail to realise is that nearly two dozen self-inflicted deaths are not a police problem, but rather the start of a violent trend that could accelerate if concessions and dialogue are not offered.

In the Tibetan exile capital of Dharamsala in India, religious leaders and political activists rightly see hypocrisy in China's crackdown. As security forces stream into eastern Tibet, grievances elsewhere in China are being addressed with a new degree of diplomatic acumen.

Recent protests in the village of Wukan, in the southern province of Guangdong, are instructive. When residents massed last year to condemn corrupt property deals, the Communist Party could have responded with more violence, as it had on many other occasions. Instead, officials offered to hold free village elections and to conduct an investigation.

Wukan cast ballots earlier this month. And on the same day that they voted, party officials in Sichuan blamed "trained separatists" and terrorists for the continuing unrest in Tibet.

Since the 1950s, fear of domestic instability has inclined Beijing to respond to its "Tibet problem" with violence, economic coercion and endless propaganda. But decades of social development and infrastructure improvements have failed to win over the millions of Tibetans who live in the vast expanse of grasslands and mountains of the Tibetan plateau.

Almost every one of the 22 people who have set themselves on fire over the last year had the same demand: Beijing must stay out of Tibetan religious affairs and allow the return of the Dalai Lama.

Neither demand is likely to be answered anytime soon. And yet, they demonstrate the depth of reverence for the man viewed as the embodiment of the intangible Tibetan faith. No degree of force or "re-education" can wipe away that belief.

In Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is believed to be the earthly embodiment of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the deity of compassion. The incarnations of the Dalai Lama in different individuals have served as the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibetans for centuries.

China's manipulation of reincarnation doctrine - with Beijing introducing a law mandating that lamas, including the Dalai Lama, be approved by the officially

atheist Communist Party - is rightly seen as an attempt to wipe out the Tibetan identity.

The spate of self-immolations is only a glimpse of the unrest that China will see if the Dalai Lama, now 76, dies without a solution that is acceptable to Tibetans. Kirti Rinpoche, an exiled abbot of a monastery that has seen about half of the recent immolations, told me that unless China changes its policies on religious practices, the crisis will deepen.

“The Chinese communist government should consider the situation and they should improve it,” the abbot said, “or it could lead to violence.” Tibetans, he said, “are helpless”.

Not all Tibetans would see themselves as helpless bystanders. In death, Lobsang Jamyang may have accomplished more than he could have in life. Far from driving the Tibetan issue underground, China’s military response has only generated more unity and resolve.

“People were coming [to pay respects] from as far away as Lhasa,” Lobsang’s friend, who asked to remain anonymous, told me. “There is a spark of unity, and nationalism, now in Tibet; nationalism that is being sparked for the first time.”

It is true that Beijing’s grip on the Tibetan region faces no real challenge. Tibetans are not demanding political independence. Rather, they are calling for religious freedom, recognition of the status of high lamas and cultural respect.

Beijing’s response, then, will shape the future. This is not an Arab-style rebellion that threatens regime change. But the deployment of police and tanks cannot frighten protesters who are willing to set themselves on fire.

For now, Tibetans across the plateau continue to hold on to a belief that the Dalai Lama can, and will, bring them salvation. When his light is extinguished, do not expect the sparks of unrest and rebellion to disappear with it.

Another Tibetan layman burns self to death in Ngaba

TCHRD, 17 January 2012

Lobsang Jamyang, a 21-yr-old Tibetan layman died of self-immolation on 14 January 2012 in Ngaba county (Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province). According to information received by TCHRD, Lobsang

Jamyang stood adjacent to Kirti Monastery and shouted slogans such as “May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live thousands of years” while still engulfed in flames. Eyewitnesses say he paced up and down the street unsteadily as he continued to shout slogans. The Public Security Bureau and People’s Armed Police then surrounded Lobsang Jamyang and used iron rods and chains to intimidate and beat other Tibetans who had gathered around Lobsang Jamyang’s burning body. According to sources, a Tibetan woman in her 40s died after she was hit in the eye with iron chains after the scuffle between the police and the crowd started. Almost 700 Tibetans had gathered to protest the police actions. At least 10 Tibetans were arrested. Lobsang Jamyang died on the spot, according to eyewitnesses. However, the police forcibly took his body to an unknown location and as of today, his whereabouts are not known. Many more have been injured and the situation is described as very tense although details are still difficult to obtain. Lobsang Jamyang was born in Aduk village in Ngaba. He attended the Ngaba Middle School and was briefly a monk at Aduk Monastery.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30710&t=1>

Latest Tibetan to self-immolate passes away; Injured Tibetans avoid hospitals fearing arrest in Ngaba

Phayul, Wednesday, January 18, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, January 18: Details are finally emerging of the Tibetan man whose self-immolation on January 14 in the besieged Ngaba region of eastern Tibet led to public demonstrations and police firing.

The man has been identified as 22-year-old Losang Jamyang of the Gyatsotsang household in Shewa village the Andu area of Ngaba.

In a release yesterday evening, the exile base of the Kirti monastery in Dharamshala said that Lobsang Jamyang was a leading member of a popular association for the promotion of Tibetan language in his village and was exposed to “oppression and intimidation” from the local Chinese authorities.

On January 14 at about 1.30 pm local time, Losang Jamyang doused himself in petrol inside a public toilet cubicle at an intersection in Ngaba county town and set himself on fire. He then walked on to the street shouting slogans for the long life of the Dalai Lama and for freedom in Tibet.

“Soldiers and police in the vicinity started to beat him with spiked clubs, rather than putting out the flames, covered him with a white cloth, and continued to beat and stamp on him,” the release said.

Angered by the actions of the police, local Tibetans gathered at the site and demanded the body to be handed over to them.

Chinese security personnel reacted by arresting and beating people at random with spiked clubs and even opening fire on the crowd. Scores of Tibetans were injured and blinded and as earlier reports suggested, one Tibetan woman was killed in the gunfire.

“As a result, Choki Dawa of the Gatsang house in division 2 of Me’uruma township was taken to hospital in critical condition, with little chance of survival, two youths were also seriously wounded by the beatings, and a woman was blinded in one eye. Two women were wounded by gunshots fired by security forces,” the release said.

Eyewitnesses described the scene as “terrifying” and that people were being “beaten mercilessly”.

There are no further details on the number and identity of the arrested Tibetans.

According to Kanyag Tsering, an exile monk with close contacts within the region, many of the injured Tibetans are avoiding treatment in hospitals fearing arrests.

“The consequence of the medication would be much worse than the injury itself if Chinese security personnel traces and arrests the patient on charges of participating in the protests,” Kanyag said. “That is why many injured Tibetans are avoiding going to hospitals.”

As a result of the severe beating, Losang Jamyang succumbed to his injuries on January 16 in Barkham, Ngaba according to the Kirti monastery release. It is not yet known whether Losang Jamyang’s body has been handed over to his family.

Security forces in the region are reportedly on high alert as Chinese authorities put up warning posters on the main streets of Ngaba in order to intimidate local Tibetans.

However, leaflets have appeared in the region, urging Tibetans to shun celebrations during the upcoming Tibetan new year by eating “poor food” and wearing “old clothes” as a sign of “public mourning”.

Since Tapey's self-immolation in 2009, 17 Tibetans including nuns, monks, and laymen have set their bodies on fire calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Ngaba has been at the nodal point of the fiery wave of self-immolations with 11 Tibetans setting themselves ablaze in the past 11 months.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/mother-01182012151811.html>

'No Regret' For Loss: Mother

RFA, 2012-01-18

A Tibetan mother says she is proud of her son's sacrifice to protest Chinese rule.

The mother of the most recent Tibetan to die by self-immolation in protest of Chinese rule does not regret the loss of her son, according to a source close to the family.

Lobsang Jamyang, 21, set himself ablaze on Saturday in Sichuan's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture.

Chinese authorities threw blankets over him and began beating him severely, according to a Tibetan monk living in Dharamsala, India, prompting a clash with over seven hundred Tibetans who gathered to protest the police attack.

Lobsang Jamyang's mother, Lacham, said she was proud of her son who had "sacrificed his life for the Tibetan cause," according to family contact Konchog Tsering, also from Dharamsala.

"When the representatives from Nyentse Monastery and local residents went to see Lobsang Jamyang's mother, she did not show any sign of regret," he said.

"She told them that when her son was alive he was a very modest and well-disciplined son, and that among the youth, he was someone who always worked towards preserving Tibetan culture and religion."

"She said, 'This time he sacrificed his life for the Tibetan cause, so our family has no regret for his death.'"

Meanwhile, Konchog Tsering said, Lobsang Jamyang's father Gyatso was returning on Wednesday evening from Ngaba prefecture's Barkham town (in Chi-

nese, Ma'erkang) where he retrieved the ashes of his son from the local police, indicating authorities had cremated his remains.

Lobsang Jamyang, of the Gyatso family in Amdo Khepa town, had attended school and had studied at Amdo Yanggo monastery where he was a key member of the Tibetan Vernacular Promotion group and had advocated use of the pure Tibetan language.

Sixteen Tibetan monks and nuns have set fire to themselves since March 2011 to protest Beijing's rule over Tibetan areas. A seventeenth monk, named Tapey, set himself ablaze in 2009.

Chinese authorities have blamed the Dalai Lama for the fiery protests, accusing him of encouraging the self-immolations which, they say, run contrary to Buddhist teachings.

The Dalai Lama has denied the charge, blaming instead what he has called China's "ruthless and illogical" policy toward Tibet.

Rigzin Dorje

Age: 19

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 8 February 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan teenager becomes 3rd person to self-immolate in 3 days

The Telegraph, 06 Mar 2012

Washington-based Radio Free Asia reported that an 18-year-old identified only as Dorje set himself ablaze Monday near a local government office in Jia township, in Sichuan's Aba prefecture.

It quoted Kanyag Tsering, a Tibetan monk exiled in India with contacts in Tibet, as saying he shouted "slogans against Chinese policies in Tibet" before he set himself on fire and died on the spot.

An official with the Communist Party propaganda office in Aba said he hadn't received any notice of an immolation. He refused to give his name and referred calls to the provincial propaganda department, where phones rang unanswered.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet also reported Dorje's death.

Radio Free Asia reported earlier that a 20-year-old female student set herself on fire and died Saturday in Gansu province, and a 32-year-old woman with four young children died after immolating in Aba on Sunday.

This is a sensitive time for Tibet, and for all of China. China's annual legislative session, a time when security is tightened across the country, began Monday. March is also when Tibetans mark significant anniversaries, including that of the unsuccessful 1959 revolt that caused Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee, and deadly anti-government riots that rocked the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 2008.

ore than two dozen Tibetans, including several teenagers, have set themselves on fire in China over the last year, protesting China's suppression of their religion

and culture and calling of the return of the Dalai Lama.

At least 10 were monks or former monks from the Kirti monastery in Aba, according to a tally from the International Campaign for Tibet.

A man at the management office of the Kirti monastery in Aba county said Tuesday that he had heard rumors of immolations Monday and Sunday.

“The control here is too tight. It is not convenient for you and me to talk like this. If you need to know more, come down here and see for yourself,” he said and hung up.

Tibetan areas are mostly off-limits to foreign media and it was not possible to immediately confirm the claims.

An Associated Press reporter who managed to visit Aba last week saw soldiers with helmets, rifles, sticks and shields march in rows along the town’s main road and police scanning license plates and faces of passengers for unwelcome visitors.

Locals said authorities were making random checks of school dormitory rooms for books that go against the ruling Communist Party establishment.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharmasala, India, said in an emailed statement Monday that a 19-year-old monk from Kirti who immolated in February, Rigzin Dorjee, had died in a hospital. It didn’t say when he passed away.

The statement also said that Lobsang Kunchok, another Kirti monk who set himself on fire in September, was being verbally abused and beaten by staff in the hospital where he is being treated. It said Kunchok, 18, had his arms and legs amputated and was being fed through a tube.

“We call on the Chinese government to allow those injured from self-immolations to get proper medical treatment,” it said. “We are deeply troubled by reports of such cruel treatment of fellow human beings.”

The statement didn’t say where Kunchok was being treated.

China says it treats minority groups such as Tibetans fairly, and pours tens of billions of dollars into improving living conditions in their areas. The government has also accused the Dalai Lama and overseas Tibetans of being behind the protests and self-immolations.

<http://tibet.net/2012/02/09/tibetan-self-immolates-in-ngaba/>

Tibetan Self-Immolates in Ngaba

February 9, 2012 11:56 am

DHARAMSHALA: A Tibetan man, Rigzin Dorjee, 19, set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government in Ngaba in northeastern Tibet, and his condition and whereabouts are still unknown, reports coming out of Tibet say.

The self-immolation incident took place at the No.2 primary school in Ngaba at 6:30 PM (Tibet Time) on 8 February. While setting himself on fire, Rigzin Dorjee, believed to be a monk, raised slogans against the Chinese government. He is from Meruma, Ngaba. His father's name is Tsonkho and his mother's name is Dhunkar.

He was taken away immediately by soldiers and police, and his present condition and whereabouts are not known.

Two monks were also arrested from the vicinity, but their identities are also unknown.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30863&t=1>

Latest self-immolating Tibetan identified as Rigzin Dorje, Streets in Ngaba filled with security forces

Phayul, February 09, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, February 9: The man who set himself on fire yesterday in the besieged Ngaba region of eastern Tibet has been identified as 19-year old Rigzin Dorje.

The exile base of Kirti monastery in Dharamshala in a release today said Rigzin Dorje alias Rigpe is from the Garpa Tsongko household in division no.2 of Me'uruma township, Ngaba and the youngest of six siblings.

Rigpe set himself on fire at around 6.30 pm local time on February 8.

Eyewitnesses have told sources in exile that Rigpe raised slogans against the Chinese government before setting himself ablaze.

He was taken away from the site of protest by Chinese security personnel first to the county hospital and later to Barkham.

“As of the night of February 8, he was believed to be on the verge of death, but no clear information on whether he is still alive is available,” Kirti monastery said in its release.

A former monk at the Kirti monastery, Rigpe has been described as a “kind and humble” person who used to enjoy looking after pigeons.

In continued protests in the Ngaba region, which alone has witnessed 13 instances of self-immolations, monks from the Se monastery took out a candle light march on February 5.

The monks were marching from their monastery to Ngaba town when they were confronted by Chinese security personnel and stopped from proceeding any further.

No information is available on whether any arrests have been made following the march.

The situation in Ngaba continues to remain tense with a strict security clamp-down on the entire region. According to the release, the situation worsened over the last four days in the build up to the call for a global vigil for Tibet on February 8 by the exile Tibetan leadership.

“Beginning early morning on February 8, Tibetans, not only in Ngaba town but on all the roads leading into the town were stopped, searched, and questioned one by one,” the release said.

“Tibetans are being severely harassed and intimidated by security forces.”

In Tibet, 21 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire demanding the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama and protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Many parts of Tibet remain cut off from outside world with a prevailing situation of undeclared martial law following mass protests in recent weeks in which at least a dozen Tibetans are feared dead in police firings.

Sonam Rabyang

Age: 35

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 9 February 2012

Place: Triwang town, Yulshul, Kham, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Unknown



<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30866&t=1>

Tibet continues to burn: Another self-immolation reported

Phayul, Friday, February 10, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: There are reports of yet another self-immolation that took place yesterday in the Keygudo (Ch: Yushu) region of eastern Tibet.

Although initial reports are scare, the Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile has identified the Tibetan as Sonam Rabyang, a monk in his late thirties from the La Monastery in Tridu, Keygudo.

“A monk in his 30s set fire to himself on the main road of La Township, Tridu County, Keygudo Autonomous Prefecture (Ch: Chenduo County, Yushu Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai) yesterday, 8 February, between 1 and 2pm local time,” a release by the London based campaign group Free Tibet said.

Eyewitnesses report that the monk was alive but in a serious condition when he was taken away by Chinese security personnel.

The fiery wave of self-immolations is now spreading to other areas of Tibet with yesterday's self-immolation being the first reported from the Keygudo region. The rate at which Tibetans are setting themselves ablaze has also seen an alarming increase.

On February 8, just a day earlier, Rigzin Dorze, 19, set himself on fire in Me'uruma township of Ngaba. Eyewitnesses said his condition was very serious and it is not yet known whether he is dead or alive.

Just this year, nine Tibetans have set themselves ablaze demanding the return of

exiled Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Since Tapey's self immolation in 2009, now 21 Tibetans have torched their bodies protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

On February 8, coinciding with the call for a global solidarity vigil for Tibetans inside Tibet made by the exile Tibetan leadership, around 400 monks from the Dzil Kar monastery in Tridu began a protest march to Dza Toe town at 10 am local time.

The monks carrying banners demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and respect for Tibetan lives were confronted by a large number of armed Chinese security personnel at a bridge leading to the town and were apprehended from moving further.

However, there were no reports of arrest following the protest.

In another protest on February 4 Saturday, four Tibetans were arrested by Chinese security personnel for carrying out a peaceful protest in front of a Chinese police station at Dza Toe town again in Tridu region of Keygudo.

The four Tibetans; Tsering Palden, Tsering Sangpo, Tsering Tashi and Dorjee raised slogans calling for Tibet's independence and the return of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The current whereabouts of the Tibetans remain unknown.

Tenzin Choedon

Age: 18

Occupation: Nun

Date of self-immolation: 11 February 2012

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo,

Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan Nun Dies From Self-Immolation in China

VOA, 11 February 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan Buddhist nun set herself on fire late Saturday in China's troubled southwestern Sichuan province, and later died of her injuries.

An activist group, Free Tibet, issued a statement Sunday identifying the nun as Tenzin Choedon, who shouted slogans of protest against the Chinese government before setting herself on fire.

Tibetan activists said Chinese security forces moved in quickly after the incident, took the injured nun away, and sealed off her nunnery in Aba county, east of Tibet.

Choedon's death brings to at least 19 the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire in the past year. Activists say at least 12 Tibetans are believed to have died from their injuries.

Recent months have seen an upsurge in anti-Chinese protests in Tibetan areas of China, the worst since 2008.

The Chinese government accuses the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, and overseas organizations such as the London-based Free Tibet movement of instigating the unrest.

Teenage Tibetan nun sets herself on fire in China

The Telegraph, 12 February 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan nun has set herself on fire in western China in the latest such protest against Beijing's handling of the vast ethnic Tibetan regions it rules, an overseas activist group said Sunday.

Free Tibet said in a statement that the nun had died after setting set herself ablaze on Saturday. The young woman, identified as Tenzin Choedon, was a nun at the Mamae Nunnery in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, the group said.

It said Ms Choedon shouted slogans of protest against the Chinese government before setting herself on fire at a junction close to the nunnery.

"Soldiers and police came immediately and took her away," Free Tibet said. "Soldiers then surrounded the nunnery and sealed it off."

As many as 18 monks, nuns and ordinary Tibetans have set themselves on fire over the past year, and Free Tibet says at least 12 died from their injuries.

Activist groups say the self-immolations are a protest against China's policies and a call for the return of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' spiritual leader who fled from the Himalayan region to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

Government and police officials reached by telephone in Aba said they knew nothing about any self-immolation and hung up. There was no number publicly listed for the nunnery.

A statement by two Tibetan monks exiled in India, Losang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering, distributed by the London-based International Campaign for Tibet said Choedon was the eldest of four children and a good student.

The Mamae nunnery has a history of showing fierce loyalty to the Dalai Lama. In October, a 20-year-old nun from the same monastery died after setting herself on fire and a group of nuns at Mamae staged a protest march in 2008, carrying a portrait of the Dalai Lama, which led to mass detentions and prison terms for some of the nuns, the ICT statement said.

The Chinese government has condemned the self-immolations and says an upsurge in violence in Tibetan areas, including some deadly clashes between Tibetan protesters and security forces, are being instigated by forces outside the

country wanting to separate Tibet from China.

China has vilified the Dalai Lama for more than a decade, accusing him of a campaign to split the Himalayan region from the rest of China. The Dalai Lama says he is only seeking increased autonomy for Tibet.

The last few months have been the region's most violent period since 2008, when deadly rioting in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, spread to Tibetan areas in adjoining provinces. China responded by flooding the area with troops and closing Tibetan regions entirely to foreigners for about a year.

Western reporters trying to visit that part of Sichuan in the last several weeks have been turned away by security forces.

China says Tibet has been under its rule for centuries, but many Tibetans say the region was functionally independent for most of that time. Anger over cultural and religious restrictions is deepened by a sense that Tibetans have been marginalised economically by an influx of migrants from elsewhere in China.

Tibet Nun, 18, Sets Self Ablaze

By the Associated Press, Feb 12, 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan nun has set herself on fire in western China in the latest such protest against Beijing's handling of the vast ethnic Tibetan regions it rules, an overseas activist group said today. Free Tibet said in a statement that the nun had died after setting herself ablaze yesterday. The young woman, identified as Tenzin Choedon, was a nun at the Mamae Nunnery in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture.

It said Choedon shouted slogans of protest against the Chinese government before setting herself on fire at a junction close to the nunnery. "Soldiers and police came immediately and took her away," Free Tibet said. "Soldiers then surrounded the nunnery and sealed it off." As many as 18 monks, nuns, and ordinary Tibetans have set themselves on fire over the past year, and Free Tibet says at least 12 died from their injuries. The Mamae nunnery has a history of showing fierce loyalty to the Dalai Lama. In October, a 20-year-old nun from the same monastery died after setting herself on fire and a group of nuns at Mamae staged a protest march in 2008.

Another Self-Immolation as Access to Tibetan Areas Blocked

China Digital Times, February 2012

Another Self-Immolation as Access to Tibetan Areas Blocked

On Saturday, an 18-year-old nun from Aba county, Sichuan died after setting herself on fire. Her death is the latest in a string of self-immolations among Tibetans in which more than a dozen have died. Voice of America reports:

Tibetan activists identified the nun as Tenzin Choedon, who was quickly taken away by Chinese security forces. Her nunnery, located in Aba county, east of Tibet, was immediately sealed off.

The nun's death brings the number of Tibetans who have died from self-immolation in the past year to more than one dozen.

The Guardian's Jonathan Watts reports on the government's efforts to block access to the region in the wake of the self-immolations and other protests:

At the nearby Kirti monastery, Chinese officers in fire trucks keep a close eye on pilgrims prostrating themselves, in case their devotion turns to immolation.

Outsiders are not supposed to see this. The Chinese authorities have gone to great lengths to block access to Aba, in north-western Sichuan, which is home to more than half the 23 monks, nuns and lay Buddhists who have set fire to themselves in acts of defiance aimed at the Chinese Communist party in the past two years.

The authorities have blocked internet and mobile phone signals. Checkpoints have been set up on surrounding roads to keep outside observers, particularly foreign journalists, away.

But after a 10-hour drive through mountain valleys and snow-covered plains, the Guardian was able to get into Aba and witness how the authorities are trying to quell dissent with security, propaganda and "re-education" campaigns. These tactics have had little success. Despite flooding Aba with security personnel, the protests continue.

China Media Project reported that a Sina Weibo post linking to this Guardian story was quickly deleted.

The death of Tenzin Choedon follows reports of four more self-immolations last week. A letter written in 1965 by Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nath Hanh to Martin Luther King, Jr. provides a Buddhist perspective on self-immolation as an act of protest. Read more about the phenomenon of self-immolation by Tibetans via CDT.

Tibetan Teenage Girl Dies in Self Immolation Protest, Continuing Trend *NTDTV*, 13 February 2012

A teenage girl has become the latest in a series of Tibetans to set themselves on fire to protest Chinese Communist policies in Tibet. 18-year-old Tenzin Choe-don was a nun at a Buddhist religious institution in the heavily Tibetan Aba region of Sichuan Province. Tenzin is believed to have died from the severe burns she sustained during her protest, according to a report by the UK-based NGO Free Tibet. The organization estimates that 18 nuns, monks, and laypeople have engaged in similar self-immolation protests over the past year, with 12 resulting deaths. Some of the self-immolators have carried pictures or made statements supporting of Tibet's exiled religious leader, the Dalai Lama, who has expressed distress over the current protest movement.

Teenage Tibetan nun sets herself on fire in China

The Durango Herald and *Associated Pres*, 12 February 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan nun has set herself on fire in western China in the latest such protest against Beijing's handling of the vast ethnic Tibetan regions it rules, an overseas activist group said.

Free Tibet said in a statement Sunday that the nun had died after setting set herself ablaze Saturday. The young woman, identified as Tenzin Choedon, was a nun at the Mamae Nunnery in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, the group said.

It said Choedon shouted slogans of protest against the Chinese government before setting herself on fire at a junction close to the nunnery.

"Soldiers and police came immediately and took her away," Free Tibet said. "Soldiers then surrounded the nunnery and sealed it off."

As many as 18 monks, nuns and ordinary Tibetans have set themselves on fire over the past year, and Free Tibet says at least 12 died from their injuries.

The official Xinhua News Agency confirmed Choedon's death in a report from the Sichuan capital of Chengdu, saying she died on the way to a hospital. It did not immediately give any other details.

Activist groups say the self-immolations are a protest against China's policies and a call for the return of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' spiritual leader who fled

from the Himalayan region to India amid an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

Government and police officials reached by telephone in Aba said they knew nothing about any self-immolation and hung up. There was no number publicly listed for the nunnery.

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The last few months have been the region's most violent period since 2008, when deadly rioting in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, spread to Tibetan areas in adjoining provinces. China responded by flooding the area with troops and closing Tibetan regions entirely to foreigners for about a year.

Western reporters trying to visit that part of Sichuan in the last several weeks have been turned away by security forces.

China says Tibet has been under its rule for centuries, but many Tibetans say the region was functionally independent for most of that time. Anger over cultural and religious restrictions is deepened by a sense that Tibetans have been marginalized economically by an influx of migrants from elsewhere in China.

Tibetan nun dies after self-immolation in China

Radio Netherlands, 12 February 2012

An 18-year-old nun set herself on fire in China's restive southwest and later died, rights groups said Sunday, the latest in a spate of such incidents among ethnic Tibetans protesting Beijing's rule.

The woman -- a member of a Buddhist nunnery in Aba prefecture in China's Sichuan province, which borders Tibet -- set herself alight on Saturday evening, Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet said.

This brings to at least 19 the number of people who have set themselves on fire in the past year in Tibetan-inhabited areas in protest over Chinese rule.

Rights groups say another three Tibetans self-immolated earlier this month in a remote village of Sichuan. However, local authorities quoted in the official Global Times newspaper have denied that account.

The nun from the Mamae nunnery shouted out slogans of protest against the Chinese government before setting herself alight, the rights groups said in statements.

She is believed to have died, London-based Free Tibet said. Her name was given by the groups as Tenzin Choedron, or Choedon.

Soldiers and police quickly took her away, still alive, and later sealed off the nunnery, the groups said.

Free Tibet also said she was the second nun from Mamae to set herself on fire, following another who died in October last year.

A police officer in Aba declined to comment. "I am not clear (about this)," the official, who declined to be named, told AFP. Calls to the local Aba government went unanswered.

China has stepped up security in Tibet and areas inhabited by ethnic Tibetans following a series of protests against Chinese rule, some of which have turned violent.

Security has also been tightened before March, the anniversary of anti-Chinese protests in 2008 which started in the Tibetan capital Lhasa before spreading to other areas.

At least two people were killed last month in clashes between police and locals in Sichuan, which has large populations of ethnic Tibetans, many of whom complain of oppression.

Security forces on Thursday shot dead two Tibetan brothers who were on the run after protesting against Chinese rule, according to US-based broadcaster Radio Free Asia.

Beijing has accused overseas organisations of seeking independence for Tibet and blamed the Dalai Lama -- Tibet's exiled spiritual leader -- for the unrest.

Tibetans have long chafed under China's rule over the vast Tibetan plateau, accusing Beijing of curbing religious freedoms and eroding their culture and language, and these tensions have intensified over the past year.

But Beijing insists that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and have benefited from improved living standards brought by China's economic expansion.

Following the violent incidents Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on Friday pledged religious freedom and cultural protection in Tibet.

"We will place more importance on improving the lives of our Tibetan compatriots... and in preserving the freedom of religious belief of Tibetans," he said.

Free Tibet called on the international community to do more.

"A handful of carefully crafted statements is no longer enough -- now is the time for concerted international action," the group said in the statement.

The United States said Friday it would raise concerns about human rights among other issues during a closely watched visit in the coming week by Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, likely the country's next leader.

"It is an area of grave concern for us to witness the increase of tensions in Tibet and Xinjiang," said Danny Russel, US President Barack Obama's top adviser on Asia.

The northwest region of Xinjiang is home to another ethnic group, Muslim Uighurs, who have also staged violent protests against Chinese rule.

Lobsang Gyatso

Age: 19

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 13 February 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Unknown



Another Tibetan monk sets himself on fire

BBC News, 14 February 2012

According to Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), Lobsang Gyatso, 19, set himself on fire on Monday in Aba county, Sichuan province.

Police allegedly beat him while they tried to extinguish the flames.

It was not immediately clear if the monk survived.

Aba county, an ethnic Tibetan area that is home to the Tibetan Buddhist Kirti monastery, has been the scene of many of the self-immolations in recent months.

ICT, citing monks in exile and other Tibetan sources, said that two other Tibetans had tried to help Mr Gyatso, but were severely beaten by police.

On Monday China confirmed that a Tibetan nun died on Saturday, also in Aba county, after setting herself on fire.

In the last year, at least 21 young Tibetans have set themselves on fire in apparent protest against Beijing's rule.

Correspondents say Tibetan-populated parts of China are experiencing their worst unrest in four years, with at least three deadly demonstrations reported in January.

International media are denied access to the area, making it difficult to verify accounts.

Another Tibetan Self-Immolation from Restive Ngaba

VOA Tibetan

A Tibetan monk self-immolated himself Monday in Ngaba County in eastern Tibet (Chinese: Aba County, Aba Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province).

Tibetan exile sources with contacts in the area say 19-year-old Lobsang Gyatso of Kirti monastery shouted slogans against China when he set himself ablaze.

Reports say police and special security forces immediately extinguished the fire and took Gyatso away. His present condition and whereabouts are unknown.

Yesterday, an 18-year-old Tibetan nun died after setting herself on fire in an anti-China protest.

Tibetan exile groups claim that 23 people have burned themselves since March last year in desperate protests against China's growing repression of Tibetans.

Today's self-immolation is the 24th Tibetan self-immolation since Kirti monk Tapey set fire to himself on February 27, 2009.

China has worsened crackdown in the Tibetan area of Ngaba, Sichuan, following the self-immolation and death of a young Kirti monk called Phuntsog on March 16, 2011. Fourteen more Tibetans are known to have self-immolated from the Ngaba region since then. In the aftermath of Phuntsok's protest and subsequent show of solidarity by the monks at Kirti monastery, the authorities launched a stringent patriotic education campaign at Kirti monastery, according to Kirti monks in exile.

In April 2011, Chinese authorities seized more than 300 protesting monks from the Kirti monastery. Beijing at the time denied involvement in the disappearances, before later admitting the monks were undergoing enforced "legal education" at undisclosed locations.

Kirti monastery is one of the most important religious institution in the area with more than 2,500 monks studying at the monastery.

The recent immolations that have taken place mark a dramatic escalation in the tactics opposing Beijing's rule, and the Chinese government has been very critical of the actions.

The Chinese government has condemned the self-immolations, calling them a form of terrorism. Beijing has also accused Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the

Dalai Lama, of supporting such acts.

The Dalai Lama has denied encouraging self-immolations. In an interview with the BBC television last year, the 76-year-old Buddhist leader said those who set themselves on fire were brave, but that their sacrifice was not wise because it resulted in a tougher crackdown by the Chinese authorities.

The Dalai Lama fled into India in 1959 and has lived in exile for more than 50 years after fleeing a failed revolt against Chinese rule in Tibet.

Tibetans have long sought greater freedom from Beijing's rule, with some seeking complete independence and others wanting greater autonomy within China.

Tibet: 19-year old monk self-immolates. Chinese police arrest activist

Asia News, 14 February 2012

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - A young monk of just 19 set himself on fire yesterday afternoon in the Chinese province of Sichuan, in an escalation of protest against the repression imposed by Beijing. This is the second extreme gesture in two days by Tibetan youth (see AsiaNews 13/02/2012 In Ngaba, 18-year-old man dies in self-immolation and brings the number of victims to 24 - even though there is no official confirmation of his death - since February 2009. Meanwhile, Chinese authorities have arrested a prominent lawyer who defends the rights of the Tibetan people and culture. Local sources, who denounce the disappearance of Dawa Dorje - government investigator in Nagchu, in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) - last week in the hands of Beijing officials for having expressed concern about "the closure of the monasteries."

Yesterday afternoon, Lobsang Gyatso, of Kirti Monastery in the town of Ngaba, Sichuan province, set himself on fire in the town center. Local sources quoted by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and Free Tibet, report that the police intervened, beating him so wildly that they extinguished the flames and took him away. Meanwhile, the Chinese security forces have set up checkpoints throughout the city and launched raids on homes and inhabitants.

Anonymous sources also confirm the detention of the lawyer Dawa Dorje, who was arrested at Gonggar airport in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Right now, "no further information" is known about the episode and sources say the family "is trying desperately to find the place where he is detained." A friend of Dorje who

lives in India, identified by the name of Rabgye, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the lawyer had recently visited Sichuan, theatre of recent anti-Chinese violent. “He said - he his friend reports - the major source of concern is the continued closure of monasteries in Driru”.

Last weekend more than 200 Tibetans protested in the city of Kyegudo, Yulshul prefecture, while in the city of Kardze activists erected billboards demanding independence for Tibet. In the streets of McLeodganj, a suburb of Dharamsala, Tibetans brandished photos of 22 people in the community who have set themselves on fire in recent years, while a video that portrays images of burning and self-immolation occurred from 2008 to today was shown.

The Dalai Lama and many Buddhist figures have repeatedly called on their followers not to commit these acts and to think in the long term, but they also admitted that the deprivation of freedom of Tibetans which has increased from year to year. The police, on the orders of the communist central government, instead of seeking dialogue and slow deaths, continues to maintain very tight control in the regions inhabited by Tibetans. The regional secretary of the Tibetan Communist Party of China has asked its officials to declare “war on the Dalai Lama’s secessionist “, threatening the officials who did not seek to expel them.

Teen Tibetan monk self-immolates

News 24, February 14 2012

Beijing - A teenage Tibetan monk has set fire to himself in a restive town in south-western China, while around 200 Tibetans protested in another town, reports said on Tuesday.

Lobsang Gyatso, aged 19, set fire to himself on Monday in Aba town, or Ngaba in Tibetan, London-based Free Tibet said.

Police put out the flames and took away Lobsang, who was a monk at nearby Kirti monastery. It was not known if he survived the self-immolation, the group said.

His protest was the 24th self-immolation reported in Tibetan areas of China in the past two years, most of them in or near Aba.

It came on the same day that the Chinese government confirmed the death of a 19-year-old nun who self-immolated in Aba on Saturday.

Meanwhile, around 200 Tibetans protested in the main square of Yushu town, or Jyekundo, in Qinghai province on Saturday, followed by a smaller protest on Sunday, Free Tibet said.

6 dead

In another development, a state-run newspaper in Sichuan's Ganzi prefecture has confirmed earlier reports by Tibetan exiles that police shot dead two fugitive Tibetans who had fled after violence in Luhuo town, or Drango, last month.

At least six other Tibetans died in clashes with security forces in Luhuo and the nearby Seda area of Sichuan's Ganzi prefecture last month, according to reports by Tibetan exile groups, international rights groups and US-based Radion Free Asia.

The reports suggested growing tension in several Tibetan areas, with Free Tibet saying police were searching people at checkpoints around Aba on Monday.

It quoted sources in Yushu as saying paramilitary police there were also restricting the movement of local residents, with some people confined to their homes and others banned from leaving the town.

About 100 Free Tibet activists protested outside the White House in Washington on Monday before the arrival of Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping.

Several activists unfurled a giant banner on the Arlington Memorial Bridge in the city to protest the visit by Xi, who is scheduled to meet US President Barack Obama on Tuesday.

Damchoe Sangpo

Age: 40

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 17 February 2012

Place: Themchen Dzong, Tsojang, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



LATEST SELF-IMMOLATION

Reuters, BEIJING, February 17, 2012

The U.S.-based broadcaster Radio Free Asia reported that another Tibetan monk, Damchoe Sangpo, aged about 40, had burned himself to death on Friday in China's western Qinghai province.

The monk set himself on fire after protesting Chinese security strictures at Bongtak monastery in the Haixi district, RFA said in a report that could not be immediately verified.

Sangpo's death was the 22nd confirmed self-immolation by Tibetans protesting Chinese rule in Tibetan regions since February 2009, RFA said.

Tibetan advocacy groups say as many as seven Tibetans were shot dead and dozens wounded during protests in Sichuan in January. Chinese state media reported that police fired in self-defense on "mobs" that stormed police stations.

Human Rights Watch said the recent batch of Tibetan detainees had travelled in and out of China on valid Chinese passports.

"There is no known regulation banning Tibetans from attending the teachings, and the returnees undergoing re-education have not been accused of any crime, such as carrying illicit documents or crossing the Chinese border without permission," it said.

"There are no reports so far that any of the estimated 700 ethnic Chinese from China who attended the Dalai Lama's teachings in Bihar have been detained on their return to China, suggesting that the detainees are being selected because of their ethnicity," the group added.

Rights groups say Tibetan parts of China have been put under even tighter security than normal ahead of the Tibetan new year, which falls on February 22.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule.

(Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Additional reporting by Michael Martina, Sanjeev Miglani and Paul Eckert in Washington; editing by Todd Eastham)

Tibetan monk self-immolates to protest China: group

By Staff Reporter, *AFP Asian Edition*, Feb 17, 2012

A Tibetan monk burned himself to death on Friday in a protest against a crack-down on his monastery, in the latest of a wave of self-immolations against Beijing's rule, an exile group said.

Tamchoe Sangpo set himself alight after he unsuccessfully tried to persuade security forces to leave his monastery in Qinghai province, where Beijing was carrying out a "re-education" campaign after recent protests, London-based Free Tibet said.

The group said that Sangpo was in his late 30s and served on the Bongthak monastery's Democratic Management Committee, a government-backed body through which China tries to enforce its rules in Tibetan areas.

US-backed broadcaster Radion Free Asia, quoting exiled Tibetans, said that China had sent forces to the monastery in Haixi prefecture after ordering the monks not to hold a traditional prayer festival.

"Damchoe objected to this and told the Chinese officials that if they didn't withdraw their troops from the monastery, the monks should not be held responsible for any incident that might follow," Radio Free Asia quoted an India-based monk named Shingsa as saying.

At least 21 Tibetans, many of them Buddhist monks, have set fire to themselves in recent months to protest what they say is religious and cultural repression.

China has disputed accounts of the incidents and accuses overseas groups and Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama of fomenting unrest.

Another self-immolation in Tibet

By Harold Mandel, *Examiner*, February 19 2012

Today is just another sad day for Buddhists as the flames of discontent continue to rage in Tibet. The intense pain of the Tibetans who have been enduring difficult conditions under Chinese rule appears to have become infectious. Buddhists in Syracuse have been joining in prayers upon receiving news of another self-immolation of a Tibetan protesting oppressive Chinese rule. The Tibet Sun has reported “Another Tibetan monk self-immolates to protest China.”

It has been reported that a Tibetan monk burned himself to death on Friday in a protest against a crackdown on his monastery. This was the latest in a series of self-immolations against Beijing’s rule. London-based Free Tibet said Damchoe Sangpo set himself on fire after he failed to persuade security forces to allow him to leave his monastery in Qinghai Province, where Beijing has been carrying out a “re-education” campaign after recent protests.

Sangpo, who was in his late 30s, served on the Bongthak monastery’s Democratic Management Committee, which is a government-backed body through which China tries to enforce its rule in Tibetan areas. Radio Free Asia, quoting exiled Tibetans, has said that China had sent forces to the monastery in Haixi prefecture after ordering the monks not to hold a traditional prayer festival.

Radio Free Asia quoted an India-based monk named Shingsa as saying “Damchoe objected to this and told the Chinese officials that if they didn’t withdraw their troops from the monastery, the monks should not be held responsible for any incident that might follow.” The self-immolation of Damchoe followed and sadness pervades Buddhist communities worldwide today as Tibet remains in turmoil.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/intrusion-02172012113723.html>

Monk Burns to Protest Monastery Intrusion

RFA, 2012-02-17

A Tibetan monk burned himself to death on Friday after protesting Chinese security intrusions at his monastery in China’s western Qinghai province, adding to tensions in protest-hit Tibetan-populated areas, sources said.

Damchoe Sangpo, aged about 40 and a monk at the Bongtak monastery in Themchen county of the Tsonub (in Chinese, Haixi) prefecture, set himself ablaze at around 6:00 a.m. local time and died shortly afterward, an India-based senior Tibetan monk named Shingsa said, citing contacts in the region.

It was the 22nd confirmed self-immolation by Tibetans protesting Chinese policies and rule in Tibetan regions since a wave of the fiery protests began in February 2009.

Three other self-immolations were reported in early February in a remote region of Sichuan province, but have never been confirmed due to communication problems stemming from the stepped-up crackdown by Chinese security forces.

Damchoe Sangpo, the monk who died in Friday's protest, had objected to the cancelling by Chinese authorities of a traditional prayer festival at the monastery and to the presence of Chinese security forces, Shingsa told RFA in an interview. "After the Tibetan New Year, which in Qinghai's Amdo region coincides with the Chinese New Year, Chinese officials banned the [monastery's] Monlam religious gathering and sent armed security forces there," Shingsa said.

"Damchoe objected to this, and told the Chinese officials that if they didn't withdraw their troops from the monastery, the monks should not be held responsible for any incident that might follow," he said.

"When monks came out of the temple after morning services, they saw Damchoe burning," Shingsa said, adding, "He died on the spot."

Chinese security measures had already been tightened at Bongtak following an earlier protest by a monk protesting mining in the area, a Tibetan exile parliament source was quoted as saying

"Some years back, a Chinese company began digging in the area in search of silver deposits. A monk named Kalsang made a video protesting the excavation, for which he was detained and then sentenced to a year and a half in jail," the source said.

"After that, the Chinese increased their military presence in the area," he said.

Communications cut

Tibetan-populated regions in China have been shaken by a series of self-immolations and protests recently, leading to a bloody crackdown by security forces and the arrest of scores, if not hundreds, of Tibetans.

Chinese authorities have virtually cut off communication lines amid the crack-down, and information flow has been severely restricted, according to sources who have traveled out of these places.

Damchoe Sangpo was the youngest of 10 siblings, of whom all the others were girls, Shingsa said.

“His father’s name is Taklha. His mother passed away when he was very young”

Damchoe Sangpo, who was described by Shingsa as a “highly responsible person,” was ordained as a monk in 1991 and went to India in 1994.

“[Three years] later, he returned to Tibet and became the disciplinarian of the monastery. Before his death, he tutored the monks in religious texts.”

It is not clear whether the Chinese authorities or the monks are now in possession of Damchoe Sangpo’s body, Shingsa said.

“Because of the heavy troop presence at the monastery, no more phone calls can be made, and it appears that all of the lines have been cut,” he said.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tibetan-monk-self-immolates-in-protest-against-raid-by-Chinese-authorities-24011.html>

Tibetan monk self-immolates in protest against raid by Chinese authorities

Asia News, 02/18/2012

Dharamsala (AsiaNews / Agencies) - A Tibetan monk set himself on fire yesterday afternoon, to protest against intrusion of Chinese security forces in a monastery in the western province of Qinghai, the man died from severe burns and his gesture has helped to fuel anxiety and anger against Beijing’s occupation of the Tibetan region. This is the 22nd confirmed self-immolation, since protests against Chinese policies began in February 2009, according to other sources, the number has reached 25, but there is no official confirmation because of the censorship imposed by China. Meanwhile, the tragic protest by Tibetan Buddhists has gained the support of the highest religious figure in Vietnam, who says the repression in Tibet is “a challenge to all humanity.”

Local sources, interviewed by *Radio Free Asia* (RFA), say that 40-year old monk Damchoe Sangpo, of Bongtak monastery, County Themchen, Tsonub prefecture, set himself on fire at around 6 am yesterday and died shortly after. He

wanted to protest against the decision of Chinese authorities, who forced the cancellation of a traditional prayer meeting in the monastery, and the constant presence of security forces. “When the monks left the temple - a monk named Shingsa tells a RFA - at the end of morning prayers, they saw Damchoe burn. He died on the spot.”

To try to contain the fires and the daily news of protests, China has imposed strict censorship and the severing of all outside communications. Security forces have implemented a strict control on monasteries and arrested scores of people, if not hundreds. However, the self-immolation still receives the support of influential personalities of international Buddhism.

In a secret letter sent to the Dalai Lama, Thich Quang Do - Vietnamese Buddhists’ spiritual leader and head of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, from Hanoi haunted - says that the fires may be the only way in the battle for religious freedom against Chinese rule. “Self-immolation is a tragic and extreme gesture - writes the patriarch - and should be avoided at all costs.” But there are “times when extreme acts”, says the 83 year old monk, such as becoming “a human torch” is the only way to “dispel the darkness and ignorance.” In the letter he mentions the most famous case of self-immolation of a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, in 1963, during the war: “This gesture from the film released - concludes Thich Quang Do - shocked the conscience of the world.”

In all these months, the Dalai Lama has often urged the young Tibetans to preserve their lives and not take part in these extreme measures.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/another-tibetan-monk-selfimmolates-against-chinas-crackdown/913717/>

Another Tibetan monk self-immolates against China’s crackdown

Indian Express, Feb 18 2012

Another Tibetan monk burned himself to death today in a protest against a crackdown on his monastery, in the latest of a wave of self-immolations against Beijing’s rule, an exile group said.

Tamchoe Sangpo set himself alight after he unsuccessfully tried to persuade security forces to leave his monastery in Qinghai province, where Beijing was

carrying out a “re-education” campaign after recent protests, London-based Free Tibet said.

The group said that Sangpo was in his late 30s and served on the Bongthak monastery’s Democratic Management Committee, a government-backed body through which China tries to enforce its rules in Tibetan areas.

US-backed broadcaster Radio Free Asia, quoting exiled Tibetans, said that China had sent forces to the monastery in Haixi prefecture after ordering the monks not to hold a traditional prayer festival.

“Damchoe objected to this and told the Chinese officials that if they didn’t withdraw their troops from the monastery, the monks should not be held responsible for any

incident that might follow,” Radio Free Asia quoted an India-based monk named Shingsa as saying.

At least 21 Tibetans, many of them Buddhist monks, have set fire to themselves in recent months to protest what they say is religious and cultural repression.

China has disputed accounts of the incidents and accuses overseas groups and Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama of fomenting unrest.

Nangdrol

Age: 18

Occupation: Layman

Date of self-immolation: 19 February 2012

Place: Dzamthang, Ngaba, Amdo,

Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Nangdrol:

Raise your head high with courage and loyalty. I, Nangdrol, call with gratitude upon my parents, siblings and relatives. The time has come for me to leave, For the sake of the Tibetan people, by lighting my life on fire. My requests to the Tibetans are -- Be united, Be Tibetan, Dress Tibetan and Speak Tibetan. Never forget that you are a Tibetan, Be compassionate; Respect your parents; Most of all be united; Treat animals with compassion, Do not slaughter them.

Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama! Long live all the lamas and tulkus of the Land of Snow.

May Tibetan people be free from China's oppressive rule, There is immense suffering under China's rule, and this suffering is unbearable. There is no way to further endure this Chinese occupation, its terrible rule, this torture without trace. In the end the merciless Chinese will kill the Tibetans. Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama.'

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Teenage Tibetan immolates in Dzamthang

Tibet.net, Press Release, 20 February 2012

DHARAMSALA — The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply aggrieved and concerned over the news of self-immolation of Nangdrol, who according to information was only 18 years old.

While in flames, Nangdrol was last heard praying, “May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live thousands of years and Freedom for Tibet”. He was from Choeje vil-

lage, Barma township in Dzamthang. He is the fourth of eight siblings.

It is reported that the public managed to take the body to Dzamthang Gonchen, monastery of the locality and performed the traditional Buddhist death rituals despite strong restriction by the armed forces. Due to pressure from the armed forces, Nangdrol's body was cremated at 01am local time. Even in the odd winter-night, over 1,000 Tibetans were present at the cremation.

The Central Tibetan Administration once again urge the Chinese leadership to positively respond to prevent these spontaneous acts of individual Tibetans by putting in place measures that address the genuine grievances of the Tibetans.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/20/tibetan-monk-dies-self-immolation>

Tibetan monk, 18, dies after setting fire to himself in Chinese monastery

Associated Press and The Guardian, Monday 20 February 2012

A campaign group says a Tibetan monk has died after setting himself on fire at a monastery in western China's Sichuan province.

The London-based International Campaign for Tibet said on Monday that 18-year-old Nangdrol self-immolated on Sunday after shouting slogans in favour of Tibetan independence and exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama.

His death brings to at least 21 the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire over the past year to protest Chinese government policies over Tibetan society and the Buddhist religion. Chinese security has cut off access to Tibetan areas, making it virtually impossible to independently confirm such acts.

As many as 21 monks, nuns and ordinary Tibetans have set themselves on fire over the past year, and Free Tibet says at least 13 died from their injuries.

Such acts show no signs of abating, even as China ratchets up security and seals off Tibetan areas to outsiders, making it impossible to know what is actually happening inside.

China blames supporters of China's exiled Buddhist leader the Dalai Lama for encouraging the self-immolations and anti-government protests that have led to the deaths of an unknown number of Tibetans at the hands of police. Authorities have reportedly detained and forced into re-education classes hundreds of

Tibetans who went to India to receive religious instruction from the Dalai Lama, who China accuses of campaigning to split Tibet from the rest of China. The Dalai Lama says he is seeking only increased autonomy for Tibet.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9092560/Tibetan-monk-self-immolates-in-Sichuan-province.html>

Tibetan monk self-immolates in Sichuan province

The Telegraph, 20 Feb 2012

Eighteen-year-old Nangdrol self-immolated on Sunday in Sichuan province after shouting slogans in favor of Tibetan independence and exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, the London-based International Campaign for Tibet said.

His death brings to at least 21 the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire over the past year - including one on Friday. The acts are among increasingly radical protests against Chinese government controls over Tibetan society and the Buddhism.

Following Nangdrol's death, police demanded that his body be handed over, but monks at his Samdrup Norbu Ling monastery in Aba prefecture in Sichuan refused, the ICT said, citing Tibetan monks based in India. More than 1,000 people gathered at the monastery overnight to stand guard over the body, it said.

Chinese security has cut off access to Tibetan areas, making it virtually impossible to independently confirm such acts. Calls to local government and Communist Party offices rang unanswered on Monday.

China blames Dalai Lama supporters for encouraging the self-immolations and other anti-government protests that have led to the deaths of an unknown number of Tibetans at the hands of police.

However, the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile has issued statements discouraging self-immolation, including a statement Saturday expressing concern and shock and saying that any protests should be peaceful, dignified and "in accordance with the laws of your country."

Activists say Tibetans are being pushed into ever-more radical acts because of intense pressure from China's police and military, who maintain a highly visible presence in towns and occupy monasteries while forcing monks to endure hours

of political indoctrination at the expense of their religious studies.

On Sunday, an overseas Tibetan news service reported Chinese police had taken Tibetan writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab from his home in the main town of Sichuan's Serthar county on Wednesday night and he has not been released.

Citing a Tibetan politician living in exile, the Norway-based Voice of Tibet said that when Drubpa Kyab's wife asked for a warrant, police told her they wanted to talk with her husband.

Police and government officials in Serthar and in Ganzi, the Sichuan province prefecture that administers Serthar, either could not be reached by telephone Sunday or said they had not heard about the case.

In Serthar, also known as Seda, Tibetan protesters clashed with security forces last month, leaving at least two Tibetans dead. The government said the protesters had attacked a police station. It was not known whether Drubpa Kyab was involved in the protests.

A Tibetan writer living in Beijing, Woesser, said on her much-read blog that she was familiar with the 33-year-old Drubpa Kyab's writings. She said that he is a Serthar native and has been a teacher and writer there for 10 years.

He would be at least the second cultural figure to be detained in the latest wave of arrests. Dawa Dorje, described as a civil servant and advocate for promoting traditional Tibetan music and culture, was reportedly arrested two weeks ago.

Teen monk burns to death in protest

The New Zealand Herald, Feb. 21, 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk has died after a self-immolation protest in south-western China's Sichuan province, exiles and rights groups say.

Hundreds of other monks and lay Tibetans prevented police from seizing the body of the monk after he set fire to himself on Sunday in Rangtang county, known as Dzamthang in Tibetan, the International Campaign for Tibet said.

The monk, identified by the single name, Nangdrol, had shouted his support for the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and "Freedom for Tibet."

His self-immolation was the latest of about two dozen such protests in Tibetan areas of China in recent months.

It followed the self-immolation on Friday of 38-year-old monk Damchoe Sangpo, an official at his monastery in nearby Tianjun county in Qinghai province.

Damchoe was angered by a growing security presence at his monastery and by restrictions on a traditional religious festival, US-based Radio Free Asia quoted exiled monks as saying.

The Chinese government has tightened security in most Tibetan areas this year amid a series of protests and self-immolations.

Police arrested popular Tibetan writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab last week in Sichuan's Seda, the broadcaster said.

Speaking after meeting EU leaders last week, Premier Wen Jiabao said the recent Tibetan protests had "no popular support" and stemmed from "attempts to incite a small number of monks to take extreme acts."

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=30923&t=1>

Another self-immolation days ahead of Losar

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, February 19, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, February 19: Amidst the ongoing self-immolations, another teenaged Tibetan in Tibet set himself on fire and is reportedly dead.

The 18 year old teenaged Tibetan, Nangdrol set himself on fire today in the afternoon in Amdo Ngaba, the nerve centre of almost all the Tibetan self-immolations in the recent months.

"Nangdrol set himself on fire and died on the spot. Right now his body is with the Ngaba Dzamthang monastery," Tsayang Gyaltsso, an exiled Tibetan told Phayul citing his contacts in Tibet. The monastery in the region took the charred body of Nangdrol and performed religious services.

"Nangdrol has also left his testament," Tsayang Gyaltsso said.

The fiery wave of self-immolations that has gripped Tibet for the last 11 months has, off late, witnessed an alarming increase in the rate at which Tibetans are willing to torch their bodies.

Tibetans in exile fear that there will be more loss of Tibetan lives and bloodshed in the coming days coinciding with the Tibetan New Year which falls on 22nd

February and on the Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising in March.

So far more than two dozen Tibetans in Tibet have torched their bodies and a dozen others died under the Chinese open fire calling for freedom in Tibet and return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

<http://tibet.net/2012/05/09/new-video-footage-show-self-immolations-in-zamthang/>

New Video Footage Shows Self-Immolations in Zamthang

Tibet.net, May 9, 2012

New video footages coming out of Tibet shows tragic self-immolation of three Tibetans and audio recordings of their last wishes to restore freedom and preservation of Tibetan identity and culture under the repressive rule of the Chinese government.

The footages also depicts the peaceful demonstrations and protests that took place in Zamthang, Ngaba in north-eastern Tibet in January 2012 and the subsequent police firing that killed Ogyen, a 20-year-old Tibetan in Barma township.

The video shows the self-immolation of Nangdrol on 19 February, 2012. Nangdrol's photo before and after the self-immolation and his last wishes are also contained in the video.

Nangdrol has stated in his last wish that he is giving up his life to fire because there is immense suffering in Tibet under the repressive policies of Chinese government. He has called upon all Tibetans to preserve our identity, unite and maintain harmony, and pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The footage of Sonam and Choephag Kyab, who set themselves on fire on 19 April 2012 and left audio recordings of their last wishes. They said they self-immolated for the restoration of freedom in Tibet and world peace. The suffering of the Tibetan people is far greater than the tragedy of setting my body on fire, they said. Choephag Kyab and Sonam, both in their early twenties, were studying in a school established by the Chinese government for minority nationals. The location of the schools is not known.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2012/02/21/2003526032>

Tibetan monk self-immolates

Taipei Times, Feb 21, 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire to protest Chinese rule — becoming at least the 21st to do so in the past year — and more than 1,000 people were trying to prevent police from taking his body, an overseas Tibet support group reported yesterday. Nangdrol self-immolated on Sunday outside his monastery in Aba County, where most of the immolations have occurred, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet said. The group said Nangdrol shouted slogans for Tibetan independence and for the Dalai Lama. Nangdrol's is the latest in what seem to be increasing numbers of immolations that have galvanized other monks and lay people to protest Chinese government controls over Tibetan society and the Buddhist religion. More than 1,000 people gathered at the monastery overnight to stand guard over the body, the group said.

'Teenage Tibetan monk self-immolates, dies'

ZEE News, 20 February 2012

Beijing: An overseas group said on Monday that a Tibetan Buddhist monk died after setting himself on fire outside a monastery in western China, and more than 1,000 people were trying to prevent police from taking his body away.

Eighteen-year-old Nangdrol self-immolated on Sunday in Sichuan province after shouting slogans in favour of Tibetan independence and exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, the London-based International Campaign for Tibet said.

His death brings to at least 21 the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire over the past year — including one on Friday. The acts are among increasingly radical protests against Chinese government controls over Tibetan society and the Buddhist religion.

Following Nangdrol's death, police demanded that his body be handed over, but monks at his Samdrup Norbu Ling monastery in Aba prefecture in Sichuan refused, the ICT said, citing Tibetan monks based in India. More than 1,000 people gathered at the monastery overnight to stand guard over the body, it said.

Chinese security has cut off access to Tibetan areas, making it virtually impossible to independently confirm such acts. Calls to local government and Communist Party offices rang unanswered on Monday.

China blames Dalai Lama supporters for encouraging the self-immolations and other anti-government protests that have led to the deaths of an unknown number of Tibetans at the hands of police.

However, the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile has issued statements discouraging self-immolation, including a statement on Saturday expressing concern and shock and saying that any protests should be peaceful, dignified and “in accordance with the laws of your country”.

Activists say Tibetans are being pushed into ever-more radical acts because of intense pressure from China’s police and military, who maintain a highly visible presence in towns and occupy monasteries while forcing monks to endure hours of political indoctrination at the expense of their religious studies.

On Sunday, an overseas Tibetan news service reported Chinese police had taken Tibetan writer Gangkye Drubpa Kyab from his home in the main town of Sichuan’s Serthar county on Wednesday night and he has not been released.

Citing a Tibetan politician living in exile, the Norway-based Voice of Tibet said that when Drubpa Kyab’s wife asked for a warrant, police told her they wanted to talk with her husband.

Police and government officials in Serthar and in Ganzi, the Sichuan province prefecture that administers Serthar, either could not be reached by telephone on Sunday or said they had not heard about the case.

In Serthar, also known as Seda, Tibetan protesters clashed with security forces last month, leaving at least two Tibetans dead. The government said the protesters had attacked a police station. It was not known whether Drubpa Kyab was involved in the protests.

A Tibetan writer living in Beijing, Wooser, said on her much-read blog that she was familiar with the 33-year-old Drubpa Kyab’s writings. She said that he is a Serthar native and has been a teacher and writer there for 10 years. He would be at least the second cultural figure to be detained in the latest wave of arrests. Dawa Dorje, described as a civil servant and advocate for promoting traditional Tibetan music and culture, was reportedly arrested two weeks ago.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/another-teen-tibetan-is-dead-from-self-immolation>

Another teen Tibetan is dead from self-immolation

Examiner, 12 February 2012

There is no sunshine in the hearts and minds of Buddhists and their friends again today upon receiving news that another young Tibetan is dead from self-immolation. Buddhists in Syracuse are deeply disturbed about this and are finding time for deep prayers today. It has been reported by the Tibet Sun “Another teenage Tibetan monk self-immolates, dies.”

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet has said a young Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire to protest Chinese rule, becoming at least the 21st to do so in the past year, and that greater than 1,000 people have been trying to prevent police from taking his body. It has been reported eighteen-year-old Nangdrol self-immolated on Sunday outside his monastery in Ngaba, where most of the self-immolations have occurred. As he set himself on fire it is said Nangdrol shouted slogans for Tibetan independence and for the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan leader who is exiled in India.

The Chinese security has since cut off access to Tibetan areas, therefore making it almost impossible to confirm what is actually going on in Tibet now. And telephone calls to local government and Communist Party offices rang unanswered on Monday. The Chinese government has been blaming Dalai Lama and his supporters for encouraging the self-immolations and other anti-government protests that have resulted in further repressive measures. However, the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama have said they have not encouraged any self-immolations. And so sadness pervades Tibetan communities today as a Chinese crackdown on protests continues to harden.

Nangdrol cremated, Thousands pay homage

Phayul, 20 February 2012

DHARAMSHALA, February 20: The fiery wave of self-immolation in Tibet continues to rage on with three Tibetans torching their bodies last week alone.

On Monday Losang Gyatso, a 19 year-old monk at the Kirit monastery in the

beleaguered region of Ngaba, eastern Tibet set himself ablaze shouting slogans of protest against the Chinese government. He reportedly survived the protest but his whereabouts and well being are not yet known.

On Friday, Dhamchoe Sangpo, a 38 year-old monk from Bongthak Ewam Tare Shedrup Dhargey Ling monastery in Tsongon, Amdo, eastern Tibet set his body on fire during a prayer gathering at the monastery, where several villagers were in attendance. Dhamchoe Sangpo, a teacher at the monastic school was protesting against the repressive policies of the Chinese government, including the intensification of the patriotic re-education campaign at his monastery.

On Sunday, 18-year old Tibetan from Dzamthang, Ngaba, eastern Tibet set himself on fire and died on the spot. According to sources in exile, Nangdrol raised slogans calling for the 'long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama' and 'freedom for Tibet'.

The monks defied police orders and were able to carry Nangdrol's charred body back to the monastery where traditional Buddhist rituals were carried out for him.

As pressure and intimidation mounted from the growing numbers of Chinese armed forces at the monastery, Nangdrol was cremated just hours after his death.

More than 1000 people gathered in Dzamthang to keep watch over the body of Nangdrol and pay their last respects.

Nangdrol was the fourth of eight children, and is from Choeje village, Barma township, Dzamthang, the Tibetan area of Amdo.

According to the Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration, 23 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire since Tapey's self-immolation in 2009.

The self-immolating monks, nuns, and laymen have demanded the return of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Many parts of Tibet are under an undeclared martial law as phone lines and internet connections in many of the tense areas remain cut for nearly a month now.

In the build up to the Tibetan new year on February 22 and the anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day on March 10, Chinese authorities have banned all outside visitors to Tibet.

Tsering Kyi

Age: 19

Occupation: Student

Date of self-immolation: 3 March 2012

Place: Machu town, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan Self-Immolations Rise as China Tightens Grip

By Andrew Jacobs, *The New York Times*, 23 March 2012

MAQU, China — Like many children of Tibetan nomads, Tsering Kyi started school relatively late, at age 10, but by all accounts she made up for lost time by studying with zeal.

“Even when she was out at pasture with her parents’ flock, there was always a book in her hand,” a cousin said.

That passion for learning apparently turned to despair this month when the Maqu County Tibetan Middle School, in Gansu Province near Tibet, switched to Chinese from Tibetan as the language of instruction. The policy shift has incited protests across the high-altitude steppe that is home to five million Tibetans and a far greater number of ethnic Han Chinese.

On March 3, a few days before the start of the spring semester, Tsering Kyi, 20, emerged from a public toilet at the town’s produce market, her wispy frame bound in gasoline-soaked blankets that had been encircled with wire, relatives and local residents said.

In a flash she was a heap of flames, her fist raised defiantly, before falling to the ground, residents said. She died at the scene.

Over the past year 29 Tibetans, seven of them in the last three weeks, have chosen a similarly agonizing, self-annihilating protest against Chinese policies. Of those, 22 have died.

Beijing, alarmed about the threat to stability in a region seething with discontent over religious and cultural controls, has responded with an assortment of

heavy-handed measures. Officials have described the self-immolators as outcasts and terrorists, blamed the pernicious influence of Tibetan exiles and flooded the region with checkpoints and paramilitary police officers in flak jackets.

Communist Party leaders have also introduced a “monastic management” plan to more directly control religious life. As part of the plan, 21,000 party officials have been sent to Tibetan communities with the goal of “befriending” monks — and creating dossiers on each of them. Compliant clergy members are rewarded with health care benefits, pensions and television sets; the recalcitrant are sometimes expelled from their monasteries.

At some temples, monks and nuns have been forced to publicly denounce the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader whose name is often invoked by self-immolators. The freedom of movement that allowed monks to study at distant monasteries across Tibet and four adjacent provinces has been curtailed.

“They claim we are free to practice our religion but in fact they keep pulling the reins tighter and tighter so we can hardly breathe,” said a 22-year-old monk from Qinghai Province, who like many Tibetans keeps banned pictures of the Dalai Lama in his room and on his cellphone.

Senior officials have trumpeted the new approach, which includes the distribution of one million national flags and portraits of Mao Zedong and other party leaders — with a requirement that they be displayed at homes and monasteries. “Temples have undergone a delightful change since the new management methods were put into place,” Xinza Danzengquzha, a top Tibetan official, said this month in Beijing.

Such measures, however, may be having the opposite intended effect. Robert Barnett, director of the Modern Tibet Studies Program at Columbia University, said that the government’s more intrusive approach to monasteries, the heart of Tibetan society, is a reversal of self-management policies put in place in the 1980s. “History suggests it is unlikely to work,” he said.

The antipathy, never far beneath the surface, is erupting into plain view with greater frequency. In the past week, several protests have broken out, including two in Qinghai Province that were led by students angry over the introduction of Chinese-language textbooks for subjects like chemistry, math and geography. In January, exile groups say 31 people were shot, at least one fatally, when police officers opened fire on demonstrators in Drango County, in Sichuan Province.

In Diru County, in the Tibet Autonomous Region, 20 of the 22 monasteries have been closed, according to the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy.

Spasms of unrest have coursed through modern Tibetan history with some regularity since 1959, when the Dalai Lama fled to India after a failed uprising. Between 1987 and 1989, the region was rocked by protests that were brutally crushed. The most recent crackdown began in March 2008, when rioting in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, led to the death of at least 19 people, most of them Han Chinese. In the weeks and months that followed, exile groups say a far greater number of Tibetans died.

But Tibetan scholars and exiles say the current resistance campaign is unlike anything seen before. The tactic — public, fiery suicides that do not harm bystanders or property — has profoundly moved ordinary Tibetans and bedeviled Chinese officials. Just as significant, they note, is that the protesters are mostly young — all but nine of them under 30.

Tsering Kyi was one of them. According to family members, she was a thoughtful student whose hard work earned her a place on the school's honor roll. But in 2010, she joined classmates who took to the streets of this dusty county seat to protest the new Chinese-language textbooks and the decision to limit Tibetan to a single class. In the clampdown that followed, several teachers suspected of encouraging the protest were fired and the headmaster, a popular Tibetan writer, was sent to work on a dam project, according to local residents.

Tsering Kyi's death has been widely publicized by Tibetan activist groups eager to draw attention to the self-immolations. The Chinese state news media, which has ignored most of the cases, reported that she was mentally unstable after hitting her head on a radiator. Her grades started to sag, the official Xinhua news agency said, "which put a lot of pressure on her and made her lose courage for life and study."

In interviews, several Tibetan residents and relatives of Tsering Kyi's contemptuously waved away such assertions. Instead, they were eager to discuss her devotion to her Tibetan heritage and the final moments of her life. When she emerged from the public toilets in flames, they said, the market's Han Chinese vegetable sellers locked the front gate to prevent her from taking her protest to the street. No one, they claim, tried to douse the fire.

When the police arrived, they forced witnesses to remain inside the market and

returned Tsering Kyi's body to the bathroom. Then, after collecting everyone's cellphones, they methodically went through the devices and deleted any photographs of the incident.

In interviews last week with two dozen monks and ordinary Tibetans in Qinghai and Gansu Provinces, many said that they expected the fiery suicides and protests to continue to spread beyond Aba, the county in Sichuan Province where the majority of the self-immolations have taken place. "From the outside, everything looks so pretty here, but on the inside, everyone is boiling," said one lama at a monastery in Rebkong, a major tourist draw in Qinghai famous for its intricate thangka paintings.

The lama, who asked for anonymity because speaking to foreign reporters can lead to severe punishment, said monks were expected to attend "patriotic education" sessions that consist of pro-government propaganda. "I don't want trouble with the authorities, but I can't control their rage any longer," he said of the monks.

In Gansu Province, security at the sprawling Labrang Monastery was visibly tighter, and emotions more raw. Monks there said the accumulation of indignities, years in the making, was followed by two days of street protests in 2008 that led to a wave of detentions and beatings.

Many Tibetan monks are unable to get passports and the Han, they said, often treat them with contempt. "We can't even speak our minds on the phone because the police are listening in," said one 39-year-old who ducked into a reporter's hotel room to share details about life for Labrang's 1,400 monks.

He described how the police had raided the white-walled monastery complex one night as everyone slept, kicking in doors, smashing computers and tearing up photographs of the Dalai Lama. At least 180 monks were detained that night. "They ran out of handcuffs, so they started tying our wrists with rope they found in the monastery," he said.

The monks were eventually released but Labrang, one of the most important religious sites in Tibetan Buddhism, is a changed place. Video surveillance cameras hang from the eaves of hallowed temples and plainclothes police officers mingle with the faithful. "They never fool us because they hold their prayer beads with their right hand, and every Tibetan knows to hold them in their left hand," one monk said.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/26/nomad-path-self-immolation>

One Tibetan woman's tragic path to self-immolation

By Jason Burke in Dharamsala, *The Guardian*, Monday 26 March 2012

As a young girl, Tsering Kyi's favourite days of the year were the eve of her village's annual move to their summer pastures and the eve of their return. The lives of the 30 nomadic households of Tethok, in China's Gansu province, followed the rhythm of the seasons. In the spring they would load their household on to yaks and ride up into the high valleys and hills where their herds would find grass and the children would play with frogs in the lakes and streams. As the winter approached, they would return to lower grazing.

A day before they moved all the heavy items would be packed and sent ahead. The women and children would remain behind, sleeping under the stars, to follow the next day. This was Kyi's favourite time.

"I remember how she was always excited. She loved to sleep outside with her sister and brothers and all the cousins," said a close relative interviewed by the Guardian last week. "Even when she went to school and was a teenager she still came with the family to the pastures in the summer. She didn't like the town so much."

Three weeks ago, in the late afternoon, Kyi, now a 20-year-old student, set herself alight in a vegetable market in the centre of Machu town. Her last acts were to enter a public toilet, take off her traditional Tibetan overdress and douse herself in petrol. She then walked out into the market, ignited the fuel and became the 23rd Tibetan to self-immolate in just under a year.

Every few days in recent weeks there has been a report of another such burning. Since Kyi died seven more have followed suit – including 27-year-old man who set himself on fire in New Delhi before a visit by China's president, Hu Jintao. The streets of Dharamsala, the Indian hill town where the Tibetan community in exile is based, are full of posters of these "martyrs", as they are known locally. The most recent poster shows a 44-year-old farmer. Few doubt there will be many more.

Tibetans in Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama has lived since fleeing Tibet af-

ter a failed revolt in 1959, say the self-immolations are born of desperation in the face of the Chinese authorities' repressive policies. A letter smuggled out from one monastery lists restrictions on Tibetan language teaching in local schools, an increased presence of security personnel and new controls on religious practice as reasons behind the self-immolation of a 34-year-old monk outside its gates two weeks ago. Another factor, it says, is the continuing enforced settlement of the region's nomads.

Chinese officials blame the suicides on "separatist plot" or "criminals". The official Chinese news agency said Kyi was suffering depression following a head injury sustained in an accident. Her relatives, who insisted on anonymity when interviewed, tell a different story.

Kyi was born in 1992, the second child of two nomadic farmers. Her community was the village's 30 households, and her days were spent with the yaks, horses and sheep that were their livelihood. She rarely visited Machu, the town two hours' motorbike ride away where the nearest school and basic health facilities were located. It was a simple, if harsh life. Members of Kyi's family watched women die in childbirth for want of medical attention. Almost no one could read or write.

Change was coming, however. When Kyi was still a young girl, relatives remembered, a new government policy led to each household being allocated a plot of land for grazing and barbed wire divided the high pastures. The old days of allowing the herds to roam freely over the high plateau grassland were over.

Another change was education. Nomad children had never gone to schools in distant towns. But new facilities were being opened, in part to cater for the huge numbers of nomads being resettled in places like Machu. Kyi set about persuading her parents to send her and her younger brother to the Tibetan middle school in the town. An aunt finally convinced them to agree and, aged 11, Kyi started lessons, staying in the hostel attached to the school during term time.

"She did really well. She was starting late like most nomad children but made up for lost time. Her teachers said she was an example to the other kids," said the relative.

But if Kyi thrived at the school, she did not lose sight of her roots. With their herds dwindling due to a lack of adequate pasture, some relatives were now living in Machu town. But Kyi preferred to travel back to be with the rest of her family

during the long summer and winter breaks. The contrast with the fast-growing country town where she studied, with its new grids of roads, shops and large numbers of Han Chinese immigrants, was stark.

“She would come back from school and it was like nothing was different, for her or us. She was older and so able to get involved with all the tasks like looking after the yaks, shearing the sheep and so on. And she still had fun,” remembered the relative. “She had a wonderful voice and was always in demand in the village to sing at all the festivals.”

Such festivals – and their accompanying religious rituals – marked the slow progression of the days. The rites of Tibetan Buddhism were carefully, unquestioningly observed. Even in the summer pastures, a small tent was set up to shelter a sculpture of the Buddha and a picture of the Dalai Lama.

“Religion is everywhere for us. It is just part of our lives,” said the relative.

But if Kyi did not show any signs of becoming “political” as a young teenager, she was now an avid reader, hungry for knowledge.

“When she came back to be with her family, she always brought books. When it was dark, when we had all gone to sleep, she would be still there, reading by the light of a lamp,” the relative said.

Unpicking the course of events that led Kyi to her self-immolation is difficult. The act itself goes against many of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism and although the Dalai Lama has refused to condone it, he says he understands the reasons behind it. But if Kyi had not actively searched for involvement in activism, she was soon to find herself plunged into its centre.

The spring of 2008 saw the most significant unrest in Tibet for decades. Peaceful protests turned into serious riots in many cities and towns as security forces moved to disperse demonstrators. In Machu police cars and government buildings were burned. In a major crackdown, hundreds were detained, according to Tibetan campaigners, human rights groups and western governments.

But the unrest did not stop, at least not in Machu. Kyi’s school became a centre of protest in 2010 when students staged a demonstration calling for more freedom and Tibetan independence. Though dozens were arrested, another protest took place a month later. Then the popular headmaster was fired and at least two teachers detained, provoking further anger. Kyi had found herself in a hotbed

of activism.

Following the 2008 unrest there is now an unprecedented level of “political consciousness and Tibetan nationalism”, a monk in Dharamsala said last week. He would only speak anonymously as he feared reprisals when he returns to Tibet. “With the internet and mobile phones, everyone now hears about what the Dalai Lama is doing, the protests, every burning. That is a huge change from before,” he told the Guardian.

In early January Kyi spoke of the spate of self-immolations and told a close relative that she understood why they were happening. “No one could go on living like this,” she said.

Kyi died the day after returning from a month’s winter break spent with her family in the winter pastures. She had spent the night at a cousin’s home and a friend had given her a lift on his motorbike to school. Kyi did not enter – had she signed the registration book she would have been the responsibility of her teachers and thus have exposed them to reprisals – but headed into the town. One petrol station refused to serve her. A second did not. The last images of Tsering Kyi show her buying a five litre can of fuel.

Hours later Chinese security officials were removing her charred remains from Machu’s vegetable market.

Tibetan who burned herself to death had head injury, China says

By the *CNN* Wire Staff, 7 March 2012

A Tibetan student who died after setting herself on fire in western China had been experiencing difficulties following a head injury, the official Chinese news agency reported Wednesday.

The student, Tsering Kyi, was the first of three Tibetans who reportedly self-immolated between Saturday and Monday. It is the only one of the three alleged acts so far acknowledged by the Chinese authorities.

Tibetan advocacy groups say the self-immolations -- more than 20 of which are reported to have taken place in the past year -- are to protest Chinese rule.

They follow an increase in security measures by the Chinese authorities in response to unrest among Tibetans in western areas of China in recent months and

ahead of the sensitive anniversary of protests by Tibetan monks four years ago that ended in bloodshed.

Activists say the disturbing acts reflect an increasingly repressive environment under China's control. Beijing rejects accusations of oppression of Tibetans, saying that under its rule living standards have greatly improved for Tibetans.

Chinese officials have described the self-immolations as "extreme" acts. The report Wednesday by Xinhua, the government news agency, suggested Tsering Kyi, 20, had been troubled by the aftereffects of a head injury before she set herself on fire in the county of Maqu, or Machu in Tibetan, in Gansu Province.

"She was sent to hospital and has had occasional fainting spells," Xinhua reported, citing the local police. "The medical treatment held up her studies and her school scores began to decline, which put a lot of pressure on her and made her lose her courage for life and study."

A local official said similarities in the self-immolations point to a transparent political motive and behind-the-scenes orchestration, Xinhua reported. The victims were used by separatists to create chaos, according to Wu Zegang, chief of the Aba prefecture in Sichuan province.

On Sunday, a mother of four named Rinchen died after setting herself alight in front of Kirti Monastery in the county of Aba, which Tibetans call Ngaba, in Sichuan Province, according to Tibetan advocacy groups like London-based Free Tibet.

And on Monday, an 18-year-old Tibetan man named Dorje burned himself to death in a nomadic area of Aba, according to advocacy groups. Local officials reached by telephone declined to comment on the matter.

It was not possible to independently verify the accounts of the self-immolations. China restricts journalists' access to the areas where they have been taking place.

This month will mark the fourth anniversary of protest marches by Tibetan monks in Lhasa that ended violently in 2008.

Tibetans say the situation escalated to violence when Chinese police beat monks who had been protesting peacefully; Chinese authorities claim Tibetans launched attacks on Chinese businesses. Officially the death toll is under 20; Tibetans in exile say the death toll is near 150.

Fire rages on in Tibet: Tibetan school girl dies in self-immolation protest

Phayul, 5 March, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A teenaged Tibetan school girl torched her body in an apparent protest against the Chinese occupation of Tibet in a busy market in eastern Tibet.

Tsering Kyi, 19, studying at a local middle school set herself on fire at a vegetable market in Machu in the traditional Amdo region of Tibet on March 3. She passed away at the scene.

Dharamshala-based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile today said that Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene of the protest and locked down the market.

“All mobile phones were confiscated in an attempt to stop the news of the protest from spreading,” the release said. “People at the scene of the protest were issued strict orders against speaking about the self-immolation.”

The police later visited Tsering Kyi’s house for identification and carried out door to door searches in the neighbourhood. Websites operating from the region have been shut down and heads of the regional government offices reportedly held a meeting following the protest.

Tsering Kyi’s body is in the custody of the local police according to sources.

Reporting on the self-immolation protest, US based RFA said that Chinese market vendors threw stones at the girl’s burning body, citing an unidentified Tibetan exile with connections to the community in Machu.

“The Tibetans present in the market were agitated and this almost resulted in a major clash between the Tibetans and Chinese,” RFA quoted a source as saying.

This is the first self-immolation protest that has been reported from Machu region.

A day after Tsering Kyi’s self-immolation, a 32 year-old Tibetan mother of four, Rinchen, torched her body in the Ngaba region, which has been at the centre of the recent wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

Since 2009, 25 Tibetans have set themselves ablaze demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Ahead of the ongoing rubber stamp parliament session, Beijing vowed to “smash” all peaceful expressions of protests inside Tibet and increase internet and phone surveillance in the region.

The exile Tibetan leadership and right groups have expressed fears of more self-immolation and further bloodshed in Tibet during the sensitive period of the March 10 Tibetan National Uprising Day.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/tibetan-school-girl-dies-in-self-immolation-protest--141460543/179166.html>

Tibetan School Girl Dies in Self-Immolation Protest

VOA, 4 March 2012

A 19-year-old Tibetan student died after setting fire to herself Saturday in Machu County of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. A source from inside Tibet told Voice of America that Tsering Kyi was a good student and that her family was from Menma, a town within the same county.

Tsering Kyi was known to have gone to the town around 3 pm after buying petrol in the market. She used a public toilet to douse herself and walked out in a Chinese run vegetable market engulfed in flames, according to the same source.

Reports say she was forced back into the toilet. It is unclear whether she was forced back into the toilet by Chinese vegetable vendors or the police, but it appears that she died there. Security police are reported to have taken her body and as of this writing, they have not returned Tsering's body to her family.

The UK based advocacy group Free Tibet reports that a few days before the incidence, Tsering Kyi had said, “in Ngaba and other areas of Tibet, Tibetans are burning themselves. We should do something - life is meaningless if we don't do something for Tibet.”

The India-based Tibetan parliament-in-exile, released a statement that said Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene of the protest and locked down the market. “All mobile phones were confiscated in an attempt to stop the news of the protest from spreading,” the release said. “People at the scene of the protest were issued strict orders against speaking about the self-immolation.”

Dolkar Kyap, a former political prisoner in Tibet, now living in India said that

Tsering Kyi is from a family of nomadic farmers and that she had one elder sister. Kyap told VOA that following the immolation, an emergency county meeting was convened where it was agreed to propagate the cause of the self-immolation as being a personal matter related to a love interest. The meeting also agreed to keep the market and schools closed on Monday.

Since 2009, 25 Tibetans have set themselves ablaze demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet. Heightened clampdowns and reports of arbitrary beatings and detentions in all Tibetan regions across the Tibetan plateau have been occurring for several weeks, possibly in an attempt to preempt any protests as March 10 approaches, the sensitive anniversary of the Tibetan uprisings of 2008 and 1959.

Rinchen Kyi

Age: 32

Occupation: mother

Date of self-immolation: 4 March 2012

Place: at a police station near Kirti Monastery, Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan burns herself to death in China protest

Reuters, 4 March 2012

BEIJING - A Tibetan woman set herself on fire in southwestern China on Sunday to protest against Chinese rule, a Tibetan rights group said, the latest in a series of self-immolations that signal growing unrest in the Tibetan areas of China.

The incident came a day before China's annual parliamentary session - an occasion often used by authorities to clamp down on potential sources of unrest and project political unity.

Campaign group Free Tibet said the woman, identified as Rinchen, a 32-year-old mother of four, died after setting herself ablaze on Sunday morning near a monastery in Sichuan province.

The Kirti monastery in Aba county, known as Ngaba in Tibetan, has been at the forefront of pro-Tibetan protests in recent months including several self-immolations.

Local officials were unable to confirm or deny the incident.

Rinchen is the 23rd Tibetan to self-immolate in the past year. At least 16 are believed to have died from their injuries, according to rights groups. Most were Buddhist monks.

Zorgyi, a Tibetan researcher living in exile in India's Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, said

Rinchen was a widowed housewife, whose eldest child was 13 years old and the

youngest an infant.

“According to the eyewitness, she shouted some slogans during her self-immolation: ‘Return the Holiness to Tibet’ and ‘We need freedom in Tibet,’” Zоргyi said.

“She was dead on the spot, according to the eyewitness. The local people and the monks took the body to the monastery.”

Self-immolations are a small but potentially destabilising challenge to China’s regional policies, and the government has branded those who set themselves alight as terrorists.

Activists say China violently stamps out religious freedom and culture in Tibet, the mountainous region of western China which has been under Chinese control since 1950.

China rejects criticism that it is eroding Tibetan culture and faith, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region.

China’s top official in Tibet has urged authorities to tighten their grip on the Internet and mobile phones, state media reported last Thursday, reflecting the government’s fears about unrest ahead of its annual parliamentary session.

Young Tibetan mother and student self-immolate in China

The Telegraph, 05 Mar 2012

US government-backed Radio Free Asia said the 32-year-old mother and the female student died after separately immolating in different provinces over the weekend.

More than 20 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the last year to protest what they say are harsh Chinese policies that do not allow them to freely practice their religion.

The reported deaths came on the eve of the opening of China’s annual legislative session, a time when security is tightened across the country. March is also a sensitive time for Tibet, marking several anniversaries, including that of the unsuccessful revolt against China that caused Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee in 1959, and deadly anti-government riots that rocked the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 2008.

The student set herself ablaze Saturday at a vegetable market in Gansu province's Maqu county and died at the scene, the report said, without giving the girl's name or age.

Chinese market vendors threw stones at the girl's burning body, the broadcaster said, citing an unidentified Tibetan exile with connections to the community in Maqu. It didn't say why they attacked her.

The girl was described as a middle school student, but it was unclear whether she was in regular middle school, where students range from 13 to 16 years old, or senior middle school, where students can be up to 19. Calls to local Maqu schools rang unanswered.

On Sunday, a woman identified only as Rinchen set herself on fire in front of a police station by the main gate to the Kirti Monastery in Aba prefecture in Sichuan province. Radio Free Asia said she was a mother of three young children. A report by the London-based Free Tibet group said Rinchen had four children.

Radio Free Asia reported that Rinchen called for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet and freedom for Tibet as she set herself alight, quoting an exiled Tibetan monk in India, Kanyak Tsering.

Tibetan areas are mostly off-limits to foreign media and it was not possible to immediately confirm the claims.

A woman who answered the phone at the local Communist Party propaganda office in Aba declined to comment or give her name and referred calls to provincial authorities, who could not immediately be reached. A police official in Maqu said she was unaware of the report involving the student and hung up.

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said Rinchen's self-immolation was the result of repression and attempts to assimilate Tibetans into Han Chinese culture.

"Tibetans are living under de facto martial law. China's response to protests – which are increasingly widespread – has been to intensify repression and surveillance, pushing Tibet deeper into crisis," she said in a statement.

China says it treats minority groups such as Tibetans fairly, and pours tens of billions of dollars into improving living conditions in their areas. The government has also accused the Dalai Lama and overseas Tibetans of being behind the protests and self-immolations.

A mother of four dies in latest self-immolation protest in Tibet

Phayul, Sunday, March 04, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, March 4: In confirmed reports coming out of Tibet, a Tibetan mother of four passed away after setting her body on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

The self-immolation occurred in the beleaguered Ngaba region of eastern Tibet at around 6.30 a.m. (local time) today.

Rinchen, 33, torched her body in front of a special security office outside the main entrance of the besieged Kirti monastery, specifically set up by the local Chinese authorities following the spate of self-immolation and protests in the region.

According to sources in exile, monks from the Kirti monastery were able to rescue Rinchen's charred body and carried it inside the monastery.

"Engulfed in flames, Rinchen raised slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet. She passed away immediately," said the exile base of Kirti monastery in a release today.

The eldest of Rinchen's four children is 13 years old while the youngest is a few months old baby. Their father passed away last year.

The stringent security measures in place were beefed up in the region following the self-immolation.

Rinchen's self-immolation protest comes days ahead of the March 10 Tibetan National Uprising Day and the one year anniversary of the March 16 self-immolation of Kirti monk Phuntsog, which ignited the ongoing fiery wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

Since 2009, 24 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet. Ngaba alone has witnessed 16 self-immolations.

International journalists who have been able to sneak into the restricted Ngaba region have described the town as a "conflict zone" with security personnel, armed with automatic rifles, stationed all over the place.

Kirti monastery has faced severe repression with hundreds of its monks having disappeared, detained without charge and given lengthy jail terms. Hundreds of

Chinese security personnel and CCTV cameras inside the monastery have been keeping a close watch on the movement of the monks.

Last week, an Associated Press journalist who managed to get through several checkpoints along the road leading to Ngaba reported that China's "stifling lockdown" has not only been about patrolling the streets, but also "policing the minds" of the community.

"The locals are definitely feeling very heavy-hearted, very frustrated, all day. The soldiers are everywhere," a teacher was quoted as saying in the report. "At every moment, people wonder what will happen to the person next to them, what the soldiers will do to them."

<http://www.bikyamasr.com/60510/tibetan-girl-woman-die-after-self-immolation-protests/>

Tibetan girl, woman dies after self-immolation protests

By Bill Smith, DBA, 5 March 2012

Beijing (dpa) – A Tibetan teenage girl and a widowed mother died after separate self-immolations in restive areas of western China, reports said Monday, following 22 other self-immolations in Tibetan areas of China in recent months.

The unidentified girl from the Tibetan Middle School in Maqu county town, or Machu in Tibetan, in Gansu province set fire to herself Saturday at a market, US-based Radio Free Asia said.

Police took away the girl's body after Han Chinese vendors called them to the market, the broadcaster quoted a Tibetan exile with contacts in Maqu as saying.

Teenagers from the Tibetan Middle School had previously protested government controls on Tibetans and police had detained several students, it said.

On Sunday, a 32-year-old Tibetan woman died after setting fire to herself in Aba town, known as Ngaba in Tibetan, in the neighboring province of Sichuan, the London-based campaign Free Tibet said.

The woman, identified by the single name Rinchen, self-immolated near a police station at the main gate of the Kirti monastery, the group said.

It said Rinchen, a widowed mother of four children, shouted slogans in support of freedom for Tibet and the return of the exiled Dalai Lama, Tibetan Bud-

dhism's highest spiritual leader.

Monks and lay Tibetans took Rinchen's body into the monastery, reports said.

The Chinese government has tightened security in most Tibetan areas this year amid a series of protests and self-immolations.

"Tibetans are living under de facto martial law," Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement on Rinchen's death.

"China's response to protests – which are increasingly widespread – has been to intensify repression and surveillance, pushing Tibet deeper into crisis," Brigden said.

The government has accused exiled supporters of the Dalai Lama of encouraging self-immolations and other protests, despite his declared opposition to self-immolations.

Since widespread anti-government protests in 2008, it has tightened controls in all Tibetan areas, turning away journalists, limiting the access of foreign tourists and cutting off communications in some places.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin last month said tougher measures for "social management" of Tibetan areas were "absolutely necessary."

Tighter control was "helpful to combat separatist activities and safeguard social stability," Liu said.

The Dalai Lama has lived in exile since he fled to India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule of Tibet.

<http://www.voatibetanenglish.com/content/tibetan-woman-dies-after-self-immolation-in-restive-ngaba-141354343/1267223.html>

Tibetan Woman Dies After Self-Immolation in Restive Ngaba

VOA Tibetan, 03 March 2012

A Tibetan woman died after setting herself ablaze Sunday morning in Ngaba County in eastern Tibet (Chinese: Aba County, Aba Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province).

Ven. Lobsang Yeshi of Kirti Monastery in India told VOA Tibetan that the

33-year-old Rinchen, mother of four children self-immolated herself in front of a special security office stationed outside the besieged Kirti Monastery where heavy security measures have been beefed up following rounds of self-immolations.

Reports say Rinchen called for freedom in Tibet and return of Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet moments before she succumbed to flames.

Free Tibet, a UK based advocacy group said Rinchen's four children range in age from 13 to just a few months and her husband is known to have died a year earlier. Free Tibet also reports that Rinchen travelled from her a nomadic area or settlement to Ngaba town to self-immolate.

The latest self-immolation comes at a sensitive time ahead of the March 14 anniversary of 2008 Tibet-wide protests against China.

China has worsened crackdown in the Tibetan area of Ngaba following the self-immolation and death of a young Kirti monk called Phuntsog on March 16, 2011. More than fifteen Tibetans are known to have self-immolated from the Ngaba region since then.

The recent immolations that have taken place mark a dramatic escalation in the tactics opposing Beijing's rule, and the Chinese government has been very critical of the actions.

More than 20 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the past year to protest Beijing's rule. The exile Tibetan leadership and rights groups have expressed fear of more self-immolations and further bloodshed in Tibet following China's violent crackdown over peaceful protests in recent weeks in Tibet.

The Chinese government has condemned the self-immolations, calling them a form of terrorism. Beijing has also accused Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, of supporting such acts. The Dalai Lama has denied encouraging self-immolations. In an interview with the BBC television in 2010, the 76-year-old Buddhist leader said those who set themselves on fire were brave, but that their sacrifice was not wise because it resulted in a tougher crackdown by the Chinese authorities.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/china/national-news/2012/03/05/333645/Rights-group.htm>

Rights group claims another self-immolation

The China Post, 5 March 2012

BEIJING--A mother of four died after setting herself on fire in a Tibetan-inhabited region of southwest China on Sunday, a rights group said, in the latest self-immolation to hit the country.

The death of Rinchen, 32, in Sichuan province's Aba town comes on the eve of the country's 10-day parliamentary session where growing social unrest across China is likely to be on the agenda.

Rinchen called for the return of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, as she set herself alight near the restive Kirti monastery, London-based Free Tibet said in a statement.

AFP was unable to independently confirm the incident, and calls to local police and government officials in Aba went unanswered.

Rights groups say more than 20 people have set themselves on fire in Tibetan-inhabited areas of China over the past year, mostly in Sichuan, in protest at what is seen as repressive Chinese rule.

Authorities are particularly keen to avoid any protests during this year's parliamentary meeting — the last under the current leadership before a major transition of power begins in the autumn — which coincides with the sensitive anniversaries of the Dalai Lama's flight into exile in 1959 and of deadly riots in 2008.

China's top leader in Tibet has ordered increased controls over the Internet and mobile phones during the period, according to state media reports.

Tibetans have long chafed at China's rule over the vast Tibetan plateau, accusing Beijing of curbing religious freedoms and eroding their culture and language.

Tensions have increased markedly this year, and western parts of Sichuan — which borders the Tibet autonomous region and has a large population of ethnic Tibetans — have been hit by deadly bouts of unrest in recent months.

As a result, authorities have imposed virtual martial law in parts of the vast Tibetan-inhabited regions, increasing their surveillance of monasteries and cut-

ting some phone and Internet communications.

China blames the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations in a bid to split Tibet from the rest of the nation.

http://www2.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=23142

Tibetan Woman, Student Set Selves on Fire

The Irrawaddy, By Alexa Olesen, AP Writer, 5 March 2012

BEIJING—A young mother and a student have become the latest people to set themselves on fire in protest against Chinese rule in Tibetan areas, a U.S. broadcaster said on Monday.

U.S. government-backed *Radio Free Asia* said the 32-year-old mother and the female student died after separately immolating in different provinces over the weekend.

More than 20 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the last year to protest what they say are harsh Chinese policies that do not allow them to freely practice their religion.

The reported deaths came on the eve of the opening of China's annual legislative session, a time when security is tightened across the country. March is also a sensitive time for Tibet, marking several anniversaries, including that of the unsuccessful revolt against China that caused Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee in 1959, and deadly anti-government riots that rocked the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 2008.

The student set herself ablaze on Saturday at a vegetable market in Gansu province's Maqu county and died at the scene, the report said, without giving the girl's name or age.

Chinese market vendors threw stones at the girl's burning body, the broadcaster said, citing an unidentified Tibetan exile with connections to the community in Maqu. It didn't say why they attacked her.

The girl was described as a middle school student, but it was unclear whether she was in regular middle school, where students range from 13 to 16 years old, or senior middle school, where students can be up to 19. Calls to local Maqu

schools rang unanswered.

On Sunday, a woman identified only as Rinchen set herself on fire in front of a police station by the main gate to the Kirti Monastery in Aba prefecture in Sichuan province. *Radio Free Asia* said she was a mother of three young children. A report Sunday by the London-based Free Tibet group said Rinchen had four children.

Radio Free Asia reported that Rinchen called for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet and freedom for Tibet as she set herself alight, quoting an exiled Tibetan monk in India, Kanyak Tsering.

Tibetan areas are mostly off-limits to foreign media and it was not possible to immediately confirm the claims.

A woman who answered the phone at the local Communist Party propaganda office in Aba declined to comment or give her name and referred calls to provincial authorities, who could not immediately be reached. A police official in Maqu said she was unaware of the report involving the student and hung up.

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said Rinchen's self-immolation was the result of repression and attempts to assimilate Tibetans into Han Chinese culture.

"Tibetans are living under de facto martial law. China's response to protests—which are increasingly widespread—has been to intensify repression and surveillance, pushing Tibet deeper into crisis," she said in a statement.

China says it treats minority groups such as Tibetans fairly, and pours tens of billions of dollars into improving living conditions in their areas. The government has also accused the Dalai Lama and overseas Tibetans of being behind the protests and self-immolations.

Tibetan sets herself on fire in China protest

The Aljazeera, March 2012

Tibetan woman has set herself on fire in southwestern China to protest against Chinese rule, a Tibetan rights group said, the latest in a series of self-immolations that signal growing unrest in the Tibetan areas of China.

The incident on Sunday came a day before China's annual parliamentary session

- an occasion often used by authorities to clamp down on potential sources of unrest and project political unity.

Campaign group Free Tibet said the woman, identified as Rinchen, a 32-year-old mother of four, died after setting herself ablaze on Sunday morning near a monastery in Sichuan province.

The Kirti monastery in Aba county, known as Ngaba in Tibetan, has been at the forefront of pro-Tibetan protests in recent months including several self-immolations.

Local officials were unable to confirm or deny the incident.

Rinchen is the 23rd Tibetan to self-immolate in the past year. At least 16 are believed to have died from their injuries, according to rights groups. Most were Buddhist monks.

Destabilising challenge

Zorgyi, a Tibetan researcher living in exile in India's Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, said Rinchen was a widowed housewife, whose eldest child was 13 years old and the youngest an infant.

"According to the eyewitness, she shouted some slogans during her self-immolation: 'Return the Holiness to Tibet' and 'We need freedom in Tibet'," Zorgyi said.

"She was dead on the spot, according to the eyewitness. The local people and the monks took the body to the monastery."

Self-immolations are a small but potentially destabilising challenge to China's regional policies, and the government has branded those who set themselves alight as "terrorists".

Activists say China violently stamps out religious freedom and culture in Tibet, the mountainous region of western China which has been under Chinese control since 1950.

China rejects criticism that it is eroding Tibetan culture and faith, saying its rule has ended serfdom and brought development to a backward region.

China's top official in Tibet has urged authorities to tighten their grip on the Internet and mobile phones, state media reported last Thursday, reflecting the government's fears about unrest ahead of its annual parliamentary session.

CTA Mourns Tragic Self-immolation of two more Tibetans

Tibet.net, Press Release, 5 March 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply concerned and saddened by the latest development in Tibet involving a 32-year-old mother and a student setting themselves on fire to protest against the continuing occupation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China. Both of them have died.

Rinchen, a mother of four children, set herself on fire in front of the police station at the entrance of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba in northeastern Tibet on 4 March. She shouted slogans demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. She died on the spot.

On 3 March, Tsering Kyi, a 20-year-old Tibetan student died after setting herself on fire at a vegetable market in Machu in eastern Tibet. Media reports state that the Tsering Kyi was a middle school student.

The current situation in Ngaba is tense following this latest self-immolation incident, as large number of security forces and police have been deployed in the region.

Moreover, Rigzin Dorjee, the monk of Kirti monastery who self-immolated in February 2012 is reported to have succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital. The Chinese authorities cremated him in Barkham despite pleas from his relatives to have his body returned to them.

Another monk from Kirti monastery, Lobsang Kunchok, who self-immolated in September 2011, is in serious condition following amputation of his legs and arms. He is being fed through a tube in his throat. The staff at the hospital are reported to physically abuse him with beatings and label him "enemy of the state".

The Central Tibetan Administration would like to offer its deep condolences to the family members of the three Tibetans who died from self-immolation.

We call on the Chinese government to allow those injured from self-immolations to get proper medical treatment.

"We are deeply troubled by reports of such cruel treatment of fellow human beings. We appeal to the Chinese government to demonstrate greater wisdom in its handling of the current tense situation," stated Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations.

Dorje

Age: 18

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 5 March 2012

Place: at a bridge near a government office in
Cha town, Ngaba, Amdo, Noreastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Third Self-Immolation in Three Days

REA, 2012-03-05

A Tibetan youth burned himself to death on Monday to protest Chinese rule in Tibetan areas—the third self-immolation in three days, according to Tibetan sources.

The young man, identified as Dorje, 18, set himself ablaze at around 6:30 p.m. local time in a nomadic area of Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county in China's western Sichuan province, said Kanyag Tsering, an India-based Tibetan monk, citing contacts in the region.

"Prior to his self-immolation, he walked from a bridge near the Charuwa nomadic area in Ngaba to the local Chinese office center shouting slogans against Chinese policies in Tibet, and then set himself on fire," Tsering said.

He died on the spot, Tsering said.

"Before [local] Tibetans could take possession of his body, Chinese police arrived and took his body to the Ngaba county center."

Dorje is the 26th Tibetan to have self-immolated since February 2009 in protests against Beijing's rule in Tibetan-populated areas and calling for the return of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Dorje's family is the Garkya Tsang of Charuwa in the Cha subdivision of Ngaba county, and his father's name is Cha Cha, Tsering added.

Desperate situation

His death came after twin self-immolations at the weekend, highlighting what

rights groups say is the “desperate” situation facing Tibetans as Chinese authorities pursue a crackdown on monasteries and policies curtailing Tibetan language and other cultural rights.

“This third self-immolation in as many days underlines that Tibetans will not stop protesting until their calls for freedom are heeded. The international community must take immediate action,” London-based advocacy group Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said.

A 32-year-old Tibetan widow and mother of four named Rinchen died after burning herself on Sunday in Sichuan province while a middle-school girl, identified on Monday as Tsering Kyi, self-immolated on Saturday in Gansu province.

Following the self-immolations, Chinese authorities have tightened security in the two areas and in the Tibet Autonomous Region ahead of what Tibetans call “Uprising Day” on March 10, the sensitive anniversaries of the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile in 1959 and of deadly riots in 2008.

The body of Tsering Kyi is in the custody of Chinese police and has not been returned to her family after she set herself on fire at a vegetable market in Machu county in Gansu province’s Kanlho (in Chinese, Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, sources said.

“The Chinese vendors at the Machu vegetable market threw stones at her burning body,” one source had said, adding that the girl died at the scene.

Several witnesses to the fiery protest were immediately detained, the source said.

“The Machu Tibetan Nationality Middle School is surrounded by Chinese paramilitary forces, and officials are conducting ‘reeducation’ activities inside the school. Tibetan family houses in the Machu area are also being searched.”

Language protest

Tsering Kyi had earlier protested a Chinese decision to eliminate Tibetan as the language of instruction for text books in the middle school, a Tibetan source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“Authorities had implemented the teaching of subjects like history, geography, chemistry, and math in Chinese,” the source said.

“Tibetan teachers and students are facing great difficulty in adjusting to the transition,” he said.

Meanwhile, a monk named Rigdzin Dorje, who set fire to himself in February, is now reported to have died.

Another monk, Lobsang Konchog, who self-immolated in September 2011, “is in serious condition following [the] amputation of his legs and arms. He is being fed through a tube in his throat,” the India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) said in a statement.

The staff at the hospital physically abuse him and have labeled him an “enemy of the state,” said the CTA, expressing condolences to the families of the self-immolators.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9125105/Tibetan-teenager-becomes-third-person-to-self-immolate-in-three-days.html>

Tibetan teenager becomes third person to self-immolate in three days

The Telegraph, 06 March 2012

Washington-based Radio Free Asia reported that an 18-year-old identified only as Dorje set himself ablaze Monday near a local government office in Jia township, in Sichuan’s Aba prefecture.

It quoted Kanyag Tsering, a Tibetan monk exiled in India with contacts in Tibet, as saying he shouted “slogans against Chinese policies in Tibet” before he set himself on fire and died on the spot.

An official with the Communist Party propaganda office in Aba said he hadn’t received any notice of an immolation. He refused to give his name and referred calls to the provincial propaganda department, where phones rang unanswered.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet also reported Dorje’s death.

Radio Free Asia reported earlier that a 20-year-old female student set herself on fire and died Saturday in Gansu province, and a 32-year-old woman with four young children died after immolating in Aba on Sunday.

This is a sensitive time for Tibet, and for all of China. China’s annual legislative session, a time when security is tightened across the country, began Monday. March is also when Tibetans mark significant anniversaries, including that of the

unsuccessful 1959 revolt that caused Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee, and deadly anti-government riots that rocked the Tibetan capital Lhasa in 2008.

ore than two dozen Tibetans, including several teenagers, have set themselves on fire in China over the last year, protesting China's suppression of their religion and culture and calling of the return of the Dalai Lama.

At least 10 were monks or former monks from the Kirti monastery in Aba, according to a tally from the International Campaign for Tibet.

A man at the management office of the Kirti monastery in Aba county said Tuesday that he had heard rumors of immolations Monday and Sunday.

"The control here is too tight. It is not convenient for you and me to talk like this. If you need to know more, come down here and see for yourself," he said and hung up.

Tibetan areas are mostly off-limits to foreign media and it was not possible to immediately confirm the claims.

An Associated Press reporter who managed to visit Aba last week saw soldiers with helmets, rifles, sticks and shields march in rows along the town's main road and police scanning license plates and faces of passengers for unwelcome visitors.

Locals said authorities were making random checks of school dormitory rooms for books that go against the ruling Communist Party establishment.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharmasala, India, said in an emailed statement Monday that a 19-year-old monk from Kirti who immolated in February, Rigzin Dorjee, had died in a hospital. It didn't say when he passed away.

The statement also said that Lobsang Kunchok, another Kirti monk who set himself on fire in September, was being verbally abused and beaten by staff in the hospital where he is being treated. It said Kunchok, 18, had his arms and legs amputated and was being fed through a tube.

"We call on the Chinese government to allow those injured from self-immolations to get proper medical treatment," it said. "We are deeply troubled by reports of such cruel treatment of fellow human beings."

The statement didn't say where Kunchok was being treated.

China says it treats minority groups such as Tibetans fairly, and pours tens of billions of dollars into improving living conditions in their areas. The government has also accused the Dalai Lama and overseas Tibetans of being behind the protests and self-immolations.

<http://www.tibetanreview.net/news.php?id=10430>

Youth dies in 26th confirmed self-immolations in Tibet

TibetanReview.net, 08 March 2012

An 18-year-old Tibetan youth named Dorje has burned himself to death in protest against Chinese rule at around 6:30 PM (local time) in a nomadic area of Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) County in Sichuan province. The incident brings to three the number of such protests in Chinese ruled Tibet in as many days and to 26 the number of confirmed self-immolation protests there since Feb 2009.

Before immolating himself, Dorje walked from a bridge near the Cha Ruwa (or Cha Township) nomadic area in Ngaba to the local Chinese office centre, shouting slogans against Chinese policies in Tibet, said Kanyag Tsering of Kirti Monastery at Dharamsala, citing sources in Tibet. His body was reported to have burned in a raging inferno, with the result that very little of it could be seen in its midst.

Chinese police were reported to have taken away his charred body to the country centre while many people in the streets recited mantras and prayed to His Holiness the Dalai Lama with tears and grief in their eyes.

The day before, on Mar 4, Rinchen, a 32-year-old widowed mother of four had immolated herself to death outside a police station at the main gate of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Town. And the day before, a 20-year-old middle school girl named Tsering Kyi had immolated herself and died at a vegetable market in Machu county of Gansu province.

Dorje and Rinchen were reported to belong to the same group of villages in the pastoral Cha (Chinese: Jia) Township, located some 60 kilometres east of the county town.

The girl was reported to have earlier protested against the replacement of Tibetan by Chinese as the medium of teaching in Tibetan middle schools. Following her fiery protest and death, Chinese paramilitary police were reported to

have surrounded her Machu Tibetan Nationality Middle School, with officials conducting ‘reeducation’ for the students inside.

AP Mar 6 cited locals as saying authorities were making random checks of school dormitory rooms for books that go against the ruling Communist Party establishment. Besides, Tibetan homes in Machu County were reportedly being searched by the authorities.

Reporting on Dorje’s self-immolation protest, the exile Tibetan Administration at Dharamsala on Mar 6 urged China to “address the genuine grievances of the Tibetans inside Tibet and resolve the Tibet issue peacefully”. It quoted Information and International Relations Kalon (Minister) Ms Dicki Chhoyang as appealing to the international community to “make urgent representations to the Chinese government to end the tragic cycle of self-immolation in Tibet by adopting liberal policies in Tibet.”

The exile administration said 19 of the 26 Tibetans who had carried out self-immolation protests against Chinese rule since 2009 had died.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/06/world/asia/two-tibetan-women-die-after-self-immolation.html>

Three Tibetans Die After Self-Immolations

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, March 5, 2012

BEIJING — Three Tibetans killed themselves by self-immolation in two different Tibetan regions of western China over the past three days, to protest China’s repression of Tibet, according to reports by Tibetan exile groups and Radio Free Asia, which is financed by the United States government.

The three deaths — a man and two women — bring the number of Tibetans who have set fire to themselves in western China since March 2011 to at least 25; at least 17 have died.

Free Tibet, an advocacy group, said that an 18-year-old identified as Dorjee set fire to himself on Monday in the Sichuan provincial town of Chara, about 40 miles from the town of Aba, known in Tibetan as Ngaba, where many of the self-immolations have taken place. The group quoted a witness as saying Dorjee walked “in flames to a government office building where he collapsed.”

The Radio Free Asia report said that Rinchen, a 32-year-old widow and mother

of three, killed herself by self-immolation on Sunday in front of the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba. A report by Free Tibet, said Rinchen had four children.

On Saturday, a woman who attends a middle school in Maqu County in Gansu Province set fire to herself in a vegetable market, Radio Free Asia reported. On Monday, the Tibetan Women's Association, an exile advocacy group, identified the woman who killed herself as Tsering Kyi, age 19; Free Tibet said she was 20.

"This third self-immolation in as many days underlines that Tibetans will not stop protesting until their calls for freedom are heeded," said Stephanie Brigden, director of Free Tibet.

The women's association said the self-immolations by the women were the first by Tibetan laywomen in Tibet's history. Previously, only nuns or former nuns had set fire to themselves.

China considers itself a liberator of Tibet, the former Himalayan kingdom that Chinese forces occupied in the 1950's. China has denounced the self-immolations as terrorism inspired by the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader-in-exile, who fled Tibet in 1959 and has called for eased Chinese restrictions on Tibetan political and religious activities.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31010&t=1>

Tibet continues to burn: Third self-immolation in three days

Phayul, March 05, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In alarming news coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan died today after setting himself on fire protesting China's occupation of Tibet.

This is the third self-immolation in as many days.

Dorjee, 18, a native of Cha Shang in the beleaguered Ngaba region of eastern Tibet set himself on fire at around 6.30 pm local time today.

The exile base of Kirti monastery in Dharamshala, in a release said that Dorjee carried out a march from a bridge to a Chinese office in the region.

"Dorjee was engulfed in fire as he raised slogans protesting the Chinese government's policies in Tibet while marching towards the office building," the release said.

Dorjee later died at the scene of his protest.

Cha Shang is located around 70 kms east to the main Ngaba town, the centre of the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

“Local Tibetans tried to gain possession of Dorjee’s charred body but Chinese security personnel forcibly took it to Ngaba town,” the release added.

In the past two days, two women – Tsering Kyi, a 19-year school students and Rinchen, a 32-year old mother of four – torched their bodies protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Since 2009, now 26 Tibetans have set themselves on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

The three self-immolations come days ahead of the 53rd anniversary of the March 10 Tibetan National Uprising Day and the one year commemoration of the March 16 self-immolation of Kirti monk Phuntsog.

Many parts of Tibet remain under an undeclared martial law following the fiery wave self-immolations and a series of mass protests that have been brutally suppressed.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/03/201236174017267366.html>

Tibetan youth sets himself ablaze in China

Aljazeera, 06 Mar 2012

A Tibetan youth has burned himself to death in southwestern China, the third self-immolation in three days, in what overseas Tibetan rights groups said reflects growing resentment against China’s policies in the Tibetan areas.

Dorjee, 18, died after he set himself ablaze in Aba county in Sichuan province on Monday in protest at China’s policy on Tibet, human rights organisations Free Tibet and International Campaign for Tibet said .

A local official and police told Reuters by telephone that they had no knowledge of the incident.

Dorjee was the 25th self-immolation in the past year, with at least 18 believed to have died from their injuries, according to rights groups.

The latest deaths were all ordinary people and not, as is often the case, Buddhist monks or former clergy.

Isabel Hilton, editor of the London-based *China Dialogue*, said the string of self immolations was a measure of despair in response to an intensification of Chinese policies.

“This is certainly the most widespread and consistent protest since 2008. And the interesting thing about it is that although it began with religious community, monks and nuns, it has spread way beyond that,” she said.

“And it has spread into places that was not traditionally close to the Dalai Lama.”

Free Tibet, based in Britain, cited an eyewitness saying Dorjee set himself on fire near a bridge and then walked in flames to a government office building where he collapsed.

Tibetan monks at the Kirti monastery in India’s Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, said Dorjee shouted slogans against the Chinese government’s policies on Tibet as he set himself ablaze, according to the US-based International Campaign for Tibet.

Dorjee’s death came two days after two Tibetans killed themselves by setting themselves on fire in Sichuan and neighbouring Gansu province.

“This third self-immolation in as many days underlines that Tibetans will not stop protesting until their calls for freedom are heeded,” Stephanie Brigden, the director of Free Tibet, said in an emailed statement.

“The international community must take immediate action.”

Activists say China violently stamps out religious freedom and culture in Tibet, the mountainous region of western China which has been under Chinese control since 1950.

Gepey

Age: 18

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 10 March 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Noreastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan Monk Sets Himself on Fire to Protest Chinese Rule

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, 13 March 2012

Gepey was from Kirti Monastery in Sichuan Province, which is the epicenter of the wave of self-immolations that began in March 2011. Since then, at least 26 Tibetans have set fire to themselves across the Tibetan plateau, and at least 18 have died. Gepey committed self-immolation on the anniversary of an ill-fated Tibetan uprising against Chinese occupiers in 1959 that resulted in the Dalai Lama fleeing to India.

Free Tibet said Gepey killed himself behind a military building in the town of Aba, known in Tibetan as Ngaba. He was the third Tibetan in a row to self-immolate by a building that symbolizes China's crackdown in Tibet, the group said. It added that security officers took away Gepey's body, and the authorities did not allow traditional funeral rites to be performed for fear of the ceremony turning into a protest.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/13/tibetan-teenager-self-immolates-revolt-anniversary>

Tibetan teenager self-immolates on anniversary of failed uprising

The Associated Press in Beijing, 13 March 2012

A teenage Tibetan monk set himself on fire on the 53rd anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule, an overseas activist group said on Tuesday.

The London-based Free Tibet group said 18-year-old Gepey self-immolated on Saturday in Aba, a town that is under heavy security lockdown in western Sichuan province.

The group says Gepey was a monk from the town's Kirti Monastery, the scene of numerous protests against the Chinese government over the past several years. 10 March marked the start of the unsuccessful revolt that eventually caused the Dalai Lama to flee the Himalayan region in 1959.

More than two dozen Tibetans, including several teenagers, have set themselves on fire in China over the last year, protesting against China's suppression of their religion and culture and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.

Gepey died after self-immolating behind a military camp, Free Tibet said. The group said locals tried to take his body away but security personnel removed it.

A woman from the county communist party propaganda department said she had no information about the incident. Calls to the prefectural communist party department and police and county police rang unanswered. A man who answered the phone at the Kirti Monastery hung up when he was asked about the self-immolation.

Chinese authorities in Aba refused to allow locals to carry out traditional funeral rites for Gepey so as not to provide an opportunity for Tibetans to gather and protest, Free Tibet said.

Gepey was the third Tibetan this month to self-immolate near a building associated with Chinese authority. Earlier in March, another 18-year-old Tibetan man in the same county set himself on fire and walked to a government office building while a mother similarly protested outside a police station in Aba town.

"We are now witnessing a pattern of Tibetans setting themselves on fire in front of buildings which symbolise China's current crackdown in Tibet," Free Tibet's director Stephanie Brigden said.

"Saturday's self-immolation is the latest in an ever-increasing list of courageous and profound acts which the world cannot continue to ignore."

Tibetans, including a prominent writer in Beijing, have pleaded for an end to the self-immolations, saying they are not helping the cause of Tibetan rights.

The communist government has blamed supporters of the exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for encouraging the self-immolations.

The Dalai Lama has said he does not encourage the protests, but he has praised the courage of those who engage in self-immolation and has attributed the protests to what he calls China's "cultural genocide" in Tibet.

http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2017734283_apaschinatibet.html

Tibetan teen self-immolates on revolt anniversary

By Gillian Wong, *The Seattle Times* and *Associated Press*

BEIJING — A teenage Tibetan monk set himself on fire in protest on the 53rd anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule, an overseas activist group said Tuesday.

The London-based Free Tibet group said 18-year-old Gepey self-immolated on Saturday in Aba, a town that is under heavy security lockdown in western Sichuan province.

The group says Gepey was a monk from the town's Kirti Monastery, the scene of numerous protests against the Chinese government over the past several years. March 10 marked the start of the unsuccessful revolt that eventually caused the Dalai Lama to flee the Himalayan region in 1959.

More than two dozen Tibetans, including several teenagers, have set themselves on fire in China over the last year, protesting China's suppression of their religion and culture and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.

Gepey died after self-immolating behind a military camp, Free Tibet said. The group said locals tried to take his body away but security personnel removed it.

A woman from the county Communist Party propaganda department said she had no information about the incident. Calls to the prefectural Communist Party department and police and county police rang unanswered. A man who answered the phone at the Kirti Monastery hung up when he was asked about the self-immolation.

Chinese authorities in Aba refused to allow locals to carry out traditional funeral rites for Gepey so as not to provide an opportunity for Tibetans to gather and protest, Free Tibet said.

Gepey was the third Tibetan this month to self-immolate near a building associated with Chinese authority. Earlier in March, another 18-year-old Tibetan man in the same county set himself on fire and walked to a government office building while a mother similarly protested outside a police station in Aba town.

“We are now witnessing a pattern of Tibetans setting themselves on fire in front of buildings which symbolize China’s current crackdown in Tibet,” Free Tibet’s director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement. “Saturday’s self-immolation is the latest in an ever-increasing list of courageous and profound acts which the world cannot continue to ignore.”

Tibetans, including a prominent writer in Beijing, have pleaded for an end to the self-immolations, saying they are not helping the cause of Tibetan rights.

The communist government has blamed supporters of the exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for encouraging the self-immolations.

The Dalai Lama has said he does not encourage the protests, but he has praised the courage of those who engage in self-immolation and has attributed the protests to what he calls China’s “cultural genocide” in Tibet.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31056&t=1>

Fiery death marks March 10 commemorations in Tibet

Phayul, 13 March 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A teenaged Tibetan monk in eastern Tibet burned himself to death in an apparent protest against China’s rule on March 10, the day marking the 53rd anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprisings.

Gepey, an 18-year-old monk from the Kirti Monastery in the beleaguered Ngaba region set himself on fire on Saturday March 10 at around 5pm (local time) according to exile sources.

The exile base of Kirti monastery in Dharamshala in a late night release today said that Gepey self-immolated near a military camp in Ngaba town that was built in the 1950s for China’s “liberation army” when they first invaded Tibet.

“Due to the proximity to the military camp, Chinese soldiers quickly arrived and carried Gepey’s charred body inside the camp and refused to hand it over to the deceased’s family,” the release said.

A day later, on March 11, after much persistence, Chinese authorities decided to allow only five people from Gepey’s family to take part in the funeral, according to the release.

The family was ordered to have the funeral immediately and his body was cremated at 10pm (local time) on March 11, without proper traditional funeral rites. The cemetery was surrounded by security officers keeping a close watch on the proceedings.

In a separate release confirming the events of March 10, London based rights group, Free Tibet said the Chinese authorities refused to allow the traditional funeral rites to take place, fearing that it would give Tibetans a “chance to gather and provide an opportunity for further protest against China’s repression.”

Gepey is the third Tibetan in a row to self-immolate near Chinese government buildings, which are symbolic of China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

<http://www.tibetanreview.net/news.php?cp=9&cid=10463>

Monk, 18, immolates self on 53rd Tibet uprising day

TibetanReview.net, Mar 14, 2012,

An 18-19-year-old monk named Gepey of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County or Sichuan Province immolated himself to death around 5:30PM (Beijing Time) on Mar 10 as Tibetans across the free world marked the 53rd anniversary of their national uprising against Chinese rule. Gepey immolated himself in a market-place behind the county military camp, the first to be set up by the Chinese while invading Tibet, reported Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and several other sources Mar 13.

Because of the prevailing state of security imposed by the Chinese authorities, the monk’s mother learnt about the incident only the next day and went to the camp to demand his body. But the Chinese refused and eventually agreed to its cremation near Kirti Monastery late in the night of Mar 11, but without the traditional rituals. The crematorium was surrounded by troops to prevent the gathering of a crowd.

RF4.org (Radio Free Asia, Washington) said Mar 13 that Chinese police detained Gepey’s mother, Chako, and questioned her for several hours over Mar 11-12, eventually releasing her.

Gepey belonged to the nomadic Soru Division of Choejema Township in Ngaba County. He joined Kirti Monastery at a young age. His father passed away

few years back while his brothers are also monks at Kirti Monastery.

Gepey's is the 27th known case of self-immolation by protesting Tibetans in Tibet since Feb 2009. Local Tibetans were reported to have shut their shops and restaurants to show solidarity with Gepey.

REA.org reported that news of Gepey's self-immolation appeared also on the Chinese website Xin Lang, which carried a Weibo microblog posting confirming Gepey's name and age and the date of his protest. However, the posting was quickly removed and replaced by a comment saying that the story could not be viewed by the public.

Local Chinese authorities have either refused to answer questions to denied knowledge about the incident when queried by international wire news services.

Dorjee, self-immolated on March 5 walking towards a local Chinese government building, while on March 4, Rinchen torched her body in front of a police station especially set up outside the gate of Kirti monastery in Ngaba.

Gepey, a semi-orphan, is survived by his mother and two brothers, both of whom are monks.

According to Kirti monastery, his mother was summoned by Chinese security personnel for daylong interrogation sessions on March 11 and 12.

Due to the tight security clampdown in Ngaba, which alone has witnessed more than 15 self-immolations, Tibetans in the region came to know of Gepey's death only on March 12.

"Local Tibetan shops and restaurants remained closed today in a strong show of solidarity with Gepey's courageous act," the release said.

More military, paramilitary and police personnel have been deployed in Ngaba town since Saturday.

27 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire since 2009 demanding the return of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Jamyang Palden

Age: 34

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 14 March 2012

Place: Rongpo Monastery, Rebkong, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Another Tibetan Monk Sets Himself on Fire to Protest Chinese Rule

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, 15 March 2012

Jamyang Palden, who self-immolated in a square in front of Rongwo Monastery, is believed to have survived. The authorities took him to a hospital, but monks brought him back to the monastery for fear that he would be arrested, Free Tibet said.

At least 27 Tibetans have self-immolated since March 2011, and at least 18 of those have died. About 500 monks gathered in the square after the self-immolation on Wednesday, and some held up pictures of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of the Tibetans, Free Tibet said.

The International Campaign for Tibet, another advocacy group, said its sources had confirmed the self-immolation, which took place around 9 a.m. Rongwo is in the county of Rebkong, called Tongren in Chinese, an area that is on the border of the Tibetan and ethnic Han lands.

Fire rages on in Tibet: A monk in Rebkong self-immolates

Phayul, 14 March 2012

DHARAMSHALA, March 14: Reports of yet another self-immolation by a monk in Rebkong in the traditional Amdo region are coming out of Tibet.

Jamyang Palden, 34 a monk at the Rongwo monastery in Rebkong set himself on fire in an apparent protest against the Chinese government earlier today.

The Dharamshala based Tibet Times newspaper has cited sources in exile as saying that Jamyang Palden self-immolated on a ground in front of the monastery.

“Tibetans who were present at the site of Jamyang Palden’s fiery protest immediately took him to a hospital in Marlho town but soon after, he was brought back to the monastery,” the report said.

It is not clear why Jamyang Palden was brought back to the monastery but it is widely believed that the move was taken to rescue him from falling into the hands of Chinese security personnel.

In earlier instances of self-immolation protests, eyewitnesses have said that Chinese security personnel at the scene of the protests have resorted to brute force, beating Tibetans who are still on fire with spiked clubs.

Reports have confirmed that Tibetans who had survived their self-immolation protest had to go through amputations and were subjected to verbal abuse and maltreatment from the doctors and Chinese officials at the hospital.

“Right now, a large number of monks and local Tibetans are gathered at the ground in front of the monastery, the site of Jamyang Palden’s protest and offering prayers,” sources said.

There are no further details available at the time of filing this report.

With Jamyang Palden’s self-immolation, 28 Tibetans have now set their bodies on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2012/03/201231654630527945.html>

Tibetan monk in self-immolation bid in China

Aljazeera, 16 March 2012

A Tibetan monk set himself on fire in western China on Wednesday, an overseas activist group and a Chinese state news agency reported, the latest in a spate of self-immolations.

Jamyang Palden burned himself in Tongren, a monastery town in Qinghai province, and survived after security forces put out the blaze, the official Xinhua

News Agency and London-based Free Tibet said.

More than two dozen Tibetans have set themselves on fire in China over the past year to protest the suppression of their religion and culture and call for the Dalai Lama's return.

Palden's self-immolation coincided with the four-year anniversary of violent mass protests against inequality and Chinese influence in Tibet, which led to thousands of arrests and dozens of deaths.

It also comes as China moves to establish firmer control over the semi-autonomous province. Earlier this year, the government ended a long-running policy of allowing Tibet's monasteries to run independently, instead deciding to station Communist Party officials in almost all of them.

Free Tibet said Palden took part in the 2008 protests, the largest uprising against Chinese rule in 50 years, and was arrested and tortured for it.

Gasoline-soaked robe

Palden walked out of Rongwo Monastery in the morning dressed in a gasoline-soaked robe, then used a lighter to burn himself, Xinhua said, citing a county government spokesman.

Free Tibet said Palden went to a public square, prostrated three times beside Rongwo Monastery and shouted "Let His Holiness return! Freedom for Tibet and the Tibetan language!" before he set himself on fire.

Security forces put out the fire by covering Palden's body with a sheet, the group said.

He was taken to a hospital, but was brought back to the monastery by monks who feared he would be arrested by Chinese authorities, Free Tibet said.

Xinhua said officials were talking with the monk's relatives to try to send him to a hospital in the provincial capital of Xining where he could receive better medical treatment.

The group said about 500 monks and other Tibetans gathered in the town square to demonstrate, with some holding up images of their exiled Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Monks from other monasteries were traveling to the town to express their solidarity and people trying to enter the town were being stopped and questioned by plainclothes security, it said.

Calls to Tongren police, local government and Communist Party offices rang unanswered.

‘Cultural genocide’

At his annual news conference in Beijing on Wednesday, Premier Wen Jiabao spoke out against the immolations and said it was sad to see such behavior from innocent Tibetans.

“We are opposed to taking such radical moves which disturb and undermine the social harmony,” Wen said. “The young Tibetans are innocent. We feel deeply distressed by their behavior.”

China has previously sought to discredit the self-immolators, saying that some suffered mental problems or had criminal records. Wen also stressed that Tibet and other heavily Tibetan areas of China remain “inseparable parts of China’s territory”.

Tibetans, including a prominent writer in Beijing, have pleaded for an end to the self-immolations, saying they are not helping the cause of Tibetan rights.

The communist government has blamed supporters of the Dalai Lama for encouraging the self-immolations.

The Dalai Lama has said he does not encourage the protests, but has praised the courage of those who engage in self-immolation and has attributed the protests to what he calls China’s “cultural genocide” in Tibet.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Qinghai,-Tibetan-monks-self-immolation-sparks-protest-24236.html>

Qinghai, Tibetan monks self immolation sparks protest

By Nirmala Carvalho, *Asia News*, 14 March 2012

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - Jamyang Palden, a Tibetan monk in his 30's set himself on fire in Rongwo (Rebkong County, Qinghai) at about 10.30 this morning. The cleric self-immolated near Rongwo monastery, the largest in the county and according to the latest information, has survived.

But his sacrifice has sparked a protest that is growing.

Witnesses say that as the monks gathered for prayer, Jamyang Palden went out

into the square and set himself on fire. Staff of the Office for Religious Affairs and Public Safety arrived quickly and took him to hospital. A group of monks and lamas entered the same hospital and took the wounded man back to the monastery. They fear that the authorities would detain Jamyang, as soon as he recovers.

After the self-immolation, about 500 monks gathered in the square. They were joined by local people and neighboring villages, singing and praying under the close supervision of Chinese soldiers. Some of the demonstrators carried pictures of the Dalai Lama which are banned in Tibet. The monks then returned to the monastery, but religious of other monasteries are on their way to the city to express their solidarity.

A demonstration also broke out in the Yifu middle and high school, also in Rongwo. Last week there was a demonstration of over 700 students. Police surrounded the building with checkpoints on the streets, checking anyone who wants to enter or exit. A security cordon was also put up around the monastery.

Although Jamyang Palden survived in his sacrifice, he is in very serious conditions.

Today's self immolation brings to 25 the number of Tibetans to set themselves on fire to criticize Beijing and demand the return of the Dalai Lama. China accuses the Dalai Lama of encouraging these acts as an instrument of political pressure. In fact, the Tibetan leader has always claimed not to encourage this extreme form of protest, asking the young monks to preserve their life. He says that the desperation which created these gestures is caused by "cultural genocide" in Tibet and to which the Tibetans are submitted by the Chinese regime.

Monk Jamyang Palden succumbs to injuries six months after fiery protest *Phayul*, 1 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Tibetan self-immolator Jamyang Palden, a monk at the Rongwo Monastery in Rebkong, eastern Tibet, has reportedly succumbed to his injuries after an ordeal that lasted for more than six months.

Jamyang Palden, 34, passed away in the evening of September 29, at his monastery quarters.

According to India based Tibetan language news portal, Tibet Times, monks at

the monastery gathered in large numbers to offer prayers for the deceased, soon after news of his passing away broke out.

Monks and local Tibetans had been nursing Jamyang Palden and taking care of him since his discharge from a hospital in the nearby Malho town.

“Due to his severe burn injuries, he showed very little signs of improvement and finally passed away,” the report quoted an exile Tibetan with contacts in the region as saying.

On March 14, Jamyang Palden set himself on fire in an apparent protest against the Chinese government on a ground in front of his monastery.

Tibetans who were present at the site of his fiery protest immediately took him to a hospital but brought him back to the monastery to rescue him from falling into the hands of Chinese security personnel.

A large number of monks and local Tibetans had gathered at the ground in front of the monastery to offer prayers and mark their protest.

According to confirmed reports, Tibetans who had survived their self-immolation protest suffered amputations of all limbs and were subjected to verbal abuse, interrogations and maltreatment from the doctors and Chinese officials at the hospitals.

Days after Jamyang Palden’s self-immolation protest, Sonam Dhargey, a 44-year-old father of three, set himself ablaze near the Rongwo town centre and succumbed to his burns at his protest site.

Marching in the street, engulfed in flames, eyewitnesses said Sonam Dhargey called for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Sonam Dhargey had wound his torso with barbed wires, a tactic that has been earlier used by self-immolating Tibetans to restrict Chinese security personnel from getting hold of their bodies.

Local Tibetans had carried Sonam Dhargey’s body to Dolma Square, the main ground in front of the Rongwo monastery, where according to reports, more than 8000 Tibetans gathered to pay their last respects and mark their protest against the Chinese government.

Since 2009, there have been 52 known cases of self-immolations in Tibet, out of which now 42 Tibetans have passed away.

The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently expressed America's concerns over the increasing instances of self-immolations in Tibet and violations of human rights at a meeting with her Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi.

"The Secretary, as she always does, raised human rights concerns – notably in this particular meeting, concerns about Tibet and increasing pace of immolations," a senior US official said after Clinton met Yang on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

Lobsang Tsultrim

Age: 20

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 16 March 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Breaking: Yet another self-immolation marks a year of fiery protests

Phayul, March 16, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, March 16: Exactly a year after monk Phuntsog set himself on fire demanding the return of the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet, another Tibetan has set himself on fire today.

Lobsang Tsultrim, a 20-year-old monk from the besieged Kirti monastery in the Ngaba region of eastern Tibet set his body on fire at around 5 pm local time.

According to the exile base of Kirti monastery in Dharamshala, Lobsang Tsultrim set himself ablaze on the main street in the upper region of Ngaba town.

"Lobsang Tsultrim was enveloped in flames and raising slogans as he started marching up the main road," the release said. "Upon seeing Chinese security personnel rushing towards him, Lobsang Tsultrim turned back but another security

personnel present there struck him and he fell on the ground.”

The fire was extinguished and Lobsang Tsultrim was thrown into a police vehicle.

“Even as Chinese security personnel had pinned him on the floor of the moving vehicle, Lobsang Tsultrim was seen raising his fist in the air and raising slogans,” the release said quoting eyewitnesses.

Born to Yeshi and Tsedron, Lobsang Tsultrim is the eldest of four siblings.

He was enrolled into the monastic order at the age of eight and throughout his schooling years, he was amongst the brightest students in the monastery.

Lobsang Tsultrim has been described by his peers as “well-behaved and friendly.”

Since Phuntsog’s self-immolation protest, 28 Tibetans have torched their bodies in the past one year alone, protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

In anticipation of protests on the one-year anniversary of monk Phuntsog’s self-immolation, Chinese security personnel were on high alert since morning, the release said.

In the past few months, several foreign journalists attempting to enter the Ngaba region including reporters from the BBC and CNN have been detained, thrown out, and threatened of visa revocations.

However, journalists who have been able to slip through the tight security cordon have described the town, which has been at the centre of the fiery protests, as a “conflict zone” under “stifling lockdown.”

An Associated Press journalist reported that soldiers with helmets, rifles, sticks, and shields marching in rows were not only patrolling the streets, but also “policing the minds” of the community.

“The locals are definitely feeling very heavy-hearted, very frustrated, all day. The soldiers are everywhere,” the report quoted a teacher as saying. “At every moment, people wonder what will happen to the person next to them, what the soldiers will do to them.”

One of the first to gain access to the region, a Guardian reporter, revealed that Chinese paramilitaries were trying to “snuff out Tibetan resistance to Beijing’s rule with spiked batons, semi-automatic weapons and fire extinguishers.”

“Essentially you’ve got a town that’s on edge - a town that’s divided between the potential immolators and those standing by to extinguish,” the Guardian reported.

Many countries have expressed serious concerns over the ongoing crisis inside Tibet and urged China to address the grievances of the Tibetan people.

The Tibetan exile parliament, which is currently in session, held extensive discussions on the spate of self-immolations and mass protests inside Tibet and passed a unanimous resolution urging the Chinese leadership to immediately end its repressive policies in Tibet and allow an international fact-finding delegation to visit Tibetan areas.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Ngaba:-Tibetan-monk-who-self-immolated-to-protest-China-dies-from-wounds-24289.html>

Ngaba: Tibetan monk who self-immolated to protest China dies from wounds
Asia News, 20 March 2012

Lhasa (AsiaNews) - Lobsang Tsultrim, a 20-yr-old Tibetan monk who self-immolated on 16 March 2012 died last night in Barkham (Ngaba, Sichuan), after three long painful days. After preventing his parents from visiting their son, the authorities cremated Lobsang’s body and gave his ashes to the family. On the same day, monks at the Kirti Monastery held a prayer ceremony following the monk’s death.

According to local sources, Lobsang was a cousin of Norbu Damdul, a 19 year-old former monk at the Kirti Monastery, who self-immolated on 15 October 2011 and later died on 5 January 2012.

Since February 2009, 29 monks have set themselves on fire to demonstrate against China’s rigid censorship and control.

In order to keep Tibetan religious under control, China has brought all forms of worship under its tight rein, deciding if and when monasteries can open.

The Dalai Lama has always discouraged this form of protest; nevertheless, he has praised the courage that it takes to choose such an extreme action, which is the consequence of China’s ongoing policy of cultural genocide in Tibet. (N.C.)

<http://www.rfa.org/english/tibet/burn-03162012143125.html/>

Monk Burns Himself Amid Mass Protests

RFA, 16 march 2012

Another Tibetan monk self-immolated Friday in China's Sichuan province in protest over Chinese rule while more than 1,000 Tibetans demonstrated in neighboring Qinghai province demanding the release of more than 50 monks who were detailed a day earlier in a monastery crackdown.

Twenty-year-old Lobsang Tsultrim was in flames as he ran shouting slogans against Chinese rule near the county office in Sichuan's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture, eyewitnesses told India-based monks Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe.

"He was pursued by Chinese policemen who beat him, knocked him down, and threw him into an open truck," Tsering quoted one eyewitness as saying.

"He was seen being taken away but he kept pumping his fists in the air."

Tsultrim, the eldest in a family of four and who was ordained as a monk when he was eight, was from the restive Kirti monastery, which has been surrounded and sealed by security forces which have also beefed up security across Ngaba county.

He is the 29th Tibetan to have self-immolated since February 2009 amid a wave of fiery Tibetan protests challenging Beijing's rule and calling for the return of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan flag

The self-immolation came as more than 1,000 Tibetans protested in Gepasumdo (in Chinese, Tongde) county in Qinghai province on Friday calling for the release of about 50 monks who had been held for raising the Tibetan flag and demanding freedom a day earlier, according to sources.

"Over a thousand Tibetans converged at the county building and demanded that all the monks detained should be released," a local Tibetan source told RFA.

"They persisted in the peaceful protests and the county government building was surrounded by police and paramilitary forces."

The source said there was no confrontation as elder Tibetans had advised the protesters to “persist in their peaceful defiance and not become involved in any kind of violence.”

The protest was triggered by a crackdown by Chinese security forces on the Ba Shangtre monastery Thursday after about 150 to 200 monks from the institution raised the Tibetan flag at the Gepasumdo (in Chinese, Tongde) county in Tsolho (in Chinese, Hainan) prefecture.

They also displayed banners calling for freedom for Tibet, the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and for human rights for Tibetans before marching through the streets, the Tibetan source said.

“Some time that evening, 40 Chinese vehicles arrived at the monastery and the Chinese police and paramilitary surrounded it. They searched the residences of the monks and detained about 60 monks,” the source said.

“Fifty of them were held back at the county detention center while 10 were released.”

Police

Chinese police at Gepasumdo county refused to confirm the protests.

When RFA asked the person who answered the phone at the police station whether there was a 1,000-strong protest, he said, “There wasn’t.”

Asked whether the protesters were all students, he hung up the phone.

Tensions have heightened in Tibetan-populated provinces and in the Tibet Autonomous Region following a Chinese security clampdown and the detention of hundreds of monks since early last year.

Earlier this week, several thousand students protested in three counties in Qinghai on Wednesday to challenge a possible change in the medium of instruction in schools.

The protests against a proposed change from Tibetan to Chinese language occurred in schools in Rebkong (in Chinese, Tongren), Tsekhog (Zeku) and Kangt-sa (Gangcha) counties, according to a Tibetan exile spokesman for the Rebkong community based in the Indian hilltown of Dharamsala.

It was the biggest protest since October 2010 when thousands of Tibetan middle and primary school pupils from four different Tibetan autonomous pre-

fectures in Qinghai Province demonstrated for days against a language change policy.

Anniversary

The latest self-immolation came nearly a week after Uprising Day on March 10, the politically sensitive anniversary of the 1959 flight into exile of the Dalai Lama and of regionwide protests throughout Tibet in 2008.

The wave of self-immolations prompted a call last week from well-known Tibetan blogger Woesser and senior Tibetan religious leader Arjia Rinpoche to end the fiery protests, saying that Tibetans opposed to Chinese rule should instead “stay alive to struggle and push forward” their goals.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31095&t=1>

Lobsang Tsultrim passes away, Ngaba mourns in solidarity

Phayul, March 20, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, March 20: Lobsang Tsultrim, the 20-year-old monk, who self-immolated on March 16, marking a year of fiery protests, passed away in a Chinese hospital yesterday.

According to the exile base of Kirti monastery in Dharamshala, local Chinese authorities denied Lobsang Tsultrim's family the right to perform his last rites and cremated him the same day.

“Only a portion of his ashes was handed over to the family,” Kirti monastery said in a release.

Lobsang Tsultrim's self-immolation on March 16 came exactly a year after another Kirti monk, Phuntsog set himself on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Eyewitnesses said that Lobsang Tsultrim, enveloped in flames, marched on the main street in Ngaba town raising slogans.

He was knocked down on the ground by Chinese security personnel and thrown into the back of a vehicle after extinguishing the flames.

Lobsang Tsultrim was seen raising his fist in the air and shouting slogans even

as Chinese security personnel had pinned him on the floor of the moving vehicle.

Born to Yeshi and Tsedron, the “bright” student of Kirti Tantric college was the eldest of four siblings.

It has also been learned that Lobsang Tsultrim was a cousin of Norbu Damdul, a former Kirti monk who self-immolated on October 15, 2011 and passed away in a Chinese hospital on January 5, 2012.

Norbu Damdul had raised slogans demanding complete independence for Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Kirti monastery in its release said that all Tibetan shops and restaurants in Ngaba town remained closed for three days following Lobsang Tsultrim’s self-immolation, in a strong show of solidarity.

“Also on the 19th, the full assembly of Kirti monks sat through the night doing scriptural recitations,” the release added.

Out of the 30 self-immolations that have taken place inside Tibet since 2009, the Ngaba region alone has witnessed 19 fiery protests.

According to the Central Tibetan Administration, 22 Tibetans have died in the ongoing wave of self-immolation protests, while the condition and whereabouts of four self-immolators remain “unknown.”

The rest are being described in “serious condition,” having sustained spinal cord injuries and amputation of all limbs.

The Tibetan exile parliament, which is currently in session in Dharamshala, held extensive discussions on the spate of self-immolations and mass protests inside Tibet and passed a unanimous resolution urging the Chinese leadership to immediately end its repressive policies in Tibet and allow an international fact-finding delegation to visit Tibetan areas.

Sonam Dhargyal

Age: 44

Occupation: Farmer

Date of self-immolation: 17 March 2012

Place: at a road near Malho county, Rebkong,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



CTA Urges Chinese Government to Defuse Escalating Tension in Rebkong

Tibet.net, Press Release, 18 March 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply worried about reports of looming tensions in Rebkong in north-eastern Tibet. A stand-off between armed security forces and the local Tibetans occurred during the funeral of a Tibetan farmer who died of self-immolation yesterday.

Sonam Dhargyal, a 44-year-old farmer, shouted slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet before setting himself on fire in Rongbo in the morning of 17 March. In recent years, he is reported to have been persistently saying: “The return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet is of paramount importance, and it will solve the issue of Tibet.”

Tibetans who tried to put out the flame said he succumbed to fatal injuries on the spot. They said his stomach burst out and that he had tied a thin barb wire covered in cotton padding around the stomach.

Later, an unprecedented gathering of over 7,000 Tibetans including many from neighbouring areas, converged at his funeral at Dolma Ground in front of Rongbo monastery.

Convoys of armed police and paramilitary forces arrived at the site, resulting in confrontation with the Tibetans. The security forces, who withdrew after they were outnumbered by mourners, are still present in and around the monastery.

Prayer rituals for the deceased monk are being carried out in Rongbo monastery.

Sonam Dhargyal was a close friend of Jamyang Palden, the monk of Rongbo monastery, who was critically injured after he self-immolated on 16 March. He is undergoing medical treatment at his room in Rongbo monastery. His condition worsened today with his vital nervous system not responding to medication.

The current situation remains grim in Rebgong from the last many months as a result of severe repressive measures imposed on both the lay and monastic communities. Large numbers of government officials are stationed across the region, particularly in monasteries and schools, to quell peaceful protests by Tibetans. Local government officials and students have been warned by higher authorities that they will be dismissed from their position and expelled from school respectively if demonstrations occur. There is also unprecedented restriction on the freedom of movement and gathering of Tibetans in the region.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is extremely concerned about well-being of Tibetans in Rebgong in view of further provocative measures from the authorities and security forces. “We hope the authorities in Qinghai, with its large Tibetan population, will demonstrate a more peaceful way of responding to these protests than what we have seen so far in Sichuan,” stated Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration.

The CTA reiterates its appeal to the Chinese leadership to end its repressive policies, and address the long-standing grievances of Tibetans through peaceful dialogue.

Since 2009, 30 Tibetans have so far set themselves on fire calling for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland. 17 of these incidents occurred in this year alone.

Tension escalates in Tibet with 2 self immolations in 2 days

The Hindustan Times, Dharamsala, March 18, 2012

Expressing concern over the reports of looming tensions in Rebgong in north-eastern Tibet, The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has urged the Chinese authorities to end its repressive policies, and address the long-standing grievances of Tibetans through peaceful dialogue. A stand-off

between armed security forces and the local Tibetans occurred during the funeral of a Tibetan farmer who died of self-immolation on Saturday.

According to reports from Tibet, Sonam Dhargyal, a 44-year-old farmer set himself on fire in Rongbo on 17 March in the morning. "He shouted slogans demanding the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet before setting himself on fire," said the CTA official.

"Tibetans who tried to put out the flame said he died on the spot. They said his stomach burst open as he had padded it with cotton tucked in with barbed wire," the official added.

The official stated that, an unprecedented gathering of over 7,000 Tibetans including many from neighbouring areas converged at his funeral in Dolma ground in front of Rongbo monastery.

Convoys of armed police and paramilitary forces arrived at the site, resulting in confrontation with the Tibetans but later security forces withdrew after they were outnumbered by mourners. "Security forces are still present in and around the monastery making the situation tense," he said.

This is the 7th incident of self immolation in the month of March. The total number of self immolations is 30 out of which over 20 have died while the others are in a critical condition.

Earlier Losang Tsultrim, a 20-year-old monk of Kirti monastery, took to the main street of Ngaba town and had set himself on fire on 16 March. "CTA is extremely concerned about well-being of Tibetans in Rebgong in view of further provocative measures from the authorities and security forces," stated Dicki Chhoyang, minister for information and international relations.

"We hope the authorities in Qinghai, with its large Tibetan population, will demonstrate a more peaceful way of responding to these protests than what we have seen so far in Sichuan," she added.

Video Shows Sonam Dhargyal Engulfed in Flames

VOA Tibetan, 19 March 2012

Video received by VOA Tibetan reportedly shows Sonam Dhargyal engulfed in flames after his self-immolation. On Saturday, Sonam Dhargyal, 44-year-old fa-

ther of three, set himself on fire in Rebkong region of eastern Tibet, in the latest gesture of defiance to protest Chinese government policies on Tibet.

Twenty-nine Tibetans, mostly Buddhist monks, have set themselves on fire in the past year to draw attention to what they describe as Beijing's oppression of the Tibetan religion and culture. At least 20 have died.

The Chinese government has described the self-immolations as barbaric and terrorists acts. It accuses overseas groups and the Dalai Lama of inciting separatism. Beijing also has portrayed those who have set themselves on fire as outcasts and criminals.

<http://www.bikyamasr.com/62403/man-sets-himself-on-fire-in-eastern-tibet/>

Man sets himself on fire in Eastern Tibet

Bikyamasr, 17 March 2012

MUMBAI: A man in eastern Tibet set himself on fire on Saturday in the latest in a series of similar protests at Chinese rule and government policies.

Sonam Dhargyal, 44, had self-immolated in the Rebkong region, the broadcaster said quoting witnesses.

A monk in Sichuan province in south-western China set himself alight in a similar protest earlier this week. Many Tibetans live in the province.

Over the past year some 30 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, with at least 19 dying as a result.

An official close to the office of the Dalai Lama – the spiritual leader of Tibet – told *Bikyamasr.com* that they do not condone the acts of suicide, but added under anonymity that they “understand” what people are going through.

The Dalai Lama has long denounced any violence.

Beijing has blamed a foreign conspiracy behind the protests. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao this week accused the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile in India of promoting Tibetan separatism.

China invaded Tibet in 1959, forcing the Dalai Lama and the government to flee the country. They have been in occupation ever since, and claim the territory

to be historically part of China, despite Tibetans speaking a different language, practice a different faith and have had their own government, in a number of forms, since at least the 13th century.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31329&t=1>

Kirti Rinpoche presides over prayer service for self-immolators

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, May 03, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, May 3: Led by H.E. the 11th Kirti Rinpoche, Tibetans here in the exile headquarters of Dharamshala held a mass prayer service for the 36 Tibetans who have set their bodies on fire in the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

“Coinciding with the 49th day since the passing away of Sonam Dhargyal, we are holding this prayer service for all the Tibetan martyrs who immolated themselves calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile,” one of the organisers said.

Tibetan Buddhists believe that after death, the consciousness takes at least 49 days to travel from one life to the next and conducting prayers during this period can assist and guide the dead towards a good rebirth.

Sonam Dhargyal, a 44-year-old farmer had set himself ablaze on March 17, triggering what many believe the “largest” gathering of Tibetans in the Rongwo region of eastern Tibet.

The father of three, succumbed to his burns at the site of the protest near the Rongwo town centre, following which local Tibetans carried his body to Dolma Square, the main ground in front of the Rongwo monastery.

As news spread of Sonam Dhargyal’s fiery death, thousands of Tibetans from all over the town as well as from nearby villages, including some 600 Tibetans from Sonam’s village poured in to show their solidarity.

Since Tapey’s self-immolation in 2009, the Ngaba region, which hosts the Kirti monastery, alone has witnessed 25 instances of fiery protests.

Testifying before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on ‘Human Rights in Tibet:

Repression, Refugees, and Religious Freedom’ November last, Kirti Rinpoche, Head Abbot of the Kirti Monastery said that his native monastery has been turned into a “dreaded jail.”

“Within the barricaded monastery, the monks were divided into fifty-five groups and over 800 government officials moved into the monastic compound,” Rinpoche said in his testimony.

“Monks’ quarters are searched, all electronic devices have been confiscated, holy-scriptures are cut into pieces by knives and monks are forced to stamp on photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. About 100 monks were arrested en-mass, tortured and interrogated.”

Jampel Yeshi

Age: 26

Occupation: Activist

Date of self-immolation: 26 March 2012

Place: Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, India

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Jampel Yeshi:

‘Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is the shining example of world peace. We must strive to ensure the return of His Holiness to Tibet. I pray and believe that the Tibetan people in and outside Tibet will be united and sing the Tibetan national anthem in front of the Potala Palace.

My fellow Tibetans, when we think about our future happiness and path, we need loyalty. It is the life-soul of a people. It is the spirit to find truth. It is the guide leading to happiness. My fellow Tibetans, if you want equality and happiness as in the rest of the world, you must hold fast to this word ‘LOYALTY’ towards your country. Loyalty is the wisdom to know truth from falsehood. You must work hard in all your endeavours, big or small.

Freedom is the basis of happiness for all living beings. Without freedom, six million Tibetans

are like a butter lamp in the wind, moving without direction. My fellow Tibetans from the Three Provinces, it is clear to us all that if we unitedly combine our strength, there will be results. So, don't be disheartened.

What I want to convey here is the concern of the six million Tibetans. At a time when we are making our final move toward our goal — if you have money, it is the time to spend it; if you are educated it is the time to produce results; if you have control over your life, I think the day has come to sacrifice your life. The fact that Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st century is to let the world know about their suffering, and to tell the world about the denial of basic human rights. If you have any empathy, stand up for the Tibetan people.

We demand freedom to practice our religion and culture. We demand freedom to use our language. We demand the same rights as other people living elsewhere in the world. People of the world, stand up for Tibet. Tibet belongs to Tibetans. Victory to Tibet!"

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Jampa Yeshi, Tibetan Exile, Sets Self On Fire In Self-Immolation Anti-China Protest

The Associated Press, 26 March 2012

NEW DELHI (AP) — A Tibetan exile lit himself on fire and ran shouting through a demonstration in the Indian capital Monday, just before a visit by China's president and following dozens of self-immolations done in China in protest of its rule over Tibet.

Indian police swept through the New Delhi protest a few hours later, detaining scores of Tibetans.

The man apparently had doused himself with something highly flammable and was engulfed in flames when he ran past the podium where speakers were criticizing China and President Hu Jintao's visit.

Fellow activists beat out the flames with Tibetan flags and poured water onto him. He was on fire perhaps less than two minutes, but some of his clothing had disintegrated and his skin was mottled with black, burned patches by the time he was driven to a hospital.

About 30 such protests have occurred over the past year in ethnic Tibetan areas of China, and a Tibetan self-immolated last year in India, where many exiles re-

side. Beijing has blamed the Dalai Lama for inciting them and called the protesters' actions a form of terrorism.

Tibetans inside China and exiles say China's crackdown on Tibetan regions is so oppressive, those who choose such a horrific form of protest feel they have no other way to express their beliefs.

Activists said the exile who self-immolated Monday is Jamphel Yeshe, 27, who escaped from Tibet in 2006 and has been living in New Delhi for two years.

He was burned on 98 percent of his body and his condition is critical, according to the Association of Tibetan Journalists.

Protesters initially prevented police from taking him to the hospital, but officers eventually forcibly took him away.

While activists had been whispering Monday morning that something dramatic was expected at the protest, organizers insisted they were not behind the self-immolation.

"We have no idea how this happened, but we appreciate the courage," said Tenzing Norsang, an official with the Tibetan Youth Congress.

Hu is expected to arrive in India on Wednesday for a five-nation economic summit. Norsang called on the summit participants to discuss Tibet.

"If you care about peace you should raise the issue of Tibet," he said. "Hu Jintao is responsible for what is happening there."

At the protest site, a large poster of Hu — with a bloody palm print over his face — said: "Hu Jin Tao is unwelcome" at the summit.

More than 600 demonstrators marched across New Delhi to a plaza near the Indian Parliament. Some carried posters saying "Tibet is burning" or "Tibet is not part of China."

"This is what China faces unless they give freedom to Tibet," said Tenzin Dorjee, a young onlooker.

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory. Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries.

Many of the protesters who have self-immolated in China are Buddhist monks or nuns, often in their teens or early 20s. They have done so while calling for

the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama and to protest Chinese rule over their homeland. Security forces have taken many away, and it's unknown how many survived.

The origin of this form of protest is unclear. Some activists see inspiration from the Arab Spring protests, set off by a Tunisian fruit seller's self-immolation. Others see historical examples among Buddhist monks: those who protests Vietnam's crackdowns in the 1960s and Chinese in the last imperial dynasty.

The economic summit Hu will be attending this week involves the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, who form a grouping known as BRICS.

Police in New Delhi were already bracing for protests by the tens of thousands of Tibetan exiles who live in India. Security around the summit location has been tightened, and roads leading to the hotel will be closed to the public a day ahead of the meeting.

Rajan Bhagat, a spokesman for the Delhi police, did not know how long the protesting Tibetans would be held, or how many had been taken into custody.

Tibetan protesters normally are held for anywhere from a few hours to one day — often to stop them from further embarrassing Indian authorities during Chinese visits — though detainees legally can be held for up to one week.

Tibetan Exiles Rally Around Delhi Self-Immolator

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, March 28, 2012

DHARAMSALA, India — By Tuesday afternoon, posters of the man in flames were plastered along the narrow streets of this town adopted by Tibetan exiles. Monks, merchants and tourists stared. In the early evening, more than 200 people walked through the town center waving Tibetan flags and carrying banners that proclaimed Jampel Yeshe, who died on Wednesday, a martyr.

The shocking images of Mr. Yeshe's self-immolation in New Delhi on Monday have provided the Tibetan exile movement with a rallying point and an iconic expression of the anger and frustration that Tibetans suffer over Chinese rule. At least 29 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibetan areas of China since March 2011, and many have died. But Chinese security forces have clamped down across the plateau, so only a handful of the self-immolations have been

recorded and transmitted, and only in grainy cellphone photographs or video.

Mr. Yeshi burned himself in front of hundreds of people, during a protest largely by Tibetans before a visit by President Hu Jintao of China, who was scheduled to arrive in New Delhi Wednesday afternoon to attend an economic summit. Mr. Yeshi was taken to a hospital with burns over 98 percent of his body, and word of the self-immolation spread quickly through Dharamsala, a hill station in northern India that is the home of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, and the government-in-exile.

On Tuesday, images of Mr. Yeshi proliferated on walls here. One gruesome poster showed his ravaged body in the hospital. A cousin, Sonam Wangyal, visited him before his death and mourned his terrible injuries, The Associated Press reported. But he also said: “We are fighting for freedom. The world should know this.”

Details about Mr. Yeshi’s life emerged. Many initial reports that were largely based on Indian police accounts said his first name was Jampa and gave his age as 26, but Tibetan organizations here said with certainty that he was Jamphel Yeshi, 27. Fellow exiles said he was from the Ganzi area in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham, which now lies in China’s Sichuan Province. He left in 2006 and made his way to Dharamsala, where he attended a school that educates refugees in Tibetan history, culture and language. Mr. Yeshi then settled in New Delhi, where he was unemployed and lived with his cousin.

“He self-immolated for the cause of Tibet,” said Tenzing Namdak, 36, a man in jeans and a tan jacket walking at the back of the march on Tuesday. “All the Tibetans have tried so many ways to get attention, and somebody had to take the lead.”

The crowd that strode through upper Dharamsala, officially called McLeod Ganj, pumped fists in the air and chanted slogans: “What do we want? Freedom!” “United Nations, please support us.” “Stop the killing.” The march was organized by the Gu Chu Sum Movement of Tibet, which calls itself an association of former political prisoners.

Marchers said they wanted to express support for Mr. Yeshi and opposition to Mr. Hu, who was to attend a meeting of the leaders of Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa in New Delhi on Wednesday and Thursday. Black posters put up days ago throughout town showed Mr. Hu’s unsmiling face with a bloody hand-

print over it, and called for people to attend the rally in New Delhi on Monday. Many Tibetans had taken a 12-hour bus ride from Dharamsala to take part in that protest, which drew about 600 people, Mr. Yeshi among them.

China blames the self-immolations on the Dalai Lama. On Tuesday, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said that the Dalai Lama and his associates had “single-handedly” planned Mr. Yeshi’s act.

The images of Mr. Yeshi on fire electrified not only Tibetan exiles here in India but also those around the world. Within hours, the pictures had been posted on blogs and social-networking Web sites. “It was all over Facebook today; everyone was talking about it,” said one young man working for a research organization in Dharamsala who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he feared Chinese retribution against his family members in Tibet.

As twilight settled over the hills here on Tuesday, the march wound through the marketplace, along hillsides and past the Dalai Lama’s temple. At 6:50, people walked into a courtyard and listened to the organizers give speeches denouncing the Chinese occupation, which has lasted for decades.

“We sympathize with Jamphel Yeshi’s self-immolation,” said a Tibetan monk, Lobsang, 32, who had traveled from Nepal. “He offered himself for the freedom of six million Tibetans.”

A couple of Indian police officers watched from the side. One by one, people in the crowd lit candles for Mr. Yeshi. Two lines of prayer flags fluttered overhead.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ahead-of-brics-meet-tibetan-makes-selfimmolation-bid/928710/>

Ahead of BRICS meet, Tibetan makes self-immolation bid

Express news service, New Delhi, Mar 26 2012

Two days before Chinese President Hu Jintao’s scheduled arrival in Delhi for the BRICS summit, a 27-year-old Tibetan activist, Jamphel Yeshi, attempted self-immolation during a protest at Jantar Mantar on Monday.

Yeshi, who suffered 95 per cent burns, is undergoing treatment at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

Yeshi reportedly fled Tibet in 2006, and had been living at the Tibetan settle-

ment — Majnu ka Tila — in the Capital for the last three years.

“I spoke to him after he was hospitalised. He said his father had died and his mother was still in Tibet. His cousins told me he often spoke of self-immolation,” said Tsewang Dolma, an activist from Nepal.

According to the police, they received a call about the incident at 12:39 pm. “We are trying to ascertain the sequence of events. No arrests have been made so far though about 300 people were detained,” said a police officer. A case has been registered against the youth for attempted suicide.

Meanwhile, Tibetan Youth Congress activists said their protests would continue.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31150&t=1>

24 hours after self-immolation, Jamphel Yeshi breathing but barely

Phayul, Tuesday, March 27, 2012

New Delhi, March 27: Jamphel Yeshi continues to be in a critical condition, almost 24 hours after he set himself on fire in New Delhi at a massive gathering of Tibetans demanding international intervention in the crisis inside Tibet.

In a late night development, doctors at the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital in the Indian capital suggested an immediate operation on Jamphel Yeshi to ease his breathing.

“The doctors suggested an immediate operation to clear his trachea as it had swollen badly from infection,” Tenzin Choekyi, general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, said in a release from inside the hospital.

After a brief surgery that lasted about 45 minutes, Jamphel Yeshi is now able to breathe 90 per cent on his own.

“This does not have an affect on his general condition which is still very critical, but the fact that he is able to breathe has brought him a certain level of comfort,” Choekyi said.

With Chinese President Hu Jintao scheduled to arrive late tonight in New Delhi to attend the 4th Brics summit, observers believe that doctors and the Indian administration will carry out full measures not to further deteriorate the situation.

The Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in a release yesterday said that Jampel Yeshi's self-immolation is an act of solidarity by the Tibetans in exile with the ongoing wave of self-immolations and protests against the Chinese regime by Tibetans inside Tibet.

"Jampel Yeshi's self-immolation is in solidarity with the martyrs of Tibet and is an expression of the genuine aspirations of all Tibetans living and dead," the release said. "His self-immolation calls for a change in the repressive policies of the Chinese government and also makes an urgent appeal of support from the United Nations and freedom and democracy loving countries in the world."

30 Tibetans have self-immolated inside Tibet since 2009 demanding the return of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/india/120329/jampel-yeshi-self-immolating-tibetan-left-letter-de>

Jampel Yeshi, self-immolating Tibetan, left letter before death: activists

By Kristin Deasy, *Global Post*, March 29 2012

Activists today say Jampel Yeshi, the Tibetan activist who set himself on fire to protest a visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao, left a letter urging the world to "stand for Tibet" before dying from his burns at an Indian hospital earlier this week, the Associated Press reported.

The letter called for "loyalty" amongst Tibetans, saying "if we unitedly put our strength together, there will be [a] result," so "If you have money, it is the time to spend it; If you are educated it is the time to produce results; If you have control over your life, I think the day has come to sacrifice your life."

Nearly 30 Tibetans have died in protests against Chinese dominance by self-immolating in the last 13 months, said The Guardian, a practice that is also on the rise in India, according to the Economist. Activists say they have no other way to draw attention to their plight.

Indian police are therefore stepping up security measures ahead of Hu's arrival today in New Delhi for the BRICS summit of emerging nations, where he will be joined by leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa, said the Guardian.

Hundreds of Tibetans have been arrested since the 23-year-old Tibetan exile set himself alight and ran through a large protest against Hu's visit outside the Indian parliament on Monday, according to The Telegraph.

"The fact that Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st century is to let the world know about their suffering," stated Yeshe's letter, which was translated by activists and released on the website Burning Tibet. "People of the world, stand up for Tibet."

The letter could not be independently confirmed; AP cited activists saying it was found in Yeshe's apartment about 10 days ago.

A number of ethnic Tibetans have taken refuge in India following their unsuccessful 1959 revolt against Chinese rule.

Meanwhile, China on Wednesday denounced as meddling a recent US Senate resolution demanding that China end its "repressive policies targeting Tibetans," according to The Economic Times of India.

Some in Tibet push for total independence from China, and their exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, has spoken out against perceived moves by Beijing to weaken their cultural identity, reported CNN.

China denies any discrimination against Tibetans.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/26/what-drives-tibetan-self-immolate>

What drives Tibetan protesters to self-immolate?

By Jason Burke, *The Guardian*, 26 March 2012

Jamphel Yeshe, the 27-year-old now close to death in an Indian hospital after setting himself on fire in Delhi, is in many ways typical of the 30 or so Tibetans who have over the past 13 months committed self-immolation.

Like many of them, he is in his 20s and comes from the eastern parts of the historical area of Tibet, outside the current "Tibetan Autonomous Region". But unlike most of them, he is a layman, not a monk or nun, and he was already in exile.

Three other recent cases offer further insights into those committing self-immolation, but there is no single profile to unite them: Tsering Kyi was a 20-year-old school student of nomad origins from a small village near the town of Machu

in Gansu province. Jamyang Palden was a 34-year-old monk at the monastery in Rebkong or Tongren county, also in the eastern Tibetan zone. Sonam Dhargyal was a 44-year-old farmer from Rebkong. Each of them followed their own path to self-immolation.

Kyi and Palden are described by relatives and friends as bright, confident and outgoing. Palden was hearty and funny, according to friends, as well as being a big fan of traditional wrestling. Kyi too was described as popular and lively.

Dhargyal in contrast comes across as more troubled. Taciturn and withdrawn, he was a deeply religious “man of few words”, according to a teacher near Dharamasala who knew him well.

Dhargyal was “far from rich”, one acquaintance said, and struggled to provide for a disabled 18-year-old son and a seriously ill wife.

As with others who become involved in extreme acts of political or religious violence, searching for personal traits or clues in their lifestyle to explain their actions may be the wrong approach. Mapping the places where the incidents have occurred – almost all within a short distance from the self-immolators’ homes – may be more helpful.

What then becomes clear is how these events have largely clustered in a few specific areas.

This can in part be attributed to environmental factors such as where repression by the authorities has been particularly acute and also where a marginally more permissive regime allows freer access to the internet and thus higher levels of awareness of protest elsewhere.

Zones where nomad populations have been resettled in urban centres in large numbers also feature strongly, as do places where there have been newly intensified attempts to regulate religious and cultural life.

But the most significant factor may at first glance be harder to perceive. Tsering Kyi was at a specific school which had become a key centre of unrest. Jamphel Yeshe was living in the highly politicised exile community in Delhi and was a committed activist.

The monastery which was home to Palden is also a major centre of protest and has been for decades. It is closely linked to the Kirti monastery which alone has been the largest single source of the self-immolators.

Dhargyal lived close to Palden's monastery and may even have been a friend of the monk. As those studying other forms of extremist spectacular violence have found, such acts are part of a culture that becomes established in a given institution or community, often on a very small scale.

A momentum is generated leading to the spread of that particular form of behaviour, encouraged by the support of peers, elders and others. The local reaction to each death, rather than the international reaction, either encourages or discourages others.

Endorsement and example flows through social networks. For the moment, the self-immolators are seen as tragic but admirable martyrs worthy of the pride of their friends and family. There are likely to be many more of them.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/03/28/india-china-tibet-delhi-self-immolation-idIN-DEE82R06720120328>

Tibetan man dies from self-immolation in New Delhi

Reuters, 28 March 2012

(Reuters) - A Tibetan man died on Wednesday after setting himself on fire earlier this week in New Delhi to protest Chinese rule of the Himalayan region, activists said, hours before Chinese President Hu Jintao's arrival in India for a summit of emerging market nations.

Thirty Tibetans, mostly Buddhist monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire, mostly in southwestern China, in the past year, according to Tibetan rights groups. At least 20 have died.

Jamphel Yeshi, 27, set himself ablaze on Monday at a protest criticizing President Hu's visit. He died in a local hospital from his injuries, the general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress said in a statement.

"The fact that Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st century is to let the world know about their suffering," Yeshi wrote in a handwritten statement found in his room.

Pictures taken by a Reuters photographer showed the activist running down a street enveloped in flames on Monday. He suffered burn injuries across 98 per-

cent of his body.

Born in Tibet but living in exile in India, Yeshi was an activist with the youth organization, which seeks independence for the Himalayan region, under Chinese rule for more than six decades.

Hu arrived in Delhi on Wednesday afternoon to take part in a one day summit between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa -- known collectively as BRICS.

Indian police have arrested a number of Tibetans in recent days, activists say, in an apparent bid to prevent protests marring Hu's visit.

India hosts large community of Tibetans - including exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama - one of the main sources of friction with neighbouring China, which accuses the Dalai Lama of stirring unrest.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/HimachalPradesh/Jamphel-Yeshi-to-be-given-martyr-s-funeral/Article1-832677.aspx>

Jamphel Yeshi to be given martyr's funeral

By Naresh Kumar, *Hindustan Times*, Dharamsala, March 29, 2012

Jamphel Yeshi- who self immolated himself on March 26 in Delhi protesting against the visit of China president to India would be given a martyr funeral in Dharamsala after officials of Central Tibetan Associatio (CTA) and common Tibetans pay homage to him.

Tibetan Youth Congress

(TYC) activists who are bringing Yeshi's body to Dharamsala would be arriving at Dharamsala on Friday morning.

“Martyr Jamphel Yeshi's body would be kept in Tsuglakhang Temple where people from Tibetan community and CTA officials would pay tribute to the brave son of Tibet,” said an CTA official.

Meanwhile, a special prayer session organized by TYC to express solidarity with those who made their supreme sacrifice for Tibetan freedom movement would be held at Tsugalkhang Temple.

The prayer session would be attended by CTA officials, cabinet ministers of Tibetan government in exile and common people. However, sources told that Tibetan Spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama would not attend the prayer session while Tibetan prime minister in exile, Lobsang Sangay who is in Delhi would also be absent.

Vice-President, TYC, Dhondup Lhadar, said Jamphel Yeshe's sacrifice will be written in golden letters in the annals of Tibetan freedom struggle.

"He will live on to inspire and encourage the future generations of Tibetans. The brilliant radiance of his fire will dispel the darkness of China's illegal occupation of Tibet and regenerate the spirit of Tibetan independence," said Lhadar.

Lhadar told Thupten Ngodup was the first known Tibetan to have self-immolated in Tibetan freedom struggle during an indefinite hunger strike organised by TYC in New Delhi in 1998.

"In Tibet, since Martyr Tapey's self-immolation in 2009, 30 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet. Pawo Jamphel Yeshe's self-immolation marks a milestone in our freedom struggle where Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet stand ever united in our fights against the Chinese occupying forces," Lhadar said.

Informing about the life of Yeshe, Lhadar said Born in Kham Tawu, Martyr Jamphel Yeshe escaped to India in 2006 and studied at the Tibetan Transit School in Dharamshala for nearly three and a half years.

"Martyr Jamphel Yeshe has been living in Delhi for the last two years and has actively participated in many of the political activities organised by the TYC and other organizations," Lhadar said.

With full stately honour, TYC will carry the body of Pawo Jamphel Yeshe to the Tibetan exile headquarters of Dharamshala and hold a grand funeral deserving of a martyr.

Dharamshala police beefed up security in McLeodganj

Meanwhile, Dharamshala police has beefed up security in the McLeodganj town-the headquarter of Tibetan Government in Exile to avoid any untoward incident during the Jamphel Yeshe's funeral.

"We are keeping a close vigil on the activities of Tibetan people as the issue is very sensitive. Some plain cloth police personnel have been deployed in Mcleod-

ganj who will be reporting each and every thing happening in the town to the police administration,” said Additional Superintendent of Police, Kangra G Shiva Kumar.

He said extra force has been summoned from battalion and would be deployed in Mcleodganj to avoid any problematic incident.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9172963/Tibetan-protester-who-burned-himself-alive-left-letter-calling-for-freedom.html>

Tibetan protester who burned himself alive left letter calling for freedom

The Telegraph, 29 Mar 2012

Police have taken hundreds of Tibetans into custody since Monday's self-immolation of Japhel Yeshi, 27, and have effectively closed off New Delhi's Tibetan neighbourhoods, fearing embarrassing protests during the visit by China's President Hu Jintao.

At least three more Tibetans were taken away by police on Wednesday, activists said. Police confirmed there had been additional people detained, but refused to say how many.

The Tibetans are expected to be released after Hu leaves New Delhi on Friday. He is in the city for the BRICS summit with India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa.

In the letter, Yeshi urged his fellow Tibetans to fight for their rights.

“At a time when we are making our final move toward our goal: If you have money, it is the time to spend it; If you are educated it is the time to produce results; If you have control over your life, I think the day has come to sacrifice your life,” wrote Yeshi, who died of his burns on Wednesday.

The letter was released by activists and translated on the website Burning Tibet. The letter's authenticity could not be independently confirmed.

“The fact that Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st century is to let the world know about their suffering,” the letter stated. “People of the world, stand up for Tibet.”

Hundreds of police are manning barricades along roads throughout the city,

some carrying blankets soaked in water to quickly smother the flames of any protesters who try to set themselves alight.

About 30 people have set themselves on fire over the past year in ethnic Tibetan areas of China in protest Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region.

Beijing has blamed the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who has lived in exile in India for decades, for inciting the self-immolations, and has called the protesters' actions a form of terrorism.

Lobsang Sherab

Age: 20

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 28 March 2012

Place: Cha town, Ngaba, Amdo,

Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Another Tibetan Monk Dies in Self-Immolation

VOA News, March 27, 2012

Another Tibetan monk has died after setting himself on fire in an anti-China protest, a day after some U.S. senators approved a resolution saying they mourn the Tibetans who have died in such self-immolations.

VOA's Tibetan service reports a 20-year-old monk named Lobsang Sherab set himself on fire Wednesday in the main street of Cha township in southwestern China's Sichuan province. The report says armed police and other security forces forcibly removed the body and imposed a security clampdown on the township.

Sherab was a member of the Kirti monastery, where anti-China sentiment runs high. Some 300 Chinese officials are reported stationed at the monastery, and security is high throughout the area.

Wednesday's death was the 20th in the past year among Tibetan monks, nuns, and supporters protesting Chinese policy in the Tibetan region. At least 10 others have set themselves on fire without dying in the attempt.

China routinely refers to the protesters as trained "terrorists" and accuses the Dalai Lama of orchestrating the protests from his exile home in northern India. Beijing also argues it has provided substantial funding to upgrade Tibetan infrastructure and improve living conditions in Tibetan regions.

On Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei responded to the U.S. Senate resolution, saying some U.S. Senators "confused right and wrong" in approving it in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The U.S. resolution says the committee deplores "the repressive policies targeting Tibetans" and urges Beijing to "resume a dialogue with Tibetan Buddhist leaders, including (Tibetan exiled spiritual leader) the Dalai Lama."

The Chinese spokesman said Beijing remains "committed to protecting both the legitimate rights of people of all nationalities and their freedom of religious belief." Hong also repeated accusations that "some" U.S. lawmakers are using Tibet-related issues to interfere in China's internal affairs.

The Tibet resolution does not carry the weight of law and does not provide penalties for non-compliance. But it urges U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to seek a full accounting from Beijing on its ongoing crackdown, particularly at the flashpoint Kirti monastery.

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/topic/463a/2212,467bcd82,4f7c5a7bc0,,,html>

Tibet: Kirti monk self-immolates, dies

RFA, 28 March 2012

A Tibetan monk from a restive monastery in China's Sichuan province set himself on fire and died Wednesday in protest against Chinese rule, exile sources said, quoting local contacts.

Twenty-year-old Lobsang Sherab shouted slogans to highlight Beijing's "discriminatory" policies on Tibetans as he self-immolated in Cha township in the Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, India-based exiled Tibetan monk Kanyag Tsering told RFA.

“The self-immolation occurred at 7.10 p.m. along the main road in the township,” he said. “The exact words he uttered as he burned were not immediately clear, but what was clear was that Sherab was protesting against the ruthless policies imposed by the Chinese authorities.”

“He died on the spot,” Tsering said. “The Tibetans who were in the area tried to take his body away, but the Chinese security forces intervened, prevented them from doing so, and took the body, much to the anger of the Tibetans.”

“The Chinese security forces also ordered shops at the township to close following the self-immolation, apparently as a precautionary move,” Tsering said.

Kirti

Sherab was from the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, from which hundreds of monks were taken away by Chinese security forces after a monk from the institution self-immolated in March last year, triggering an unstoppable wave of burning protests.

“Sherab went back to his Raruwa village in Ngaba county two days earlier” apparently to prepare himself for the self-immolation, Tsering said.

Sherab, who left behind his parents and three siblings, is the 31st Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009 as Tibetans stepped up their protests against Beijing’s rule and called for the return of Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

The protests resulted in a Chinese security clampdown in Sichuan and the other Tibetan-populated provinces of Qinghai and Ganzi, as well as in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Sherab, whose father’s name was Sodon and mother’s name was Nyima, first joined the Genden Tenpel Ling monastery, a small institution with 31 monks, when he was nine years old before graduating to the mammoth Kirti monastery.

Fatal

Meanwhile, a Tibetan died on Wednesday two days after setting himself on fire in India – the second fatal self-immolation protest by a Tibetan living outside China.

“We do recognize that his sacrifice will help in boosting the morale of other Tibetans and contribute in repelling the dark clouds of Chinese occupation over Tibet,” said Dhondup Lhadar, the vice-president of the Tibetan Youth Congress

The group said a grand funeral “deserving of a martyr” is being planned for Jamphel Yeshi in the Tibetan exiled community’s headquarters of Dharamsala, the northern Indian hilltown where Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama is living in exile.

“We have decided to take his body to Dharamsala, the seat of the Dalai Lama and headquarters of the Tibetan exile government. All the necessary approval was obtained from the authorities for us to move his body, and we are making all the necessary arrangements,” Lhadar said.

Jamphel Yeshi poured fuel over himself, set himself ablaze, and ran screaming down a road engulfed in flames in India’s capital New Delhi on Monday in protest against a visit to India by China’s President Hu Jintao.

Hu is in New Delhi for the BRICS summit that includes India, Russia, Brazil, and South Africa.

Photos showing Yeshi running in flames past other protesters have been carried by newspapers and websites across the world, and Tibetans in the Indian capital have vowed to step up protests and highlight the Tibetan cause during the summit on Thursday.

Another Tibetan, Thupten Ngodup, had self-immolated and died in India in 1998.

Yeshi lived in the Majnu Ka Tila refugee enclave in the north of the city, where thousands of Tibetan exiles have been based for decades after fleeing from China.

Call

The wave of self-immolations had prompted a call recently from well-known Tibetan blogger Woesser and senior Tibetan religious leader Arjia Rinpoche to end the fiery protests, saying that Tibetans opposed to Chinese rule should instead “stay alive to struggle and push forward” their goals.

Lobsang Sangay, the head of Tibet’s exile government in Dharamsala, said that while he strongly discouraged self-immolations, the “fault lies squarely with the hardline leaders in Beijing.”

He accused Beijing of attempting over the last half-century “to annihilate the Tibetan people and its culture.”

The Chinese government however blamed the Dalai Lama for the self-immolations, accusing the 76-year-old Buddhist leader and his followers of plotting to create “turmoil” in Tibetan-inhabited areas.

<http://www.bikyamars.com/64325/tibetan-dies-in-latest-self-immolation-protest/>

Tibetan dies in latest self-immolation protest

By Bill Smith, *Bikyamars*, 29 March 2012

Beijing (dpa) – A Tibetan monk has died in the latest self-immolation protest against the Chinese government in the south-western province of Sichuan, reports said on Thursday.

Lobsang Sherab, 20, set fire to himself late Wednesday in Cha township, or Chara in Tibetan, in Sichuan’s restive Aba, or Ngaba, area.

Sherab had returned to Cha on Monday from the Kirti monastery, where he was a monk, London-based Free Tibet and US-based Radio Free Asia said.

He died immediately after his protest, the broadcaster quoted Kanyag Tsering, an Indian-based exiled monk from Kirti, as saying.

“The Tibetans who were in the area tried to take his body away, but the Chinese security forces intervened, prevented them from doing so, and took the body, much to the anger of the Tibetans,” Tsering said.

“The Chinese security forces also ordered shops in the township to close following the self-immolation, apparently as a precautionary move,” he said.

Many of the 30 other self-immolations reported in Tibetan areas since 2009 occurred near Kirti monastery.

A Tibetan protester also died after setting fire to himself in New Delhi on Monday ahead of a visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao, who is in India for a summit of the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The Chinese government has tightened security in most Tibetan areas this year after an escalation of the self-immolations and other protests, many of them by monks.

Tenpa Dhargye

Age: 22

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 30 March 2012

Place: Barkham, Ngaba, Amdo,

Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Cheme Palden

Age: 21

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 30 March 2012

Place: Barkham, Ngaba, Amdo,

Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Twin Self-immolation in Barkham County

TCHRD, 30 March 2012

Two Tibetan monks have set themselves on fire today at around 12.30 pm (Tibet Time) at Barkham (Chinese: Maerkang) County, the capital of Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP) in Sichuan Province. Tenpa Dhargyal and Chime Palden are monks at Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery in Barkham County, according to sources. The monks set themselves on fire while shouting slogans against the Chinese government.

Sources also told TCHRD that the two were alive when they were taken to the hospital by the security officers. Some monks of Tsodun Kirti Monastery rushed to the scene of the self-immolation in three vehicles. But they were stopped on the way by the police who made them to return to their monastery.

There is no confirmed information about the condition and whereabouts of Tenpa Dhargyal and Chime Palden.

Both were born in Khorlachang village, Barkham County, Gyalrong Tsodun Township, Ngaba TAP, Sichuan Province. Tenpa Dhargyal (aged 22) was born in Leko Tsang household. He is the youngest of the four children of parents Kalden and Paltso. He was a monk at Kirti Monastery (in Ngaba) from 2003 to 2009. Since 2009 he had studied at Tsodun Monastery.

Chime Palden (aged 21) was born in Yesti Tsang household. He is the son of Rabgyal and Machik Tso. In 2009 he studied in Kirti Monastery for a few months. In 2010, on his way to Lhasa, police officers found on his cell phone a picture of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a Tibetan Flag and the 'Unity' song by Tibetan singer Sherten for which he was detained in Lhasa for about a month.

Following the twin self-immolation, Barkham is now under lockdown with tight security.

Tsodun Kirti Monastery has around 300 monks and is 82 kms away from Barkham County.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Ngaba,-two-Tibetan-monks-set-themselves-on-fire.-The-police-prevent-their-rescue-24394.html>

Ngaba, two Tibetan monks set themselves on fire. The police prevent their rescue

Asia News, 30 March 2012

Lhasa (AsiaNews) - The self-immolation of the Tibetans for the return of the Dalai Lama and the end of the Chinese occupation continue. Yesterday, two young monks set themselves on fire in Barkham Ngaba county, eastern Tibet, the Chinese province of Sichuan. They are Tenpa Dhargyal, 22, a native of the village of Tsang Leko, and Chime Palden, 21, from the village Yesti Tsang. Both have been in the monastery of Kirti to 80 km from the city since 2009.

As soon as news of the double sacrifice spread, some brothers rushed to Barkham, but the Chinese police prevented them from entering the city, forcing them to turn back. The two monks were still alive when they were taken away by the authorities, but their place of detention, whether they have been cared for or left to die is unknown. The police detained people who witnessed the episode.

Following the self immolation, the authorities blockaded the city to avoid demonstrations by the people.

On March 29, Lobsang Sherab also a Kirti monk, died after setting himself on fire in the town of Chara (Ngaba County).

This year alone more than 24 Tibetans (at least 27 since 2009) have self immolated, many of them young people. All of them did so in protest against the strict control imposed by Beijing, which oversees the practice of worship, the opening and closing of the monasteries, and to demand the return of the spiritual leader of Tibetans. In contrast, the Dalai Lama has always emphasized he is “not encouraging” these extreme forms of protest, but he has praised the “courage” of those who make the ultimate gesture, the result of a “cultural genocide” is taking place in Tibet at the hands of China. (N.C.)

Tenpa Dhargyal Passes Away

TCHRD, Monday, 09 April 2012

The Tibetan monk who self-immolated along with another on 30 March 2012 in Barkham (Chinese: Maerkang) County passed away.

Tenpa Dhargyal and Chime Palden, both monks at Tsodun Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Prefecture, set themselves on fire at Barkham County, the capital of Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Sichuan Province.

22-yrs-old Tenpa Dhargyal passed away on 7 April 2012 at around 9:30 am (Tibet Time) at a hospital in Ngaba area, sources said.

Chime Palden (aged 21) has reportedly died on 31 March, the next day of their self-immolation. Chime was cremated immediately, at around 5 am.

Ignoring the request to hand over Tenpa's body to his family and the monastery, the Chinese authorities cremated the body at around 1 pm (Tibet Time). His ashes were handed over at around 4 pm. When his ashes were carried to Tsodun Kirti Monastery to perform the last rites and rituals for the deceased, officers of the People's Armed Police followed in three large vehicles.

The two monks were from Khorlachang village, Barkham County, Gyalrong Tsodu Township in Ngaba TAP, Sichuan Province.

Choepak Kyap

Age: 25

Occupation: Layperson

Date of self-immolation: 19 April 2012

Place: Jonang Dzamthang Gonchen Monastery,
Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Sonam

Age: 24

Occupation: Layperson

Date of self-immolation: 19 April 2012

Place: Jonang Dzamthang Gonchen Monastery,
Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Choepak Kyab and Sonam:

Tibetans are a people who have a unique culture and spiritual tradition. They are compassionate and treat others with respect. However, after the Chinese occupation, Tibetans suffer without basic human rights. It is for this reason, and in order for peace to prevail on earth, we offer our lives by setting ourselves on fire. The suffering of Tibetans without basic human rights is far worse than the suffering that we endure when we set ourselves on fire.

Our cherished parents, family members and relatives, it is not that we do not have love and affection towards you. With equanimity we have taken this decision to set ourselves on fire for Tibet's freedom, for the Buddha Dharma, for the happiness of all living beings and for world peace.

You must do as we have written – even if we are taken away by the Chinese. Do not do anything; we will be happy if nobody gets harmed because of us. Do not be sad for us; listen to scholars, lamas and khenpos. If you want to be scholars then make sure to take the right path, have affection for your race and by learning about our culture, you must remain united. If you do all this then our wishes will be fulfilled. We earnestly hope that our wishes will be carried out.

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/2-tibetans-set-themselves-on-fire-group/939745/>

2 Tibetans set themselves on fire: group

The Indian Express, Beijing, April 21 2012

Two more Tibetans have set themselves on fire in a restive southwestern region of China, a rights group said, the latest in a wave of such protests against Beijing's rule.

The incidents occurred Thursday in the Tibetan prefecture of Aba in a rugged area of China's Sichuan province, the London-based group Free Tibet said in a statement.

It said the fate of the pair was not known, but a Tibetan Buddhist monk in the area told AFP by phone that both had died.

Free Tibet said Chinese security forces were en route to the town of Barma, where the incident took place in front of a Tibetan Buddhist monastery.

Local authorities either refused to comment when contacted by AFP or calls went unanswered.

A total of 34 Tibetans, many of them Buddhist monks and nuns, are now reported to have set themselves on fire since the start of 2011 in protest at what they see as Chinese repression of their culture.

Many of them have reportedly died as a result of severe burns.

Free Tibet identified those involved in Thursday's protest as Sonam and Chophak Kyap, saying they were laypeople in their 20s.

Local people took the pair away after the incident, it said, citing local sources.

A Tibetan monk at a monastery near where the incident occurred told AFP the pair had died.

"Yes, they both died that night," he said, but refused further comment.

China has imposed tight security on restive Tibetan regions since 2008, when deadly rioting against Chinese rule broke out in Tibet's capital Lhasa and spread to neighbouring Tibetan-inhabited regions.

<http://tibet.net/2012/04/20/two-young-tibetans-self-immolate-in-ngaba/>

Two Young Tibetans Self-Immolate in Ngaba

Tibet.net, April 20, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Reports coming out of Tibet say two more Tibetans have set themselves on fire yesterday in Zamthang in Ngaba, northeastern Tibet.

Choepak Kyab and Sonam, both in 20s, who belonged to nomadic herder families, set themselves on fire close to a local government office in Barma township near Jonang Gonchen Monastery in Zamthang.

Both of them reportedly died following the self-immolation. Local Tibetans managed to prevent the paramilitary troops from taking away the bodies of the two Tibetans. They then took away the bodies to the monastery to carry out prayers. The situation in the area remains tense following the deployment of a large number of military troops.

Earlier on 19 February this year, an 18-year-old Tibetan boy named Nangdrol died of self-immolation in Zamthang. Nangdrol, who cared passionately about Tibetan culture and language, used to urge his fellow Tibetans to be united and to preserve their culture, language and religious identity.

On 26 January, a 20-year-old Tibetan named Ogyen died of gunshot wounds after police opened on a crowd of Tibetans who were protesting against the detention of Tharpa. Tharpa, who is a schoolmate of Nangdrol, was arrested for pasting leaflets stating that the self-immolations were calls for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. He said the self-immolations would continue until the Chinese authorities met these demands.

Since March 2009, 35 Tibetans in Tibet have so far set themselves on fire calling for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland.

2 more Tibetans immolate themselves

The Hindustan Times, By Sutirtho Patranobis, 19 April 2012

Two Tibetan civilians set themselves afire in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in southwest China in the latest attempt at self-immolation as a mark of protest to demand freedom, a rights group claimed on Thursday evening.

A statement from the London-based Free Tibet claimed that two, Sonam and Choephak Kyap, both in their 20s, self-immolated together in a town called Barma in TAR. The statement also said both were taken to a hospital and were said to be critically injured. The government was yet to comment till late Thursday.

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in the statement: “Barma Township has seen its fair share of trouble in the past months: Chinese state security forces shot dead a young man called Urgen in January, and in February a teenager called Nangdrol died after setting fire to self. All three self-immolations in Barma have been by lay (civilians, not monks) people.”

The toll of Tibetans, monks and civilians, who have set themselves on fire, has crossed the 30; many have died from the injuries. The Chinese government maintains that the self-immolations are instigated by the Dalai Lama.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/tibet/burn-04192012082147.html>

Two Tibetan Cousins Self-Immolate

REA, 19 April 2012

Two Tibetan cousins died after burning themselves Thursday in protest over Chinese rule in a Tibetan-populated area of China’s southwestern Sichuan province, according to exile sources.

They self-immolated in the afternoon near a monastery in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture’s Dzamthang (Rangtang) county, said Tsangyang Gyatso, head of the Jonang Buddhist Association in India’s Dharamsala hill town, where Tibet’s spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, lives in exile.

“Local Tibetans and monks tried to douse the flames and took the two to their homes...,” he said, identifying the two as Choephak Kyab and Sonam. “But the two died several hours later.”

Their bodies were taken to the Dzamthang Jonang monastery for funeral prayers conducted by monks amid a clampdown by Chinese security forces, Gyatso said.

“Security forces in seven vehicles converged to the area,” he said, adding that Tibetans living near the monastery had tried to provide immediate medical treatment to Choephak Kyab and Sonam but the two succumbed to their burns.

The burnings on Thursday came 20 days after the last reported Tibetan self-immolation on March 30.

It brought to 35 the number of Tibetans who had burned themselves since February 2009 to back demands for an end to Chinese rule and for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Twenty-seven of them have died of severe burns.

Bloody protests

Dzamthang was among at least three Sichuan counties where bloody protests occurred in January in which rights and exile groups believe at least six were killed and 60 injured, some critically.

Aside from Sichuan, the burnings also triggered street protests in the other Tibetan-populated provinces of Qinghai and Gansu as Tibetans questioned Chinese policies which they say are discriminatory and have robbed them of their rights.

Hundreds of monks have been detained from monasteries since March last year. Chinese authorities have also jailed scores of Tibetan writers, artists, singers, and educators for asserting Tibetan national identity and civil rights, exile sources said.

The Dalai Lama last week blamed Beijing's "totalitarian" and "unrealistic" policies for the wave of self-immolations, saying the time has come for the Chinese authorities to take a serious approach to resolving the Tibetan problem.

He called on the Chinese leadership to adopt a "holistic view" in resolving the Tibetan crisis instead of a "self-centered" approach, backed by power and wealth, to suppress the Tibetans.

Chinese authorities have labeled the self-immolators as terrorists, outcasts, criminals, and mentally ill people, and have blamed the Dalai Lama for encouraging the burnings which, they say, run contrary to Buddhist teachings.

Two Tibetans Self Immolate in Zamthang, Northeastern Tibet

The Tibet Post International, 19 April 2012

Dharamshala: - Two young men set themselves on fire on Thursday (Tibet time: around 02.20pm) in northeastern Tibet, becoming the latest Tibetans to self-immolate in protest against China's colonial and brutal repression of Tibetans

in Tibet.

These recent immolations have reportedly been protests against the Chinese government's repression of freedom of religion and cultural rights in Tibetan areas. However, China accused His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his associates of planning the 35 self-immolations in Tibet and another in India recently.

"Choephak Kyab, 20 years of age, and Sonam around 20 from Zamthang county, Ngaba region, northeastern Tibet, self-immolated in protest of Chinese oppression," Tseyang Gyatso, currently based in Dharamshala told World News Network.

"According to information from a source in Tibet, they haven't been caught by Chinese authorities, but, both of them were already dead after setting themselves on fire on Thursday," Tseyang further added.

Local Tibetans managed to prevent the paramilitary troops from removing the bodies of the two Tibetans. They then took away the bodies to the monastery to carry out prayers. The situation in the area remains tense following the deployment of a large number of military troops, sources said.

Tibetans living in exile and hundreds of their supporters from abroad on Thursday evening, April 19, held a mass candlelit vigil in Dharamshala to pay respect to the two young Tibetans who died.

On April 2nd, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said concerned people should examine the causes of the self-immolations. "I think this problem was not created by...Tibetan Buddhist culture," he told a Taiwanese news channel Next TV, "which is very peaceful, very compassionate... This problem was started by totalitarian, blind policy. So the people who created that policy must think seriously about these things."

"In Tibet, they are doing it because there is no room for any form of protest - hunger strikes, rallies, demonstrations. Anything you do, the Chinese authorities will come and arrest you, put you behind bars, and sometimes you'll get killed," Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the political leader of Central Administration told Next TV.

Since 2009, 35 Tibetans in Tibet have set themselves on fire calling for freedom and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to his homeland. 25 of these self-immolators have died, and others are either critically injured or their status unknown.

Dorjee Tseten

Age: 19

Occupation: Chef

Date of self-immolation: 27 May 2012

Place of self-immolation: Jokhang, Lhasa, Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Dhargye

Age: 25

Occupation: Cashier at a restaurant

Date of self-immolation: 27 May 2012

Place of self-immolation: Jokhang, Lhasa, Tibet

Current status: unknown



Tibetan Capital Sees First Self-Immolations

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, May 28 2012

BEIJING — One man died and another was seriously injured when they set themselves on fire outside Tibetan Buddhism's holiest temple in the center of Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, according to Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency. It was the first time that such protests against Chinese rule have occurred in the city.

The self-immolations occurred on Sunday afternoon outside the Jokhang Temple during the holy month of Saga Dawa, when followers of Tibetan Buddhism celebrate the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha.

They were the most significant act of protest in Lhasa since an uprising in 2008 that was crushed by Chinese security forces.

The authorities stepped up security in Lhasa after the uprising, particularly in the central market area known as the Barkhor. The Jokhang Temple, which is a pilgrimage destination, is in the heart of the area.

That two men set themselves on fire in Lhasa, far from the sites of earlier self-immolations in eastern Tibet and under tight security since 2008, underscores the widening discontent over Chinese rule. At least 36 people in the Tibetan regions of China have set themselves on fire since March 2011, when a monk named Phuntsok from the Kirti Monastery set himself on fire in Ngaba, a town in a Tibetan area of Sichuan Province.

Xinhua identified the two protesters on Sunday as Dargye, from Aba County, the Chinese name for Ngaba, and Tobgye Tseten, from Xiahe County, or Labrang in Tibetan, the seat of the famous Labrang Monastery and a center of protests against Chinese rule.

Both counties are in the region of eastern Tibet that is traditionally known as Amdo and where the worlds of the ethnic Tibetans and ethnic Hans have overlapped. The Han rule China, and many Tibetans resent Beijing's policies in Tibet and the Han who migrate into Tibetan regions for work and business opportunities.

Tseten died in the fire he set, Xinhua said, but Dargye survived. He was seriously injured, the news agency said, but was in stable condition and able to talk.

Harriet Beaumont, a spokeswoman for the advocacy group Free Tibet, identified the man who died as Dorjee Tseten, 19, from Bhora in Labrang County. She said the two men shouted three times outside the temple before setting themselves on fire, but it was not immediately clear what they said. Afterward, she said, security officers began detaining Tibetans, especially those from Ngaba County.

A man who answered the telephone at the Yarlung Tsangpo Hotel in Lhasa said security in the city had been tightened and additional security forces sent in. The man, who gave his name as Mr. Liu, said it was unclear whether the new forces were made up of regular police officers or were units of the People's Armed Police, a paramilitary force that is usually called out to quell riots and maintain security in the restive ethnic regions of western China.

Robert J. Barnett, a scholar of modern Tibet at Columbia University, said a Tibetan in Lhasa had told him the city was in a "boiling situation" after the self-immolations.

"We're now seeing self-immolations that seem to be political expressions that are in sympathy with the core incidents that happened earlier," Mr. Barnett said.

“The Chinese officials are really worried,” he said, because the latest protests seem to be “driven by an idea, a political goal.”

By contrast, he said, the earlier self-immolations in Ngaba were largely in reaction to security clampdowns at the Kirti Monastery after the 2008 uprising.

Ngaba has been the center of the self-immolations, but Tibetans have now set themselves on fire in areas across the vast Tibetan plateau. Most have been members of the clergy. Before the self-immolations in Lhasa, there had been just one such protest in the Tibet Autonomous Region, by a layman in the eastern area known as Chamdo.

The self-immolations on Sunday were first reported by Radio Free Asia and Voice of America, which have contact with Tibetans in western China. Voice of America reported that the two men worked at a restaurant in Lhasa called Nyima Ling. Radio Free Asia said the two were monks who were taken away in security vehicles within 15 minutes of setting themselves on fire.

In March, President Hu Jintao of China told the Tibet delegates to the National People’s Congress in Beijing that they must exert a “continuous effort in sustaining social harmony and stability.” Official news reports say Chen Quanguo, the current party chief of Tibet, repeated Mr. Hu’s words in public meetings and said officials would “persist in the thought that stability overrides all.”

Tibetan men in ‘first self-immolations in Lhasa’

BBC, 28 May 2012

One of the men died and the other “survived with injuries”, Xinhua news agency said.

The self-immolations are thought to be the first in Lhasa and the second inside Tibet.

But they follow a series of self-immolations, mostly involving monks and nuns, in Tibetan areas outside Tibet.

“They were a continuation of the self-immolations in other Tibetan areas and these acts were all aimed at separating Tibet from China,” Hao Peng, head of the Communist Party’s Commission for Political and Legal Affairs in the Tibet Autonomous Region, was quoted as saying.

‘Not a trace’

The man who died was identified as Tobgye Tseten, from Gansu province in China. The other man, named Dargye, survived and was able to talk, the Xinhua report said.

An earlier Radio Free Asia (RFA) report had referred to the men as monks and said that the incident took place outside the Jokhang Temple, a well-known destination for pilgrims and tourists.

The Xinhua report said the self-immolations took place on a busy street near the temple. Downtown Lhasa was crowded with people celebrating a Buddhist festival, it added.

The two men were believed to have been among a group of youths who had gathered to protest against Chinese rule, said the RFA report.

Police put out the flames “within minutes” of the self-immolations, Xinhua said.

“Within 15 minutes, the area was cleaned and not a trace of the incident was left at the site,” an eyewitness told RFA.

There have now been more than 30 self-immolations over the past year, primarily among young Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns. Most of them are believed to have died.

Most of the incidents have taken place in Tibetan areas of Sichuan province in southwest China.

Dargye was reportedly from Aba county in Sichuan province, said Xinhua. Many of those who have set themselves on fire have been in Aba county.

The Kirti monastery in the area has been virtually locked down since a young monk self-immolated and died in March 2011 - leading to mass protests.

Verifying these accounts is difficult, as foreign media are not allowed into the area.

China’s leaders blame the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans’ exiled spiritual leader, for inciting the self-immolations and encouraging separatism.

He rejects this, and both activist groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile say the self-immolations are protests against tight Chinese control of the region

and religious repression.

It is not clear whether this is an organised movement or simply individuals carrying out copy-cat acts of personal protest, reports the BBC's Michael Bristow in Beijing.

But it shows there is deep unhappiness, among at least some Tibetans, about how China rules them, our correspondent says.

2 Tibetans set selves on fire outside Lhasa temple

The Associated Press, Beijing, May 28 2012

Two men engulfed themselves in towering flames outside a temple that is a popular tourist site in Lhasa, marking the first time a recent wave of self-immolations to protest Chinese rule has reached the tightly guarded Tibetan capital.

The official Xinhua News Agency said one of the men died and the other was hospitalized after they set themselves on fire Sunday outside the Jokhang Temple. The report quoted a local Communist Party official as blaming the incident on separatist forces.

Xinhua said the men were taken away by authorities within two minutes of setting themselves on fire.

There have been at least 34 immolations since March of last year to draw attention to China's restrictions on Buddhism and to call for the return from exile of the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Most have taken place in heavily Tibetan areas of China, but only one had occurred in Tibet itself and none in the capital.

Chinese authorities have confirmed some of the self-immolations over the past year but not all.

Protests have become rare in remote Tibet and Lhasa in particular because of tight police security that has blanketed the area since anti-government riots erupted in Lhasa in 2008.

The latest incident occurred in the open-air Barkhor market near the temple in the centre of Lhasa, an area popular with Tibetans and tourists alike.

Radio Free Asia reported Monday that Lhasa was under heavy police and paramilitary guard following the immolations and that the situation was very tense.

Xinhua said the immolations were handled quickly and order restored. It also quoted a senior official with the regional communist government as saying it was a separatist incident.

“They were a continuation of the self-immolations in other Tibetan areas and these acts were all aimed at separating Tibet from China,” Xinhua quoted Hao Peng, secretary of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Tibet Committee, as saying in a statement Sunday.

Xinhua identified the Tibetan who died as Tobgye Tseten from Xiahe county in Gansu province and the other man as Dargye, a Tibetan from Aba county in Sichuan province.

Most of the recent immolations have taken place in Aba, home to Kirti monastery, which has seen numerous protests against the Chinese government over the past several years. Xiahe is home to the large and influential Labrang monastery and the Tibetan community there has had sporadic clashes with local authorities.

Xinhua said Dargye was in stable condition and able to speak.

US-funded radio broadcaster Voice of America said the two men worked at a Lhasa restaurant called Nyima Ling. It identified one of the men as 19-year-old Dorjee Tseten but was unable to give the name or age of the other.

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1950s.

Beijing blames the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for fanning anti-government sentiment and routinely purges monasteries and nunneries, where support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan independence runs high.

Two Tibetans self-immolate in Lhasa: is protest spreading?

By John Ruwitch, *Reuters*, May 28, 2012

SHANGHAI, CHINA: Two Tibetans set themselves on fire outside a Buddhist temple in Lhasa, the first of a series of self-immolation protests against Chinese rule over [Tibet](#) to take place in the regional capital, The broadcaster said the two Tibetans were taken away by security forces who quickly cleared the area where the immolations took place on Sunday in front of the Jokhang Temple, a key

pilgrimage site and tourist destination in the heart of Lhasa.

The city was “filled with police and paramilitary forces and the situation is very tense” in the wake of the self-immolations, the US government-sponsored broadcaster quoted an unidentified source in Lhasa as saying.

At least 34 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2011 in protest against China’s six-decade rule over Tibet, according to Tibetan rights groups. At least 24 have died.

Beijing has branded the self-immolators “terrorists” and criminals and has blamed exiled Tibetans and the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for inciting them.

China brands the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule, as a separatist. The Dalai Lama says he is merely seeking more autonomy for his Himalayan homeland.

Telephone calls to the Tibet Autonomous Region and Lhasa municipal governments were not answered.

Robbie Barnett, a Tibet expert at Columbia University in New York, said he had heard reports of the self-immolations from people in Lhasa, with a person describing the city as “boiling.

“For the Chinese authorities, it has very serious implications and suggests that the movement is spreading among Tibetans,” Mr. Barnett told Reuters. “It could lead to an increased severity of restrictions and controls.”

Voice of America, another US-backed radio station, reported online that the two Tibetans who set themselves on fire were restaurant workers, not monks.

Only one other self-immolation had been reported in the Tibet Autonomous Region, a province-level administrative area under the central government. The rest occurred in Tibetan-populated areas of other provinces in southwestern China.

The Chinese term for the Jokhang Temple was blocked on Monday on the popular microblogging site Sina Weibo.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/china/120527/tibetan-buddhist-monks-lhasa-self-immolation-fire-china-dalai-lama>

Tibetan Buddhist monks self-immolate in Lhasa

The Global Post News Desk, May 28, 2012

Two Tibetan Buddhist monks have set themselves on fire in Lhasa, the first reported self-immolations in the capital of China's Tibet Autonomous Region.

US-based broadcaster Radio Free Asia said in a statement that the monks set themselves on fire on Sunday outside the Jokhang temple, a renowned center for Buddhist pilgrimage in Lhasa.

The temple has been under heavy security since deadly riots broke out in 2008. The self-immolators were believed to be among Tibetan youths gathered to protest against Chinese rule outside the temple.

They were taken away by authorities within minutes of setting themselves on fire, according to RFA, and had reportedly died.

"The security forces arrived immediately and put out the fire and all the tourists in the area were cordoned off from the site," a witness told the broadcaster.

"Within 15 minutes, the area was cleaned and not a trace of the incident was left."

Radio Free Asia quoted a source as saying the situation in Lhasa was now "very tense" and the city was filled with police and paramilitary forces.

One Lhasa resident contacted by Agence France-Presse on Monday reported an increased police presence in the city, adding officers were carrying out identity checks in the street and the mobile signal was blocked.

However, security authorities in Lhasa contacted by telephone refused to comment on the incident.

The Associated Press wrote that there had been at least 34 self-immolations since March of last year, most of them in heavily Tibetan areas of China, aimed at drawing attention to China's restrictions on Buddhism.

Only one self-immolation had occurred in Tibet itself and none in the capital.

In past instances, the protesters have called for the return from exile of their

spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and for freedom or greater freedoms for Tibet.

Voice of America reported that the two men worked at a Lhasa restaurant called Nyima Ling. It identified one of the men as 19-year-old Dorjee Tseten but was unable to give the name or age of the other.

The two self immolators were reportedly shouting slogans as they were engulfed in flames although it is not clear exactly what they were saying.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/28/tibetans-self-immolate_n_1550285.html

Tibetans Self-Immolate Outside Lhasa Temple

By Alexa Olesen, *Huffington Post*, 28 May 2012

BEIJING -- Two men engulfed themselves in a burst of flames outside a Buddhist temple popular with tourists and pilgrims in Lhasa, marking the first time a recent wave of self-immolations to protest Chinese rule has reached the tightly guarded Tibetan capital.

One man died and the other was hospitalized after they set themselves on fire Sunday outside the Jokhang Temple, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The report quoted a local Communist Party official as blaming separatist forces, an accusation it often makes against Tibetan exiles who support the Dalai Lama.

Xinhua said the two men were taken away by authorities within two minutes of setting themselves on fire.

Protests have become rare in remote Tibet and Lhasa in particular because of tight police security that has blanketed the area since anti-government riots erupted in Lhasa in 2008.

There have been at least 34 immolations since March of last year to draw attention to China's restrictions on Buddhism and to call for the return from exile of the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Most have taken place in heavily Tibetan areas of China, but only one had occurred in Tibet itself and none in the capital.

Chinese authorities have confirmed some of the self-immolations over the past year but not all.

The twin immolations in the heart of the Tibetan capital are certain to embar-

ness the region's communist leadership, who have pledged to prioritize social stability and ethnic unity. That mandate is especially pressing this year as China prepares for a once-a-decade leadership transition in the fall and doesn't want the occasion undermined.

The immolations are also likely to prompt tough, new restrictions on Tibetan social gatherings and religious activities in Lhasa, as they have elsewhere.

Radio Free Asia reported Monday that Lhasa was under heavy police and paramilitary guard following the immolations and that the situation was very tense.

Two foreigners working in the Lhasa tourism industry reached Monday declined to comment on the situation, citing the sensitivity of the issue.

The self-immolations occurred in the open-air Barkhor market near the temple in the center of Lhasa, an area popular with Tibetans and tourists alike.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin said Monday that "inciting such deaths will win no hearts. The political motive behind (the immolations) will never be successful."

Beijing has called the protesters' actions a form of terrorism. The Dalai Lama has blamed China's harsh repression on Tibetan spiritual life and empathized with the protesters.

In a statement from its Indian headquarters, the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile said it was "seriously concerned" about the spread of such protests and urged China to open Tibetan regions to the media and U.N. observers.

Xinhua said the immolations were handled quickly and order was restored.

"They were a continuation of the self-immolations in other Tibetan areas and these acts were all aimed at separating Tibet from China," Xinhua quoted Hao Peng, secretary of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Tibet Committee, as saying in a statement Sunday.

Xinhua identified the man who died as Tobgye Tseten from Xiahe county in Gansu province and the other man as Dargye, from Aba county in Sichuan province.

Most of the recent immolations have been in Aba, home to Kirti monastery, where numerous protests have occurred for several years. Xiahe is home to the large and influential Labrang monastery and the Tibetan community there has

had sporadic clashes with authorities.

Xinhua said Dargye was in stable condition and able to speak.

U.S.-funded radio broadcaster Voice of America said the two men worked at a Lhasa restaurant called Nyima Ling. It identified one of the men as 19-year-old Dorjee Tseten but was unable to give the name or age of the other.

“This was the first time it has happened in Lhasa – and right in the middle of Lhasa,” said Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan poet and one of the most prominent activists living in India.

He said it reflects that anger against Chinese rule is not limited to areas where most of the immolations have occurred – the mostly ethnically Tibetan areas outside the legal boundaries of Tibet.

“All over Tibet it’s the same emotion, it’s the same response” to Beijing’s policies, he said.

“We are always in fear of the next self-immolation, and whenever it happens we say prayers. And every time it happens we hope the world is listening.”

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1950s.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for fanning anti-government sentiment and routinely purges monasteries and nunneries, where support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan independence runs high.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9294332/Two-Tibetans-set-themselves-on-fire-in-Lhasa.html>

Two Tibetans set themselves on fire in Lhasa

By Malcolm Moore in Beijing, *The Telegraph*, 28 May 2012

The two men immolated themselves outside the Jokhang temple, a Buddhist shrine in the heart of the city that has been smothered with security officers since its monks took part in anti-Chinese riots four years ago.

The temple is also a point of pilgrimage for Buddhists celebrating Sagadawa, or Vesak, which marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha.

In recent days, as many as 5,000 visitors have arrived at the temple each day for the festival.

It is the first recorded self-immolation attempt in Lhasa and only the second protest in the city in the past four years. "All I could infer is that this incident had taken place and that Lhasa is 'seething'. This is certainly a 'line in the sand' that has been crossed for the Chinese, as they have clearly been focused on keeping these protests out of the major cities," said Robbie Barnett, a professor of modern Tibetan studies at Columbia University.

"China is locked into using force in its response to any incident and so is likely to trigger more of them, and the exile leadership is locked into an ambiguous response in which it cannot show leadership because of its own internal politics. It is an unfolding tragedy."

Tibetan exiles have suggested that mass arrests are now taking place in the capital.

"The security forces arrived immediately and put out the fire and all the tourists in the area were cordoned off from the site," a witness told Radio Free Asia, a station funded by the United States to promote information and ideas across China and South East Asia. "Within 15 minutes, the area was cleaned and not a trace of the incident was left."

Xinhua news agency identified the Tibetan who died as Tobgye Tseten from Xiahe county in Gansu province and the other man as Dargye, a Tibetan from Aba county in Sichuan province. The latter was from Aba, in Sichuan province, one of the epicentres of recent unrest. Both men were thought to have lived in Lhasa.

The man who died, Dargye, was 19 and the youngest of three brothers.

His oldest brother was a monk.

"We understand that the two of them hired a hotel room next to the Jokhang temple at around 1pm on the Sunday," said Harriet Beaumont at Free Tibet. "They then came out of the hotel room at around 2.15pm, and walked up to the temple, where they shouted three times and then set themselves on fire," she said.

She added that it was difficult to get information out of Lhasa because phone lines and the internet are being closely monitored and that Free Tibet believes the Chinese police have detained several people in the capital from Aba, the town in

Sichuan where one of the men came from.

A source in Lhasa confirmed that there had been self-immolations in the city and that a heavy security operation was underway in the city.

One Chinese student sent a message on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, describing extra security checks for vehicles in the city.

The culmination of the Sagadawa festival falls each year on the 15th day of the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar. This year, by unhappy coincidence, the day falls on June 4, also the anniversary of the quashing of the Tiananmen Square protests.

For at least two decades, ever since small protests over Sagadawa at the beginning of the 1990s, the Communist party has issued strict orders to its members not to celebrate the festival. Students, cadres or officials caught taking part would find themselves in “serious violation of political discipline and stability work,” said the Tibet Daily. Extra security has also been laid on for the month-long event.

“This is all based on the this extraordinary logic that an incident that has happened once 20 years ago on a certain day might happen again,” said Mr Barnett. “In 1991 or 1992 some nuns protested on Sagadawa. Ever since then the Chinese have made a huge effort to intensify control during this month.”

All of the 34 previous self-immolations occurred not in Tibet itself, but in Tibetan-occupied areas of Western China.

Mass vigil in Dharamshala, CTA expresses concern over self-immolations

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, May 29, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: As the fiery wave of self-immolation continues to spread inside Tibet, the Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration in a release yesterday evening expressed grave concern over the ongoing critical situation inside Tibet.

Two Tibetans had set themselves on fire in front of the historic Jokhang Temple in the Tibetan capital Lhasa on Sunday in an apparent protest against the Chinese government.

One of them has been identified as 19-year-old Dorjee Tseten, while the other,

a 25-year old male, is believed to be his friend and a colleague at a restaurant where they both worked.

Dorjee Tseten is feared dead.

The CTA in its release said that “several convoys” of Chinese security forces immediately arrived and the scene and “swiftly cleared” all traces of the incident.

“The situation in Lhasa remains tense with the deployment of huge number of police and para-military forces in the area,” CTA noted.

The exile Tibetan administration renewed its call for China to open Tibet to international observers and the press.

“No matter how the Chinese government attempts to present the cycle of self-immolations to the international community, such explanation will be met with deep scepticism so long as access to Tibetan areas, particularly where self-immolations took place, is denied to impartial observers such as members of the press, and representatives of international bodies such as the United Nations,” Dicki Chhoyang, Minister of the Department of Information and International Relations said.

Thousands of Tibetans and supporters gathered at the Upper Tibetan Children’s Village School’s football ground yesterday evening for a mass vigil in solidarity with the ongoing self-immolations inside Tibet.

Speaking at the candle light vigil, organised by the Dharamshala regional chapters of the youth congress and women’s association, Tsewang Rigzin, the President of the largest pro-independence group in exile, condemned the Chinese government for its repressive policies in Tibet.

“The will, the wishes and the slogans of all Tibetans are same and united. All Tibetans long for the return of the Dalai Lama and restoration of Tibet’s independence,” Rigzin said.

The major Tibetan settlements in the south Indian state of Karnataka are also carrying out prayer services today for the two self-immolators.

Since 2009, 37 Tibetans have set themselves on fire demanding the return of the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Rikyo

Age: 36

Occupation: housewife/nomad

Date of self-immolation: 30 May 2012

Place: near Dzamthang Monastery, Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Rikyo:

Prayers for world peace and happiness! To ensure His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, do not indulge in slaughtering and trading of animals, do not steal, Speak Tibetan, do not fight.

Bearing all sufferings of sentient beings on myself. Do not resist by fighting if I get into Chinese hands alive, be united.

Study Tibetan culture.

On fire I burn, my family, do not worry.'

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/31/world/asia/tibetan-woman-dies-in-self-immolation.html>

Tibetan Woman Dies in Self-Immolation

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, 30 May 2012

A Tibetan mother of three died after setting fire to herself on Wednesday in the county of Ngaba, known in Chinese as Aba. The woman, in her mid-30s, was identified by Free Tibet, an advocacy group, as Rechok. She set fire to herself outside the Jonang Dzamthang monastery in the town of Barma, Free Tibet reported. The group added that Rechok had tended to the family's animals in the last few days and then traveled to town to kill herself. Radio Free Asia identified the woman as Rikyo, 33.

Crisis deepens with one more self-immolation and arrest of hundreds in Crackdown

Tibet.net, May 31, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply concerned about the escalating crisis in Tibet as one more Tibetan self-immolated in north-eastern Tibet and hundreds being detained in crackdown in capital Lhasa.

Rikyo, a 36-year-old mother of three, died on the spot after setting herself on fire in front of the Jonang Zamthang monastery in Barma town in northeastern Tibet's Ngaba region on 30 May. The local Tibetans took the body inside the monastery, where thousands of monks offered prayers.

The Chinese authorities threatened to take the body into their custody if the local Tibetans do not cremate it quickly. So, the cremation was carried out near the monastery at around 11:00 pm that night. Over 5,000 local Tibetans, including monks of Zamthang Monastery, gathered at the funeral. They braved heavy rain that night to conduct the last rites.

Rikyo, daughter of Chuklo and Rinlha, was a nomadic herder. Residents described her as very friendly and virtuous person, who always cares for the poor.

Moreover, according to media reports, Tibetans living in capital Lhasa say police and paramilitary forces are out in force to impose crackdown after the region was hit by two self-immolations on Sunday. Over 600 Tibetans have been detained in Lhasa and those from outside Tibet Autonomous expelled.

With the latest incident of self-immolation, 38 Tibetans have set themselves on fire calling for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland. Out of these, 29 died and those survived are either in serious condition or maimed. The whereabouts and well-being of 5 still remain unknown.

Tibet continues to burn: Mother of three torches self to death

Phayul, May 30, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A mother of three young has torched herself to death in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet, today.

Rikyo, 33, set herself on fire near the Jonang Zamthang Gonchen monastery in Zamthang (Ch: Rangtang) county, in the distraught Ngaba region, the nerve

centre of the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

Speaking to Phayul, Tsangyang Gyatso, an exile Tibetan who has close contacts in the region said that Rikyo passed away at the site of her self-immolation protest.

“Rikyo set herself on fire at around 3 pm (local time) today close to the Jonang Monastery, protesting against Chinese rule,” Gyatso said. “She passed away at the site of her protest.”

Rikyo’s body is currently being kept at the Jonang Monastery, although Chinese security personnel have reportedly demanded the body to be removed.

Rikyo is survived by her husband and three children, the eldest, a 9-year old son and two daughters aged 7 and 5.

The ongoing fiery wave of self-immolations in Tibet has witnessed 38 Tibetans set their bodies on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet. Today’s self-immolation protest comes just three days after two young Tibetan men set themselves on fire in heart of Tibet’s capital Lhasa.

Rikyo’s self-immolation was the fourth in Zamthang alone.

In April, two cousins, Choephag Kyab and Sonam, both in their early 20s, passed away after they set themselves on fire near a local Chinese government office. In an audio message recorded before their protest, Choephag Kyab and Sonam recount the suffering of the Tibetan people due to the lack of fundamental human rights and the forced occupation and repression of Tibet by China.

“So, for the restoration of freedom in Tibet and world peace, both of us in sound mind, are setting ourselves on fire,” Choephag Kyab and Sonam stated. “The Tibetan people’s suffering due to denial of freedom is far greater than the tragedy of setting our bodies on fire.”

In a recent interview to a media crew of the Taiwan based Next TV, Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama had said that the People Republic of China’s “totalitarian, blind, unrealistic” policies in Tibet are responsible for the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

“This problem (self-immolations) has been started by the totalitarian, blind, unrealistic policies,” the Tibetan leader said. “So, the people who created these policies must think seriously.”

<http://www.voatibetanenglish.com/content/mother-of-three-self-immolates-in-dzangthang-amdo-155675015/1267429.html>

Mother of Three Dies After Self-immolation in Dzangthang, Amdo

VOA Tibetan, 29 May 2012

A Tibetan woman set herself on fire around 3:10 PM today and died at the scene in front of Jonang Dzangthang monastery in Barma township of Zangthang county, Ngaba Prefecture in eastern Tibet (*Chinese*: Aba Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province).

Rikyo, a mother of three, is believed to have been 33 years old. Her self-immolation is the fourth to have occurred in the small town of Dzangthang.

Rikyo was a neighbor of the three young men who had self-immolated earlier this year in February and April. Reports say the January's killing of a young man in Dzangthang by security forces may have been one of the catalysts for these self-immolations.

The latest self-immolations bring the number of Tibetans who set themselves ablaze in Ngaba prefecture since March last year to 26. There have been 38 such protests throughout Tibet since February 2009.

According to exile sources, the Tibetan areas of Sichuan province had been seething from decades of abuse and repression. This latest incidence comes three days after the twin self-immolations that took place in Lhasa which represented a major escalation in the scope of these protests in Tibet's capital which had been under intense security since 2008.

Thousands attend Rikyo's funeral

Phayul, May 31, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, May 31: Rikyo, the mother of three, who set herself ablaze yesterday in Zangthang, eastern Tibet was given a grand funeral ceremony by local Tibetans at around 11 pm (local time) later that day.

Although, the area near the Jonang Zangthang Gonchen monastery, the place of the funeral, was under heavy Chinese security surveillance, thousands of Tibet-

ans gathered to pay their last respects.

The Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration, in a release today, said that the local Tibetans had to carry out Rikyo's cremation in haste as the Chinese authorities had threatened to take the body into their custody.

"The cremation was carried out near the monastery at around 11:00 pm last night," CTA said. "Over 5,000 local Tibetans, including monks of Zamthang Monastery, gathered at the funeral."

According to sources, the gathered Tibetans prayed till 3 in the morning under inclement weather.

The mother of three young children, all under the age of ten, Rikyo torched herself to death in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet on Wednesday at around 3 pm (local time), near the Jonang Zamthang Gonchen monastery in Zamthang (Ch: Rangtang) county, in the distraught Ngaba region, the nerve centre of the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

The Tibetan Women's Association, in a release today grieved Rikyo's death and noted that six Tibetan women have set themselves on fire in the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet, including two mothers.

"TWA pays tribute to Rikyo's sacrifice and deem her act as the ultimate form of non-violent protest," the release said.

Since 2009, 38 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Rikyo's self-immolation, the fourth in Zamthang alone, came just three days after two young Tibetan men set themselves on fire in heart of Tibet's capital Lhasa.

CTA holds prayer service for self-immolations

Tibet.net, June 2, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration organised a special prayer service to mourn the tragic self-immolations in Tibet under the continued repressive policies of the Chinese government.

Speaking at the prayer service, Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay said, "We are holding this prayer service to pay homage to those who have sacrificed their lives

for Tibet and console their family members”.

“As the self-immolations continue unabated inside Tibet, we Tibetans in exile are ever more concerned about the policies of the Chinese government in Tibet,” he said.

Kalon Tripa also spoke about the support extended by many world leaders and Nobel Laureates for the cause of Tibet, and urged Tibetans to continue to highlight the grim situation prevailing inside Tibet.

All the Kalons and officials of the Central Tibetan Administration as well as the heads of the various governmental and non-governmental organisations attended the prayer service. The prayer service was presided over by His Eminence Kirti Rinpoche, the head lama of the Kirti Monastery.

Since 2009, thirty-eight Tibetans have set themselves on fire calling for more freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Out of which 29 has died and the remaining 9 were either seriously injured or their whereabouts are still unknown.

The latest incident of self-immolation occurred on Wednesday 30 May, when Rikyo, a mother of three children set herself on fire in Zamthang, northeastern Tibet.

Earlier on Sunday, 27 May, two Tibetans Dorjee Tseten, 19, and Dargye, 25, set themselves on fire in front of the Jokhang Temple, the holiest temple in Tibet’s capital Lhasa.

Tamding Thar

Age: 64

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 15 June 2012

Place: Chentsa county town, Malho, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Tamding Thar:

I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

*I am setting myself on fire as an offering of light
with hope that His Holiness the Dalai Lama will return to Tibet,
that peace will prevail on earth and that
Tibet will be ruled by Tibetans.'*

(Translates from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Tamding Thar Self-immolates, CTA Urges China to Address Tibetan Grievances

Tibet.net, June 15, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply saddened by the recent situation in Tibet involving the death of another Tibetan and strongly urges China to reform its failed policies in Tibet to end the on-going wave of self-immolations.

Tamding Thar, a Tibetan nomad in his late 50s, set himself on fire at 6:30 am (Local Time) in front of the local police station in Amdo Chentsa, northeastern Tibet today, protesting against the Chinese government.

The local police officials have snatched his body after the self-immolation but has handed over his dead body to his family members afterwards.

Thousands of Tibetans and monks from the near by monasteries came to pay their last respects and express their solidarity at his funeral. Tamding Thar is survived by his children and wife.

Tamding Thar hails from Lowa, a small nomadic village in Chentsa county, Malho. Reports also say that Tamding Thar and his family were forcibly taken to

the county a few years ago under the ‘nomad relocation’ policy of the Chinese government.

The situation in Chentsa is currently very tense as hundreds of police and military personnel have entered the town, keeping a strict vigil on the movements of the local Tibetan community.

The Central Tibetan Administration has repeatedly appealed to the Chinese government to address the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people and to provide a lasting and peaceful solution to the grim situation prevailing inside Tibet.

Since 2009, 40 Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest the Chinese government’s failed policies in Tibet. They have called for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland.

Earlier in May, two Tibetans set themselves on fire in front of the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, Tibet’s capital while a Tibetan woman, Rikyo set herself on fire in Zamthang, northeastern Tibet.

Tibetan Herder Dies After Setting Himself on Fire in Government Protest

By Andrew Jacobs, *The New York Times*, June 15, 2012

BEIJING — A Tibetan herder in China’s northwest Qinghai Province died on Friday after setting himself on fire to protest government policies in the region, according to exile groups and Radio

The herder, Tamdin Thar, who was thought to be in his early 60s, self-immolated in front of a police compound in Markethang, a county seat in the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, according to the group Free Tibet. Radio Free Asia said security forces immediately extinguished the flames but the man died a short time later.

A crowd of several hundred people, including Buddhist monks and local residents, quickly gathered at center of town and demanded that the police hand over his body, according to Radio Free Asia and Free Tibet.

The authorities, they said, eventually complied, returning Tamdin Thar’s body to his family, who then brought it to a nearby monastery in preparation for his funeral.

Since 2009, at least 38 Tibetans have set fire to themselves in a wave of protest

that has defied an increasingly heavy police presence and Beijing's efforts to paint the self-immolators as terrorists. Of those, 29 have died, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, an advocacy group in Washington.

Protesters who have set themselves ablaze often shout slogans demanding the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader; several have left notes or videotaped testimonials condemning government policies they say curtail Buddhist practices and favor the Mandarin language over Tibetan.

Once largely confined to Tibetan parts of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai Provinces, the self-immolations last month spread to Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, where two men set themselves on fire in front of Jokhang Temple, the holiest in Tibetan Buddhism.

Tsering Woesser, a Tibetan writer in Beijing, said the growing toll — and the government's refusal to scale back its harsh policies — was dispiriting. "If the human rights situation doesn't improve, such tragic incidents will keep happening," she said in a phone interview. "Many Tibetans think the pain of self-immolation is nothing compared to the pain of living without religious freedom."

Chentsa nomad dies as Tibet self-immolation protests continue

TibetanReview.net, June 17, 2012

A Tibetan nomad who was among thousands of others forced to live in a fixed urban settlement few years ago has immolated himself on Jun 15 morning in protest against Chinese rule. Tamdin Thar, in his 50's, torched himself at around 6:30 am (Beijing Time) in front of a policed station or paramilitary People Armed Police Force camp in Chentsa (Chinese: Jiancha) County of Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Prefecture, Qinghai Province, according to several news reports and Tibetan sources. He appeared to have died almost immediately.

Chinese security forces were reported to have appeared on the scene within minutes and put out the flames. They took in Tamdin's charred remains.

Hundreds of local Tibetans were reported to have soon gathered in front of the camp as well as the county government centre and demanded that Tamdin's mortal remains be handed over to them for the purpose of giving him a proper religious funeral. With the crowd continuing to swell, the authorities finally relented around 12 noon, said Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights De-

mocracy (TCHRD) and RFA.org (Radio Free Asia, Washington) Jun 15.

The exile Tibetan administration, Dharamsala, said on its Tibet.net website Jun 15 that thousands of Tibetans and monks from nearby monasteries took part in the funeral which TCHRD said took place in a remote nomadic area in the county.

The deceased originally belonged to Lowa, a small nomadic village in the county, before he was forced to move to the county town with the others some years ago under China's highly controversial and coercive 'nomad relocation' policy.

Tamdin is said to be survived by his wife and children.

China's official Xinhua news agency confirmed the self-immolation but did not give any further information, saying the name of the deceased and the cause of the death were under investigation. Its policy, however, is to blame the Dalai Lama and exile Tibetan groups for all self-immolations and other forms of protests in Tibet.

The incident brings to 39 the number of Tibetans who had immolated themselves in Tibet against Chinese rule since Feb 2009, and to 30 the number of those who are known to have died as a result of it. The fate of most of the rest remains unknown.

Following Tamdin's self-immolation, the authorities were reported to have rushed in police and paramilitary police reinforcements to the county town where the situation was reported to be tense.

Uncertainties still remain about Tamdin's age, with different reports putting it at between 40s and 65, and the place of his self-immolation. Most reports said incident took place in front of the county police station.

Tibetan Self-Immolates, Draws Protests

RFA, 15 June 2012

A Tibetan burned himself to death in protest against Chinese rule in Qinghai province Friday, triggering large demonstrations and a security clampdown, local sources said.

Tamdin Thar, from a nomadic family, self-immolated early morning in front of the police station in Chentsa (Jianzha) county in the Huangnan (Malho) Ti-

betan Autonomous Prefecture, immediately drawing Chinese security forces who doused the flames and bundled him away, the sources said.

On learning of his death, hundreds of Tibetans in the area thronged the Chentsa county center and the police station to demand his body, sources in the county and in the Tibet Autonomous Region told RFA. As the crowd swelled, the authorities complied and handed over his body, they said.

“Over 300 Tibetans protested at the county center demanding custody of his body” after it was learned that Tamdin Thar, whose age was given as between 40’s and 60’s, had succumbed to serious burns, one source inside Tibet said.

“We went to the Chentsa county police station and demanded the body. Finally the authorities gave us custody of his body,” one protester, a woman, told RFA.

“However, the presence of Chinese security forces is on the increase in this area,” she added.

Another source, identified as Gyatso, a native of Chentsa county, said that monks and others had gathered for funeral prayers.

Thirty-ninth self-immolation

Tamdin Thar is the 39th Tibetan to have burned himself to protest Chinese rule and demand the return of Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama since a wave of self-immolations began in February 2009.

The India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy said Tamdin Thar belonged to a nomadic family in Lowa village in Chentsathang township. He and his family moved to the county due to the “nomad relocation policy” of the Chinese government, It quoted a source as saying.

Nearly all the self-immolations so far have taken place in the Tibetan-populated provinces in western China—Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu—as Tibetans challenge Chinese policies which they say are discriminatory and have robbed them of their rights.

The first self-immolation incident in Tibet’s capital Lhasa was reported last month when two young Tibetan men burned themselves in the heavily guarded city, suggesting that the protest movement to restore Tibetan rights is gaining momentum internally, much to the chagrin of the Chinese authorities who have portrayed the burnings as isolated incidents fueled by exile groups, according to experts.

The Dalai Lama has blamed Beijing's "totalitarian" and "unrealistic" policies for the wave of self-immolations, saying the time has come for the Chinese authorities to take a serious approach to resolving the Tibetan problem.

Chinese authorities however have labeled the self-immolators as terrorists, outcasts, criminals, and mentally ill people, and have blamed the Dalai Lama for encouraging the burnings.

Tibetan Nomadic Herder Dies After Burning Self in Protest

By Jack Phillips, *The Epoch Times* Staff, 16 June 2012

A Tibetan nomadic herder set himself on fire to protest against the Chinese regime's decades-old occupation of Tibet in the central-western province of Qinghai on Friday, sparking mass demonstrations and a subsequent security crackdown.

Tibetan human rights groups said Tamdin Thar, believed to be in his 60s, was killed after he set himself on fire outside the People's Armed Police compound, which is said to house military personnel, in Chentsa near the border with the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Following the death, between four and five hundred Tibetan civilians and monks gathered and demanded that his body be returned, according to [Free Tibet](#). The body was taken by local authorities, who later returned it and his family took it to a nearby monastery.

Free Tibet said that because the man set himself on fire in front of a police building, the act was a "clear and absolute rejection of Chinese rule."

"However, the presence of Chinese security forces is on the increase in this area," a woman, who did not give her name, told [Radio Free Asia](#).

Photos published by the International Campaign for Tibet, or [Save Tibet](#), showed throngs of armed police officers positioned near his body in Chentsa along with numerous police and military vehicles.

China's state-run media mouthpiece, Xinhua, confirmed in a two-sentence report that a man died after he set himself on fire, but did not elaborate.

"Tibetans from many different villages near Chentsa and monasteries outside Chentsa have converged upon the town to offer prayers for him," Save Tibet

said, citing Tibetan exile sources familiar with the matter.

The India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy told RFA that Tamdin Thar was a nomad who was forced to move to Chentsa due to the Chinese regime's "nomad relocation policy," RFA reported.

In recent months, there has been a wave of protests that have swept across Sichuan Province, the Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai, and parts of Gansu. Several dozen people—mostly monks—have also set themselves on fire in protest.

The self-immolations and demonstrations have not much affected the Tibetan capital of Lhasa because of the persistent heavy security presence in the city. However, two young Tibetan men burned themselves in Lhasa last month, making them the first to do so in the capital.

At least 39 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since February 2009. Friday's incident was the sixth self-immolation in Qinghai Province.

Tamding Thar cremated, Thousands pay respect

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, June 17, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, June 16: Tamding Thar, the elderly Tibetan who set himself on fire yesterday morning in Chentsa, Amdo, eastern Tibet, in an apparent protest against the Chinese government was cremated later in the evening.

Tamding Thar is survived by his children and wife.

Despite a heavy deployment of security forces, thousands of Tibetans attended the cremation to pay their last respects.

Tamding Thar belonged to a nomadic family in Lowa village and was forcibly moved to the region, a few years ago, under the 'nomad relocation' policy of the Chinese government. He set himself on fire at around 6.30 am (local time) yesterday in front of the local Chinese police station.

"Tamding Thar not only put petrol on his body but also drank it and had coiled his body with iron barbed wires so that the Chinese police won't be able to easily get hold of him," Rinchen, a native of Chentsa who is currently living in Dharamshala told Phayul.

Tibetans started to gather soon after Tamdin Thar's self-immolation protest,

demanding that the Chinese authorities return his body. After his body was handed over, hundreds of more Tibetans joined a march, carrying Tamding Thar to a remote nomadic area in the region.

The Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration yesterday said that the situation in Chentsa is “currently very tense” with the deployment of hundreds of police and military personnel keeping a strict vigil on the movements of the local Tibetan community.

Speaking to Phayul, Rinchen added that he has been unable to reach Chentsa as the area is suffering a virtual lockdown. “It seems that everyone has been warned against receiving or making phone calls.”

However, in spite of the imminent security threats, Tibetans in the region not only attended Tamding Thar’s funeral but also made offerings of Khataks, traditional Tibetan scarves, and lighted lamps at the site of his self-immolation protest in front of the police station.

Images smuggled out of Tibet showed Khataks and candles lit in front of the police station gates.

The CTA expressed “deep sadness” at Tamding Thar’s death and “strongly” urged China to “reform its failed policies in Tibet to end the on-going wave of self-immolations.”

“The Central Tibetan Administration has repeatedly appealed to the Chinese government to address the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people and to provide a lasting and peaceful solution to the grim situation prevailing inside Tibet,” CTA said.

Exiled Tibetans in Dharamshala hold a candle light vigil in solidarity with Tamding Thar on June 16, 2012.

The Dharamshala regional chapters of the women’s association and youth congress organised a candle light vigil yesterday evening in solidarity with Tamding Thar’s self-immolation protest.

Hundreds of Tibetans and foreigners marched from the main square in McLeod Ganj to the Tibetan Martyr’s Pillar near the Tsug-la Khang, the main temple.

40 Tibetans have set their bodies on fire since 2009 demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Ngawang Norphel

Age: 22

Occupation: Layperson

Date of self-immolation: 20 June 2012

Place: Zatoe town in Keygudo, Yulshul,
Kham, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tenzin Khedup

Age: 24

Occupation: former monk

Date of self-immolation: 20 June 2012

Place: Zatoe town in Keygudo, Yulshul,
Kham, Eastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



The last message of Norphel and Tenzin Khedrup:

Independence for Tibet! His Holiness must return to Tibet!

The two of us cannot contribute anything towards Tibetan culture and religion nor can we do anything to benefit Tibetans in financial terms. Hence, the only thing that we can do for Tibetans, the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and for his return to Tibet, is to set ourselves on fire. We would like to urge other Tibetan youths like us to pledge that you will never engage in such acts as fighting amongst yourselves; instead you must remain united. We have hope and faith that you will maintain loyalty among all the Tibetans.'

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

New Video Footage of Latest Self-Immolation Incident

Tibet.net, **Press Release**, 23 June 2012

On June 20, 2012, two Tibetan men self-immolated in Tridu, Yushul: Ngawang Norphel (age 22) and Tenzin Kedhup (age 24). The latter succumbed to his in-

juries on the same day. The former, Ngawang Norphel, survived and was taken to a nearby monastery. The following graphic video footage of seriously burned Ngawang Norphel was recently obtained by the Central Tibetan Administration, based in India. Despite his heavy injuries, he articulates the reasons for their self-immolation: the survival of Tibetan culture, language, and identity.

The English translation of what is being said is as follows:

The following text is the transcript of an exchange between Ngawang Norphel (attempted to self-immolate on 20 June 2012) and the monk by his side. The person he refers to as 'Khedup' and 'Tenzin Khedup' is the other man who self-immolated with him and died on 20 June 2012.

(Transaltion by Tibet.net)

(0:00-0:09) *Ngawang Norphel (N.N):* My people have no freedom of language. Everybody is mixing Tibetan and Chinese.

(0:11) *Be that as it may*

(0:16) *take my wealth*

(0:21) *I don't need them*

(0:24) *What has happened to my Land of Snow?*

(0:30) *What has happened to my Land of Snow?*

(0:55) *N.N:* How is Tenzin Khedup?

(0:59) *Monk by his side:* He is fine

(01:00) *N.N:* Where is he?

(01:02) *Monk:* He is home

(01:07-01:12) *We two "sworn brothers", we won't fail next time*

(01:12-01:20) *[This is] for the sake of Tibet. We are in the land of snow*

(01:26-01:35) *if we don't have our freedom, cultural traditions and language, it would be extremely embarrassing for us*

(01:37) *We must therefore learn them*

(01:42-01:54) *Every nationality needs freedom, language and tradition*

(01:55-01:59) *Without language, what would be our nationality?*

(02:01) *[Should we then] call ourselves Chinese or Tibetan?*

(02:16) *N.N:* Aro Khedup! Aro Khedup! Khedup!

(02:26) *Where are you?*

(02:32) *Voice from back*: Just behind you

(02:33) N.N: What?

(02:3) *Voice*: Just behind you

(02:38) N.N: Are you behind me?

(02:40-02:43) What are you doing? Aro! How is my face?

(02:45-02:47) *Voice*: Not bad. It will get better

(02:48) N.N: I don't look like a human? Aro!

(02:51) N.N: I look dreadful, don't I?

(02:56) N.N: I smell kerosene. We poured quite a lot of kerosene.

(03:02-03:08) N.N: Really, the way you fell down and rose up again, you really showed some courage. Aro!

Voice: Right

(03:29) N.N: Aro! Now you hold it.

(03:39) *Monk*: It is better now. It really is!

(03:41-03:44) N.N: Did you hand me over to the Chinese?

(03:45-03:47) *Monk*: All the monks of monastery are taking care of you.

(03:47-03:51) N.N: Thank you. Thank you. I am grateful to Silkar monastery.

(03:52-03:59) *Monk*: All the monks of Silkar monastery are here. We don't have good medical facilities but we are doing our best.

(03:59) N.N: Thank you

(04:02-04:15) N.N: There is no hope of my recovery. I have only one wish in my heart. I just wish to raise the prestige of my people. Aro!

(04:17) I have no other wish.

(04:29-04:32) N.N: What is Tenzin Khedup doing?

(04:32-04:36) *Monk*: Tenzin Khedup is fine. He is home.

(04:37) N.N: Swear

(04:38) *Monk*: Yes. Then.

(04:40) N.N: You are fooling me

(04:43) *Monk*: I am not fooling you.

(04:51) N.N: Is he dead?

(04:53) *Monk*: He is not dead

(04:54) N.N: What?

(04:55) *Monk*: He is not dead

(04:57) N.N: He is dead, right?

(04:58) *Monk*: He is not dead

(05:11-05:13) *N.N.*: Where is he?

(05:54) *N.N.*: What has become of my “sworn friend”?

(05:56) *Monk*: He is fine.

(05:58) *N.N.*: Where is he?

(06:00) *Monk*: At home.

(06:01) *N.N.*: Where is he?

(06:03) *Monk*: He was taken to his home.

(06:04) *N.N.*: What?

(06:05) *Monk*: He was taken to his home.

(06:06) *N.N.*: Where is he?

(06:08) *Monk*: He is at his home

(06:13) *N.N.*: Is he dead?

(06:15) *Monk*: He is not dead

(06:16) *N.N.*: Swear

(06:18) *Monk*: Okay

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31621&t=1>

Two Tibetans self-immolate calling for Tibet’s independence

Phayul, June 20, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, June 20: In reports coming out of Tibet, two young Tibetans set themselves on fire today in Zatoe town of Keygudo, Kham, eastern Tibet calling for Tibet’s independence and long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Ngawang Norphel, 22 and Tenzin Khedup, 24, set themselves ablaze at about 3.30 pm (local time).

Both of them were carrying Tibetan national flags in their hands at the time of their self-immolation protest.

Tenzin Khedup passed away in his fiery protest while the condition and whereabouts of Ngawang Norphel is not yet known.

Confirming the reports, Jamyang Soepa, a member of the standing committee of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile said that the two young Tibetans set themselves ablaze calling for Tibet’ independence.

“Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup called for independence and freedom in Tibet and the long-life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama before setting themselves on fire,” Soepa said citing sources.

In images received by exile Tibetans, huge flames and black smoke could be seen bellowing up from their bodies, lying on the road next to parked cars and motorbikes.

In a 7-second video clip of their self-immolation protest, Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup could be seen standing next to each other and raising the ‘banned in Tibet’ Tibetan National just before fire envelopes their bodies. While one of them immediately falls down on the ground, the second self-immolator trips and then stands up to run for a few metres before falling down.

According to reports, Tenzin Khedup is from Tridu in Keygudo. His parents are Legdup and Kyizom. Ngawang Norphel is believed to be from Ngaba, the region which remains the nerve centre of the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

Earlier this year, on February 8, Sonam Rabyang, a monk in his late thirties from the La Monastery in Tridu, set himself ablaze on the main road of La Township, Tridu County, Keygudo. Sonam Rabyang’s condition and whereabouts remain unknown.

With Tenzin Khedup and Ngawang Norphel’s self-immolation protests today, as many as 42 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009, demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Two More Tibetans Burn Themselves in China Protest

VOA Tibetan, 19 June 2012

In an unwavering continuous spate of self-immolations from Tibetan regions, another two young Tibetans from eastern Tibet have burned themselves today to protest Chinese rule and to demand return of the Dalai Lama, exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

22-year-old Ngawang Norphel and 24-year-old Tenzin Khedup set themselves ablaze around 3.30 pm Tuesday in Zatoe town of Kyegudo, (Chinese: Yushu) in eastern Tibet’s Kham province. Both were known to have carried Tibetan national flag at the time of their self-immolation.

A written statement by the protesters said: “People like us are unable to contribute anything toward Tibetan religion and culture, or contribute economically to help Tibetans.” They said they chose to self-immolate “to show our love to the Tibetan people [and] our loyalty to His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.”

Graphic video of the fiery protest forwarded to the Tibetan exile community reached VOA’s Tibetan service within hours and quickly circulated on the Internet.

Tenzin Khedup, a former monk of Zikar monastery is reported to have died at the scene of the protest. Sources say that his body was taken to Zikar monastery where monks and lay people were known to have paid respect and burned prayer lamps.

Ngawang, who has settled in the area from Ngaba region in Amdo, main locus of the Tibetan self-immolations, has been taken to hospital. His condition and whereabouts are unknown.

Sources say Zatoe town is under heavy travel and communication restriction.

The Chinese government, which views Tibet as a non-negotiable part of China, has forcefully condemned the protests, which erupted 15 months ago as Chinese security forces sought to lock down the region in a push to prevent such demonstrations.

The latest self-immolations bring the number of Tibetans who set themselves ablaze throughout Tibet since February 2009 to 41. Beijing says the immolations incite separatism and are directed from outside the country. But representatives of the Dalai Lama, who lives in exile in northern India, say protesters are driven to self-immolate in large part because they can no longer tolerate Beijing’s ongoing push against Tibetan culture and religion.

Torch vigil held by Tibetans

By Harold Mandel, *Examiner*, June 22, 2012

The degree of emotional torment being shared by Buddhists over the ongoing tensions in Tibet has been witnessed by a torch vigil. Tendar Tsering has reported for Phayul.com “Tibetan take out torch in vigil in Dharamsala.” Yesterday evening Buddhists in the exile Tibetan seat of Dharamshala, India held a first of its kind torch vigil in order to show solidarity and support with the ongoing wave of

self-immolations inside Tibet.

Symbolic of the 42 Tibetans who have set themselves on fire since 2009, large torches were carried by the marchers in place of the usual candles during the vigil which was organized by the regional chapters of the youth and women's associations. In the latest in the series of tragic self-immolations, Ngawang Norphel, 22, and Tenzin Khedup, 24 set themselves on fire Wednesday in Zatoe town of Keygudo, Kham, eastern Tibet. A note was left by the pair urging all Tibetans to be united in the fight for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from exile.

In their note Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup wrote "People like us are unable to contribute anything toward Tibetan religion and culture, or contribute economically to help Tibetans." They also wrote their actions "show love to the Tibetan people and loyalty to His Holiness the Dalai Lama." In a dramatic 7-second video clip of their self-immolation protest, which is being widely circulated on the internet, Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup are seen standing next to each other and raising banned Tibetan National flags just before huge flames engulfed their bodies. While one of them immediately fell down on the ground, the second self-immolator tripped and then stood up to run for a few meters before falling down.

One young Tibetan dead and another in critical condition after pair set themselves on fire in protest against Chinese rule

By Amy Oliver, *Daily Mail*, 21 June 2012

A double self-immolation protest in China has left one Tibetan man dead and another seriously injured.

Former monk Tenzin Khedup, 24, and Ngawang Norphel, 22, held out Tibetan flags and shouted pro-independence songs as the flames engulfed them on the street in Dzatoe township in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province.

Passersby watched in horror as Khedup burned to death in front of them, while Norphel was taken to hospital with serious burns, Radio Free Asia reported.

The pair's protest takes the total number of self-immolations to 41 since troubles began in 2009. The men had been calling for an end to Chinese rule in

Tibetan-populated areas and the return of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Lobsang Sangay, a monk in India, originally from the Zekar monastery in Yusu, told Radio Free Asia the pair had left a suicide note.

It read: 'We could not contribute significantly towards the Tibetan religion and culture and we could not (help bring) economic benefits to Tibetans.

'Therefore, we have decided to self-immolate with the hope that His Holiness the Dalai Lama may live long and return to Tibet as soon as possible. For the cause of Tibetans, we chose to die for these reasons.'

They added: 'We also want to appeal to our fellow youth that they should not quarrel among themselves and they should not have any ill feelings against each other. Everyone should unite to uphold the cause of the Tibetan race and nationality.'

The Dalai Lama, currently on a 10-day tour of Britain, said yesterday that resuming talks with China on his homeland's future was hopeless unless it adopted a 'realistic' stance, adding it was useless trying to convince Beijing he was not seeking full independence.

In comments likely to enrage a Chinese leadership already angry over his trip to Britain, the spiritual leader also said a shift towards democracy and better human rights in China was inevitable and the Chinese people 'really want change'.

China mobilises to meet Tibet burning protests

By John Garnaut, *The Age*, June 22, 2012

CHINESE security forces are arming themselves with guns, fire hydrants and 1960s communist propaganda as they battle a wave of self-immolations that is spreading across the Tibetan plateau.

Two young Tibetan men set themselves alight in Qinghai province on Wednesday, bringing the total to more than 35 over the past year. Most have died.

Tenzin Khedup, 24, died on the spot on Wednesday, while his colleague, Ngawang Norphel, 22, is reportedly being treated for serious injuries. They were carrying Tibetan flags, shouting pro-independence slogans and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, according to Radio Free Asia. Photos were posted on

the internet, despite tightening restrictions on movement and electronic communication.

Last month the morbid form of protest arrived for the first time in Lhasa, the region's spiritual and political capital, when a 19-year-old man died and a 25-year-old man was seriously injured.

They emerged from Lhasa's Mandala Hotel and ignited themselves outside Jokhang, Tibet's most important monastery.

The hotel and dozens of others have since been shut, petrol sales have been tightly restricted and dozens of people taken into custody, according to Tibetan sources.

Squads of orange-clad fire fighters, with fire trucks and four-wheeled buggies, have now joined clusters of police SWAT teams, riot police and paramilitaries in camouflage to prevent monks and Tibetan lay persons from making public spectacles of self-harm.

They are armed with fire hydrants - carried in hand and concealed in rows under fire blankets - as well as semi-automatic weapons and long black poles apparently designed for the safe handling of burning bodies.

Jokhang Temple has been stripped of most of its yak-butter candles, replaced by fluorescent lights, while identification checks are now required to enter monasteries and other public spaces.

While Communist Party officials have described the self-immolations as a form of terrorism, others argue that the notion of national martyrdom was imported with the communists in the 1950s and 1960s.

"This kind of thing has never happened in the Tibetan tradition before," said Tsering Shakya, a Tibet historian at the University of British Columbia. "It traces back to Communist propaganda figures, such as Lei Feng."

Lei Feng was a cult figure, selflessly devoted to Chairman Mao, who was said to have been killed by a falling telephone pole while directing a military vehicle to reverse onto a road.

In London, the Dalai Lama expressed hope that change would come to Tibet when Beijing's leaders were forced to respond to Chinese aspirations for freedom and democracy.

Tibetans who left suicide notes have addressed fellow Tibetans rather than Chinese authorities, perhaps reflecting a view that dialogue is futile.

"We could not contribute significantly towards the Tibetan religion and culture and we could not [help bring about] economic benefits to Tibetans," said the suicide note of Wednesday's victims, according to Radio Free Asia.

"Therefore, we have decided to self-immolate with the hope that His Holiness the Dalai Lama may live long and return to Tibet as soon as possible ... Everyone should unite to uphold the cause of the Tibetan race and nationality."

Dr Shakya said: "They are trying to mobilise Tibetan people and warn of the danger of the disappearance of traditional culture."

CTA mourns self-immolations in Tibet

Tibet.net, August 3, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration yesterday organised a prayer service to condole the recent death of 22-year-old Ngawang Norphel, and other Tibetans who self-immolated against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet.

Ngawang Norphel, 22, a native of Zurtso Truldul village, Menphuk township, Nyanang district, succumbed to severe burn injuries at a hospital in Siling on 30 July. Tenzin Khedup, 24, who also self-immolated with Ngawang Norphel on 20 July, died on the spot.

In a graphic video footage recently obtained by the Central Tibetan Administration, based in India, seriously burned Ngawang Norphel articulates the reasons for their self-immolation: the survival of Tibetan culture, language, and identity. "[This is] for the sake of Tibet. We are in the land of snow. If we don't have our freedom, cultural traditions and language, it would be extremely embarrassing for us. We must therefore learn them. Every nationality needs freedom, language and tradition," he said. The

Yesterday's prayer service at the Tsuglagkhang was attended by entire officials of the Central Tibetan Administration. "We express deep condolence and solidarity with all those Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives of the just cause of Tibet," the department of religion and culture said in a statement.

Dickyi Choezom

Age: 40

Occupation: housewife

Date of self-immolation: 27 June 2012

Place: Keygu town, Yulshul, Kham,
Eastern Tibet

Current status: Unknown



<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31688&t=1>

Land seizure protests in Keygudo prompts self-immolation

Phayul, July 04, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Tibetan woman who self-immolated in Keygudo, eastern Tibet, last Wednesday has now been identified as Dickyi Choezom, a mother of two in her 40s.

Phayul had earlier quoted the Beijing based Tibetan writer Woesser on reports of the self-immolation.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in a release Monday said that Dickyi Choezom set herself on fire on June 27, at around 2 pm (local time) in Keygu town near the Dhondupling Monastery.

“Dickyi Choezom set herself on fire during a public protest against Chinese government policies of forced eviction and land seizures in the region,” the Tibetan Parliament said.

“Around 70 Tibetan families, taking part in the protest, were raising slogans for ‘Right over our own land’ and ‘Rights over our own wealth.’”

Chinese security personnel at the scene of the protest doused the flames and took Dickyi Choezom away, reportedly to a hospital in Siling. There is no further information available on her wellbeing.

Speaking to Phayul, Lobsang Sangay, an exile monk with contacts in the region said that following Dickyi Choezom’s self-immolation, two of her relatives, who were both taking part in the protest, were severely beaten and briefly arrested.

“Tashi Yangzom and Tashi Dhondup were singled out, severely beaten and arrested by the police,” Sangay said. “Many of the gathered Tibetans demanded their release, threatening to set themselves on fire. The two were released later in the day carrying serious injuries.”

Tibetans in Keygudo have been protesting China’s redevelopment plans that have ousted them from their ancestral lands to make way for government buildings following the devastating April 2010 earthquake.

In April last year, around 300 Tibetans had led a mass protest in the main intersection of the town against the government takeover of their land. Many of the protesters were wounded and several detained in the bloody crackdown that followed.

Dickyi Choezom’s self-immolation came exactly a week after two young Tibetans, Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup self-immolated in the region demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

The Tibetan parliament condemned the repressive policies of the Chinese government, blaming them for the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

“Until China changes its repressive policies, self-immolations will continue inside Tibet,” the lawmakers said. “China must bear full responsibility for the protests.”

<http://www.theprisma.co.uk/2012/08/05/bodies-of-protest-self-immolation-in-tibet/>

Bodies of protets: self-immolation in Tibet

The Prisma, August 5, 2012

Though Tibetan Buddhism states that violence towards oneself is prohibited it is tolerated in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and in the 23rd chapter of the Lotus Sutra, which recounts the self-immolation of the Medicine King.

The act became well documented in the West during the Vietnam war (1955-1975) With television sets beaming protests in South Vietnam where Tibetan Monks were recorded setting themselves on fire in protest to the oppressive Roman Catholic regime of Ngo Dinh Diem.

The most famous of which Thich Quang Duc prompted international outrage and the widespread condemnation of the American occupation.

On June 27th of 2012 Dickyi Choezom, a woman in her 40s and mother of two, set herself on fire in protest to land seizures and forced removal of families from their homes in Keygudo, Eastern Tibet.

The Chinese authorities plan to build government offices on the land after massive earthquakes in China.

Dickyi Choezom's self-immolation occurred a week after two young Tibetan's, Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup, self-immolated in protest to the exile of the Dalai Lama.

On April 19th two more Tibetan's, Choephag Kyab and Sonam from Ngaba, Eastern Tibet, both in their 20s, self-immolated in protest to continued Chinese occupation.

On February 19th, 18 year old Nangdrol set himself on fire raising slogans reading 'long life of his holiness the Dalai Lama' and 'freedom for Tibet'. He died at the site of his protest.

The Chinese authorities blame the exiled Dalai Lama for inciting individuals to commit the act so to further highlight his political agenda in the West.

The Dalai Lama has been quoted as saying he does not support or agree with self-immolation but he does admire the courage of those who commit self-Immolation.

The Dalai Lama himself has called for investigations into the real causes of self-immolations in Tibet.

Video footage emerged early this year showing Chinese security personnel pushing down and kicking a man whilst on fire.

Tenzin Chokyi, the general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, asserted that the "absolute barbarism" employed by Chinese authorities compels the protest to continue and thrive amongst Tibetan's stating that "seeing their sacrifice only reinforces our determination to work for a free Tibet more resolutely and strongly".

Prominent Tibetan poet Tsering Woeser, who is under house arrest in Beijing, has called for unity amongst all Tibetan intellectuals and political figures to call

for an end to the deadly form of protest.

In a mission statement Woesser along with other prominent Tibetan figures affirmed that “Tibetans must cherish life and live with resilience.

Regardless of the magnitude of oppression, our life is important, and we have to cherish it”.

Whatever the cause the apparent cult of self-immolation has become for many the only means to protest against the oppressive regime of China

Tsewang Dorjee

Age: 22

Occupation: businessman

Date of self-immolation: 7 July 2012

Place: Damshung region, Central Tibet

Current status: deceased



China: 43rd Tibetan Sets Himself on Fire

By Eward Wong, *The New York Times*, July 11, 2012

A Tibetan man in his 20s set himself on fire in a village near Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, according to reports by Radio Free Asia and Free Tibet, an advocacy group. The self-immolation took place on Saturday and was the 43rd self-immolation since 2009 in protest of Chinese rule in a Tibetan area, the Radio Free Asia report said. The condition of the man was unclear. Free Tibet said he was Tsewang Dorjee, 22, a nomad. Radio Free Asia, citing a person from Lhasa, said the self-immolation took place in an area that Tibetans call Damshung, and the Chinese call Dangxiong. The Chinese government has denounced the self-immolations as the work of separatists. In May, two men self-immolated in Lhasa in front of the Jokhang, the holiest temple of Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese

government generally does not allow foreigners, including foreign journalists, to travel independently to Lhasa or other parts of central Tibet. Many areas in eastern Tibet, the region where most of the self-immolations have taken place, are now also closed to foreigners.

Chinese officials deny reports of latest Tibetan self-immolation

By Tania Branigan in Beijing, *Guardian*, 11 July 2012

A young Tibetan nomad set himself on fire near the Tibetan capital of Lhasa on Saturday, a campaign group has said.

More than 40 monks, nuns and lay people have self-immolated in Tibetan areas of western China in the last year and a half, according to exiles. But the new case is only the fourth to have taken place in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The Free Tibet campaign named the young man as Tsewang Dorjee, 22. It said he set fire to himself in a market place in Damshung county – known in Chinese as Dangxiong – near Lhasa. Security personnel put out the flames and took him to hospital, but his condition and whereabouts were unknown, the group added.

Another source told US-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the man had called for the long life of the Dalai Lama. Chinese authorities have accused the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader of inciting the self-immolations, while he has blamed Beijing's policies. He said this week he had to remain “neutral” on the issue.

Free Tibet added there were reports that witnesses to the latest self-immolation had been detained. The group's director, Stephanie Brigden, said: “China's determination to maintain ‘internal’ stability is exposed by the extreme response to Tibetan acts of protest: arbitrary detentions, communications blackouts and banning foreigners.

“The media and international observers do nothing to address Tibetan grievances nor to convince the international community that all is well in Tibet.”

The group said Damshung residents had been told not to discuss what had happened and both the group and a source cited by RFA said a security crackdown had cut off all telephone lines to Damshung.

RFA said an officer at the Damshung police station denied the incident. Officials in Damshung and Lhasa could not be reached.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=31720&t=1>

Self-immolator identified as Tsewang Dorjee, All witnesses arrested

Phayul, July 10, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, July 10: The Tibetan man who set himself on fire on July 7 has now been identified as Tsewang Dorjee, a 22-year-old nomad from Damshung, central Tibet.

The Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in a release today said Tsewang Dorjee set himself on fire in the centre of Damshung, at a place of where people gather in large numbers.

“Tsewang Dorjee raised slogans and set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government,” the Tibetan Parliament said. “Barely three minutes into his protest, Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene, doused the flames and took him to a hospital.”

The parliament also expressed fears of his death.

“No one was allowed to meet him after his protest. Reports suggest that Tsewang Dorjee passed away later that night.”

He is survived by his old mother.

Earlier reports had indicated that Tsewang Dorjee was taken to a hospital in the adjoining city of Lhasa with no reports about his well-being.

The Tibetan Parliament noted that the entire Damshung region is currently reeling under a heavy lockdown and people who witnessed Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation have since been arrested.

“All communication lines have been cut in Damshung. Even for people living in the nearby areas such as Lhasa are unable to reach Damshung.”

“The Chinese authorities in the region have arrested all the people who witnessed Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation protest and have passed strict orders barring anyone from speaking about the protest,” the release said.

Since 2009, the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire demanding freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile have now reached 43.

Damshung, which means “chosen valley” in Tibetan, is a hub of pastoral production and commerce. The region has been subjected to China’s unpopular rangeland policies, including the fencing of grasslands and restrictions over livestock development.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/witnesses-to-recent-self-immolation-arrested>

Witnesses to recent self-immolation arrested

By Harold Mandel, *Examiner*, 10 July 2012

There has been another tragic self-immolation in Tibet. In an article on July 10, 2012 Phayul.com reported “Self-immolating youth identified as Tsewang Dorjee . On July 7, 2012 a 22-year-old nomad from Damshung, central Tibet, Tsewang Dorjee, set himself on fire. The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile based in Dharamshala, India said in a recent press release that Tsewang Dorjee set himself on fire in the centre of Damshung, at a place of where people gather in large numbers.

The Tibetan Parliament said “Tsewang Dorjee raised slogans and set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government. Barely three minutes into his protest, Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene, doused the flames and took him to a hospital.” The Tibetan parliament went on to report that no one was allowed to meet him after his protest and reports have suggested that Tsewang Dorjee passed away later that night. The Tibetan Parliament has also reported that the entire Damshung region is currently being held under a heavy lockdown and people who witnessed Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation have since been arrested. The communication lines have been cut in Damshung. It is even impossible for people living in the nearby areas such as Lhasa to reach Damshung.

The Tibetan Parliament has also reported that the Chinese authorities in the region have arrested all the people who witnessed Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation. Furthermore, there are strict orders barring anyone from speaking about the protest. Damshung, which means “chosen valley” in Tibetan, is a center of pastoral production and commerce. This region has been subjected to China’s unpopular rangeland policies, which have included the fencing of grasslands and restrictions over livestock development.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/print.aspx?id=31741&t=1>

End repressive policies in Tibet: Exile leadership tells China

By Tendar Tsering, *Phayul*, July 13, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, July 13: The exile Tibetan leadership warned China that the ongoing wave of self-immolations inside Tibet will not abate unless Beijing ends its repressive policies inside Tibet and addressed the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people .

“Leaders in Beijing must understand that self-immolations will not stop unless China ends its repressive policies inside Tibet,” acting Kalon Tripa Dr Tsering Wangchuk said today.

The Tibetan Health Minister was speaking at a mass prayer session held in honour of Tsewang Dorjee, a 22-year-old nomad, who set himself on fire on July 7 in the main market of Damshung, about 160 kms from capital Lhasa, in an apparent protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

The Central Tibetan Administration earlier said that Tsewang Dorjee shouted slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama before Chinese security forces put out the flame and bundled him away.

Tsewang Dorjee passed away after suffering 90 percent burn, CTA said in a release.

“We mourn for the loss of lives of Tsewang Dorjee and Dhargey, 25, who set himself on fire in a twin self-immolation protest in Lhasa on May 27,” Kalon Wangchuk said. “We pray for the departed souls and pay our condolences to their family members.”

The prayer service, organised by the Department of Religion and Culture, CTA was led by H.E. Kirti Rinpoche. Members of the Tibetan administration along with hundreds of Tibetans and foreigners attended the mass service at the Tsug-la Khang, the main temple.

The Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile, following Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation protest, said that the entire Damshung region is reeling under a heavy security lockdown and people who witnessed the self-immolation protest have been arrested.

“The Chinese authorities in the region have arrested all the people who witnessed Tsewang Dorjee’s self-immolation protest and have passed strict orders barring anyone from speaking about the protest,” the Tibetan Parliament said.

Since 2009, 43 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding freedom in Tibet and return of the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from exile.

With Tsewang Dorjee’s death, 34 Tibetans have now passed away in their self-immolation protests. Six Tibetans have sustained serious injuries and are reportedly in critical conditions while the well-being and whereabouts of four Tibetan self-immolators still remain unknown.

Damshung Self-Immolator Dies From His Injuries

VOA News, 10 July 2012

The Tibetan man who set himself on fire July 7 in Damshung, in the Tibet Autonomous Region, has been identified as Tsewang Dorjee, a 22-year-old native of Damshung, a small town around 85 miles north of Lhasa.

The India based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in a release today said that Tsewang Dorjee set himself on fire at a place in town where people normally gather in large numbers and that he had “raised slogans and set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government”.

Dorjee’s self-immolation took place around midday, and he is reported to have walked for several steps while still ablaze.

In an interview with VOA, Phuntsok, an exile Tibetan originally from the Damshung area, says that Tsewang Dorjee had succumbed to his injuries later that night in the county hospital, contrary to earlier reports that he had been transported to Lhasa.

However Dorjee’s state or exact whereabouts cannot be confirmed as the exile Tibetan Parliament has stated that no one had been allowed to meet or see him after he was taken from the scene by security forces. Dorjee is survived by his old mother.

Exile Tibetans with contacts in the region say that there had been heavy security presence in Damshung immediately following the protest and that communications in and out of the region have now been cut off.

Another exile source told VOA that immediately following the self-immolation, all witnesses to the act were rounded up and ordered not to talk about what they had witnessed to anyone.

This is the 4th self-immolation protest to have taken place inside the Tibet Autonomous Region and the 43rd reported since February 2009 to have taken place across different Tibetan areas inside China.

Self-immolator Tsewang Dorjee Dies

Tibet.net, July 11, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration said it is seriously concerned about the latest situation in Tibet involving a self-immolation of one more Tibetan in Tibet on 7 July.

Reports coming out of Tibet say Tsewang Dorjee, 22, a nomadic herder, set himself on fire in the main market of Damshung, about 160 kms from capital Lhasa, to protest against the Chinese government. He shouted slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Security forces then put out the flame and bundled him away.

A latest report received by the Central Tibetan Administration says Tsewang Dorjee, who suffered 90 percent burn, has died.

The situation in the area remains tense, as authorities have tightened security in the region by detaining eyewitnesses and cutting off telecommunication lines.

Moreover, many areas in eastern Tibet, the region where most of the self-immolations have taken place, are now also closed to foreigners, reported *The New York Times*.

The number of self-immolation incidents in Tibet since 2009 has now reached 43. The self-immolators have called for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland.

Lobsang Lozin

Age: 18

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 17 July 2012

Place: in Tsodun Kirti Monastery, Barkham,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Teenage Tibetan monk dies after setting himself on fire in China

Guardian and the *Associated Press* in Beijing, 18 July 2012

An 18-year-old monk has died after setting himself on fire in south-west China, in the latest of dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans in the past 16 months, the Tibetan government-in-exile said.

Lobsang Lozin, from the Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti monastery, set himself alight around noon and local Tibetans blocked a bridge to prevent police from moving in, according to the exiled government based in Dharamsala, India.

A photo shared by the government-in-exile showed a blackened body lying on the ground engulfed in flame. Three people were praying as they lowered their heads and put their palms together.

The various reports on Lozin's death differed on where he died, but the Kirti monastery has been a centre of dissent against China for years, and two of its monks died of self-immolation on 30 March.

The Chinese government's intense crackdown has included "re-educating" monks and increasing security and surveillance at the monastery and the surrounding area.

The monastery is in the Ngaba Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province.

The International Campaign for Tibet says 42 Tibetans have self-immolated since March 2011. The Chinese government has confirmed some but not all of such protests and gave no information on Tuesday's death.

Activists say the self-immolations are protests against Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. China has blamed the Dalai Lama for inciting them, which the exiled spiritual leader denies.

One More Tibetan Self-Immolates in Ngaba

Tibet.net, July 17, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration has learnt with deep concern the latest self-immolation and death of an 18-year-old Tibetan monk in Ngaba in northeastern Tibet at around noon today.

Lobsang Lozin, a monk of Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery in Bharkham, set himself on fire shouting slogans and marched towards town office around 12:00 hrs (local time) today. He died on the spot.

Prayer services and preparations for his funeral to be held today evening are underway.

Lobsang Lozin, son of Jorgye and Tsepopo, was one of the best students in Tsodun Kirti Monastery.

Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery is located about 85 km from Barkham.

Fears of confrontation

A large contingent of armed police are moving towards Barkham following the incident. Local Tibetans have blocked a bridge to prevent the police, raising fears of confrontation between the two.

On 30 March this year, two monks from the same monastery, Chime Palden and Tenpa Dhargyal, died of self-immolation.

With today's incident, 44 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet in protest against the Chinese government since 2009. They have shouted slogans demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Breaking: Teenage Tibetan monk burns self to death

Phayul, July 17, 2012

A teenage Tibetan monk set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against the Chinese government in the beleaguered region of Ngaba, eastern Tibet.

Lobsang Lozin, 18, set himself on fire at around 12 noon near his monastery's main prayer hall and began walking towards the local Chinese office in flames before falling down.

"Lobsang Lozin, a monk of the Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery, set his body on fire near the monastery's main prayer hall around noon today and walked in the direction of the county's local office engulfed in flames," Kanyag Tsering, a monk at the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala said. "Lobsang Lozin succumbed to his burns and passed away at the site of his protest."

Lobsang Lozin was heard shouting many slogans but it is still not clear what these slogans were.

According to the Dharamshala based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, monks at Lobsang Lozin's monastery took his body inside and are currently holding prayers and rituals for the deceased.

"Lobsang will be cremated later in the evening," TCHRD said.

The rights group expressed fear of confrontation after local Tibetans blocked a bridge to stop Chinese armed forces from reaching the monastery.

"Following the self-immolation, a large number of security personnel including People's Armed Police came rushing towards the monastery but were met with strong resistance from the local Tibetans who tried to stop the security personnel at the bridge near the monastery," TCHRD said. "It is feared that the tense stand-off between the security personnel and local Tibetans might get worse."

Son of Jorgyal and Tsepopo, Lobsang Lozin has been described as an exemplary student with excellent track record in his monastic studies.

The Central Tibetan Administration in a release today said it was "deeply concerned" at the tense situation in the region.

Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti monastery is located some 80 kilometers away in the north of Barkham County town. It is one of the biggest Gelug monasteries in Gyalrong region and has over 300 monks.

On March 30 earlier this year, two monks from the same monastery, Chime Palden (21) and Tenpa Dhargyal (22), set themselves on fire in protest over China's continued occupation of Tibet.

With today's incident, 45 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 de-

manding freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Lobsang Lozin, Tibet Monk, Sets Self On Fire

The Associated Press, 17 July 2012

BEIJING — An 18-year-old monk set himself on fire and died in southwestern China on Tuesday in the latest of dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans in the past 16 months, the Tibetan government-in-exile said.

Lobsang Lozin, from the Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery, died after setting himself on fire around noon and local Tibetans blocked a bridge to prevent police from moving in, the exile government based in Dharamsala, India, said.

A photo shared by the government-in-exile showed a blackened body lying on the ground and engulfed in flame. Three people in the background were praying as they lowered their heads and put their palms together.

The various reports on Lozin's death differed on where he died, but the Kirti monastery has been a center of dissent against China for years, and two of its monks died of self-immolation March 30. The Chinese government's intense crackdown has included re-educating monks and increasing security and surveillance at the monastery and the surrounding area.

The monastery is in the Ngaba Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province.

The International Campaign for Tibet says 42 Tibetans have self-immolated since March 2011. The Chinese government has confirmed some but not all of them and gave no information on Tuesday's death.

Activists say the self-immolations are in protest of Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. China has blamed the Dalai Lama for inciting them, which the exiled spiritual leader denies.

Teenage Tibetan monk self-immolates in China

By Jill Langlois, *Global Post*, July 18, 2012

Lobsang Lozin, a teenage Tibetan Buddhist monk, died after setting himself on fire in China's Sichuan province, one of many self-immolation protests against

Chinese rule.

The 18-year-old monk set himself alight in Bharkham county as he marched toward a government office, reported Agence France-Presse. Lozin died on the spot.

The teenager became the 44th Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009, according to CNN. Self-immolation has become a common form of protest for Tibetans who want autonomy from China and what they consider repressive government policies.

Rights group Free Tibet said local Tibetans created a human shield around the Kirti Monastery, where Lozin took his own life, to prevent Chinese armed police from entering the site, reported UPI.

“Chinese forces began to make their way to the monastery but local Tibetans gathered to prevent them from proceeding,” Free Tibet said.

According to AFP, two other monks from the same monastery as Lozin also set themselves on fire.

UPI reported that Tibetan activists said Chinese security officials have used force to quiet protesting monks, whereas Beijing claims it’s the Tibetan activists who are the reason for growing tensions.

The Dalai Lama has remained silent on the issue of self-immolation, according to CNN, refusing to answer questions earlier this year on the subject of whether monks should stop setting themselves on fire in protest.

http://www.voanews.com/content/beijing_criticized_over_tibetan_monks_self-immolation_suicide/1418525.html

Beijing Pressured After Teen Monk Self-Immolates

By Michael Lipin, *VOA News*, 17 July 2012

The London-based rights group Free Tibet says the death of an 18-year-old Tibetan monk in a self-immolation protest in southwest China Tuesday should prompt international pressure on Beijing to “let Tibetans decide their own future.”

In a written statement, Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said Tuesday’s sui-

cide of Lobsang Lozin in Sichuan province shows that Tibetan calls for freedom now are “overwhelming.” Activists have reported more than 40 self-immolations since 2009 by Tibetans protesting what they see as repressive government policies. Some of the self-immolations have been fatal.

Tibetan activists said Lozin set himself on fire at Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province, and walked toward a local government office shouting slogans.

“Some say he walked around 100 steps toward the Chinese communist party office in Ngaba, yet we cannot confirm this,” said Kanyag Tsering, a Dharamsala-based representative of Kirti monastery. “And then he fell down and died.”

Administrators of the Tibetan government-in-exile, which is also based in the Indian city, expressed “deep concern” about Lozin’s death and said Chinese authorities sent a large contingent of armed police to the monastery’s town, Barkham, in an apparent bid to prevent further unrest.

Activists said local Tibetans blocked a bridge to prevent police from reaching the monastery.

According to Tsering, resident monks moved quickly to retrieve the teenager’s body.

“The monks have cleaned his body, brought it in the monastery and said prayers,” said Tsering. “The unusual thing is that they are preparing to cremate his body tonight. According to Tibetan custom, they would usually keep the body for a few days and cremate it on an appropriate day. But since they are cremating it tonight, it shows that the monks fear that Chinese officials will take away his body.”

There was no immediate comment on the incident from the Chinese government, but Beijing has said Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and higher living standards resulting from China’s economic development.

Tibetans have long accused Beijing of suppressing and eroding their culture by flooding Tibetan regions with Han Chinese, the county’s main ethnic group.

Activists posted a photo on the Internet purporting to show Lozin on fire. Two other monks from the same monastery died after setting themselves on fire on March 30. The monastery is one of the region’s largest, with more than 300 monks.

Young Tibetan dies after self-immolation

By China News Center, July 19, 2012

BEIJING (UPI) — An 18-year-old Tibetan monk died after setting himself on fire in southwest China, the latest such protest by Tibetans in that country, Tibetan exiles said.

The Web site of the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamshala, India, identified the victim of the Tuesday incident as Lobsang Lozin, a monk of Gyalrong Tsozum Kirti Monastery in Bharkham County in Sichuan province.

The report said Lobsang Lozin “died on the spot” after setting himself on fire at noon local time as he shouted slogans and marched toward the town office. The report said he was one of the best students at the monastery, adding local Tibetans blocked a bridge to prevent a large police force from moving in.

It was the 44th incident of self-immolation by Tibetans since 2009 to protest Chinese rule of Tibet.

Free Tibet, a rights group in London, says the latest death should prompt international pressure on Beijing to “let Tibetans decide their own future.”

Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement Lobsang Lozin’s death showed Tibetan calls for freedom now are “overwhelming,” the Voice of America reported.

The report said there was no immediate comment on the incident from the Chinese government. In the past, China has stressed Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and higher living standards.

China has blamed the self-immolations on what it calls outcasts or troublemakers. However, a U.S. State Department official said last month they are the desperate acts of people protesting denial of basic human rights.

Self-Immolator Lobsang Lozin Laid to Rest

Tibet.net, July 19, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Lobsang Lozin, 18-year-old monk who died of self-immolation in Ngaba on 17 July, was laid to rest on that day.

A report coming out of Tibet say Lobsang’s body was offered to fishes by con-

signing it to waters near Gyalrong Tsodun Kirti Monastery.

Local Tibetans were able to block a large armed police force from laying siege to the monastery. The police are standing guard on the other side of the river, the report say.

Local Tibetans took part in day-long prayer services for the departed soul at the monastery yesterday. Shops and restaurants remained closed as a mark of respect and grief.

Since 2009, Lobsang Lozin and 43 other Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese rule in Tibet. The self-immolators have called for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

“...They [self-immolation of Tibetans] serve as a clear indictment of the Chinese government’s failed policies for Tibet: policies founded on political oppression, social marginalization, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction. These are the root causes of the demonstrations and the deaths. Were the Chinese government to offer to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully through dialogue, the self-immolations would end immediately,” Kalon Tripa Dr Lobsang Sangay wrote in the Washington Post.

Prayer Service Held for Lobsang Lozin and Other Self-immolators

Tibet.net, July 20, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A prayer service organised by the Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration was held at the Tsuklagkhang temple yesterday to mourn the demise of Lobsang Lozin.

Lobsang Lozin (18), a monk from the Tsodun Kirti monastery, set himself on fire in Barkham, Ngaba in Northeastern Tibet protesting against the unjust policies of the Chinese government in Tibet on 17 July 2012.

He is the 44th Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet against the Chinese government since 2009.

Kalon Dicki Chhoyang read out the the Kashag’s message of condolence to the gathering.

The prayer service was presided over by the abbot of Namgyal monastery and attended by all the officials and staff of the Central Tibetan Administration as well as by the general Tibetan public.

Lobsang Tsultrim

Age: 21

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 6 August 2012

Place: in Martyr Street in Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Self-immolator identified as Kirti monk Lobsang Tsultrim

Phayul, August 07, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, August 7: The Tibetan who self-immolated yesterday in Ngaba, eastern Tibet has been identified as 21-year-old Lobsang Tsultrim, a monk at the Kirti Monastery.

In a release today the exile seat of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala said Lobsang Tsultrim set himself on fire at around 5.05 pm (local time) yesterday.

“Lobsang Tsultrim set himself on fire and began running down a street near the Kirti Monastery, now renamed as ‘Martyr Street,’” the release said. “He was knocked down on the ground and the fire extinguished by Chinese special armed forces stationed there.”

With flames leaping out of his body, the young monk was heard raising slogans, but they were inaudible.

According to eyewitnesses, Lobsang Tsultrim was alive when the Chinese special forces took him away.

“Lobsang Tsultrim was bundled away into a vehicle and was first taken to the town hospital where he was kept for nearly half an hour,” the release said. “He was then whisked away to an undisclosed location.”

According to Kirti Monastery, Lobsang Tsultrim joined the monastery at a young age and was classmates with Lobsang Phuntsok, the monk who passed away in his self-immolation protest last year.

During the 2008 Tibetan uprisings, Lobsang Tsultrim was arrested from the

monastery and was severely beaten by Chinese security forces.

The Central Tibetan Administration in a release today reiterated its appeal to the Chinese government to “address the underlying causes which are pushing Tibetans to set themselves on fire.”

Since 2009, 46 Tibetans have set themselves on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

The Ngaba region alone has witnessed 29 of those of fiery sacrifices, with monks and former monks of the Kirti Monastery, leading the protests.

One More Tibetan Self-Immolates

Tibet.net, August 7, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Reports coming out of Tibet say a Tibetan monk of Kirti monastery self-immolated in Ngaba in north-eastern Tibet yesterday.

Lobsang Tsultrim, 21, set himself on fire while shouting slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet on the street in Ngaba town at around 5:05 pm. Special armed police stationed there knocked him down while trying to douse the flame and bundled him off to the town hospital. After keeping him for about half an hour in the hospital he was taken to an unknown location.

One eyewitness said Lobsang Tsultrim did not die on the spot, adding that he did not hear the wordings of many slogans that the monk shouted while leaping in flame.

Lobsang Tsultrim joined Kirti Monastery at a young age. He was among those monks of Kirti monastery who were arrested and severely beaten by the Chinese security forces in 2008.

The Central Tibetan Administration reiterates its appeal to the Chinese government to address the underlying causes which are pushing Tibetans to set themselves on fire.

Since 2009, 45 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his people and freedom in Tibet.

Self-Immolator Lobsang Tsultrim Dies

Tibet.net, August 8, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Lobsang Tsultrim, the 21-year-old Tibetan monk of Kirti Monastery who self-immolated against the Chinese government this Monday (6 August), died that night, a fresh report coming out of Tibet says.

Lobsang Tsultrim succumbed to his burn injuries at a hospital at around 12:00 pm, few moments after arriving at Barkham. The Chinese authorities took him away minutes after he set himself on fire on the main market street in Ngaba.

The Chinese authorities burned the body and handed over the ashes to his family members, who earlier demanded to take the body into their custody.

Lobsang Tsultrim walked few steps after setting himself on fire while shouting slogans demanding “the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche to Tibet,” and “the re-opening of Kirti monastic school”.

Lobsang Tsultrim, son of Tsewang and Donkar Kyi, is a native of Ngaba.

Since 2009, 45 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his people and freedom in Tibet. 36 have died and the whereabouts of others remain unknown.

China hands over ashes of deceased Kirti monk to family

TCHRD, 09 August 2012

The Chinese authorities on Tuesday handed over the ashes of the 21-year old Tibetan monk, Lobsang Tsultrum, to the latter's family in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county, depriving the deceased a proper cremation according to Buddhist rites and rituals.

Lobsang Tsultrum, a monk at Kirti monastery set himself on fire on Monday (6 August) and died the same day around midnight at a hospital in Barkham (Chinese: Ma'erkang), capital of Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

“The Chinese authorities cremated the charred body, and returned the ashes Lobsang's family,” Kanyag Tsering, a monk at the India-based Kirti monastery, who has close contact with people in Ngaba said yesterday evening.

“They didn’t let the family cremate Lobsang’s body, they just returned the ashes after cremating the charred body making the family very sad.”

Lobsang Tsultrum set himself on fire on the street below the Kirti monastery known as “Martyrs’ Street”, named so after a series of self-immolation protests took place there, Kanyag said.

The 21-year old monk had suffered beatings at the hands of the Chinese police during the 2008 uprising that rocked many areas in Tibet, including Ngaba. “Lobsang is fond of playing basketball and he is a member of a local team,” Kanyag quoted locals as saying.

He is the classmate of monk Phuntsok, who had succumbed to burn injuries in March 2011 after setting himself on fire demanding for ‘freedom in Tibet’ and ‘return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet’.

According to the same source, Lobsang had shouted slogans for the ‘return the Dalai Lama and return of Kirti Rinpoche from exile.” Kanyag also said that Lobsang had also demanded the reopening of a school at Kirti monastery which was closed down by the authorities in 2003 after the school refused to teach Chinese language, and add exercise period as part of the school curriculum for the monk-students.

Citing sources in Tibet, Kanyag said Lobsang had left a note before setting himself on fire, but he is unable to retrieve it at the time of reporting this information.

“If the Chinese government has any respect and concern for Tibetan lives, they must address the underlying problems that cause these self-immolation protests,” said Tsering Tso, the executive director of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, adding that “violent crackdown and criminalising the acts of self-immolation protests will not serve China’s professed aim in establishing ‘harmony’ and ‘stability’ in Tibet.”

Lobsang Tsultrum became a monk at the Kirti Monastery since his childhood. He belonged to the family of Tshashang Raru Zadhar Tsang and is survived by his father, Tsewang and mother, Dolker Kyi.

Ngaba has been the nerve centre of the majority of Tibetan self-immolations, where more than two dozens of Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009.

Dolkar Tso

Age: 27

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 7 August 2012

Place: near Tsoe Monastery, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan woman dies after setting herself alight

BBC News, 8 August 2012

More than 40 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2011 in apparent protest against Chinese rule.

A rights group said another man set himself alight in Sichuan province on Monday. His condition was not known.

Chinese state media has confirmed some of the self-immolations but not all. Foreign media are banned from the region, making reports hard to confirm.

Drung Gertso set herself alight at the Tso Monastery in the Gannan Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Xinhua reported, citing a statement from the Communist Party in Gannan.

“Drung Gertso had intermittent mental disease, and she used to tell some of her relatives that she would commit suicide owing to frustration over family conflicts,” Xinhua said.

A report from London-based-group Free Tibet, however, identified her as 26-year-old Dolkar Kyi.

Free Tibet said she shouted slogans calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

The group also identified the man who set himself on fire in Sichuan province as 21-year-old Lobsang Tsultrim from Kirti monastery in Aba county, which has been the scene of many of the self-immolations.

“Local authorities drove him to the county hospital. He was removed after 30

minutes and his current well-being and whereabouts are unknown,” Free Tibet said in a statement.

Most of the self-immolations have taken place in ethnically Tibetan areas outside Tibet. China’s leaders blame the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans’ exiled spiritual leader, for inciting the self-immolations and encouraging separatism.

He rejects this, and both activist groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile say the self-immolations are protests against tight Chinese control of the region and religious repression.

<http://www.irrawaddy.org/archives/11117>

Tibetan Woman Dies after Setting Herself on Fire

Irrawaddy, 8 August 2012

A Tibetan rights group says a 26-year-old woman has died after setting herself on fire in west-central China’s Gansu Province. London-based Free Tibet said Dolkar Kyi set fire to herself on Tuesday at Tso Monastery in Tso city in an area that is of religious significance to Tibetan monks. The incident followed a self-immolation by 21-year-old Buddhist monk Lobsang Tsultrim on Monday in Sichuan Province. He was reported to be alive and was taken away by police. More than 40 Tibetans have self-immolated in recent months to protest Beijing’s heavy-handed rule in Tibetan regions.—AP

Young mother-of-two, monk take Tibet self-immolations count to 46

TibetanReview.net, August 08, 2012

Two more self-immolations in two days in Tibet have taken to 46 the number of Tibetans who have staged such suicide protests against Chinese rule since Feb 2009. The latest incidents involved a young monk of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province and a young mother of two in Tsoe (Chinese: Hezuo) County of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Prefecture, Gansu Province.

Dolkar Tso, a 26-year-old mother of two, died after setting herself on fire near a stupa at Tsoe Gaden Choeling Monastery at around 2.30 pm. *REA.org* (Radio

Free Asia, Washington) Aug 7 cited sources as saying she took off her clothes and burned herself as she kept shouting slogans calling for Tibet's freedom and the Dalai Lama's return from exile.

Tibetan devotees circumambulating the monastery were reported to have put out the fire but a barely alive Dolkar Tso asked monks who rushed to try to save her to end her life in order that the Chinese may not get hold of her alive. Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said Aug 7 the monks took her to hospital but she could not be saved there. They then took her body to her native village of Tasur in Nawu Township, located around 10 kilometres from Tsoe City. People were reported to be flocking both to Tasur Village and at Tso Monastery to offer prayers.

Dolkar Tso leaves behind a four-year old son and a two-year old daughter. ICIT cited sources as saying that two days before the self-immolation, both she and her husband were seen praying at every shrine in the monastery and both of them going to Dolkar's birth village rather than their home located in another village.

China's official Xinhua news agency Aug 8 reported the self-immolation but maintained that "Drung Gertso" (ie, Dolkar Tso) "had intermittent mental disease" and was estranged from both her and her husband's families and committed suicide on account of it. It said she had worked for five months after this year's Chinese Spring Festival in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

* * *

Dolkar Tso's self-immolation protest came a day after monk Lobsang Tsultrim, 21, of Kirti Monastery immolated himself on the main Ngaba county highway running just below his monastery. The monk was reported to have staged the fiery suicide protest just after 5:00 pm, shouting slogans calling for the Dalai Lama's return from exile and for the reuniting of the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile. He attempted to walk along the street – which is referred to by the local Tibetans as "Heroes' (or Martyrs) Street" because many of the past self-immolation protests by Tibetans had taken place on it – towards the office building of the Forestry Department before he fell to the ground.

Some reports said, however, that paramilitary police knocked him to the ground and quickly put out the flames before throwing him in a vehicle and driving him away. With more police than local residents reported to be present at the scene, there was no chance for the Tibetan people to take custody of the monk. Initially

kept briefly at the Ngaba County hospital, his conditions and whereabouts now remain unknown.

Dharamsala-based Tibetan centre for Human Rights and Democracy Aug 8 said the monk was detained and suffered severe beating at the hand of the Chinese police during the suppression of the Mar-Apr 2008 Tibetan uprising protests. A classmate of monk Lobsang Phuntsok who staged a self-immolation protest and died in 2011, Lobsang Phutnsok is said to be fond of playing basketball and is a member of a local team.

Woman Strips, Self-Immolates

REA, 2012-08-07

A Tibetan woman took off her clothes and self-immolated in a monastery's grounds Tuesday to protest Chinese rule in Gansu province in China's northwest region, sources inside Tibet said.

Dolkar Tso, a 26-year-old mother of two, died after setting herself on fire near a stupa at the Tso monastery in the southern part of Kanlho (Gannan, in Chinese) prefecture at around 2.30 p.m. local time, the sources said

The incident was witnessed by other Tibetans circumambulating the monastery, and as they attempted to save her she told them to let her die.

"She took off her clothes and burned herself naked," one source inside Tibet said, citing eyewitnesses who heard her shout slogans calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

"She survived initially when the Tibetans put out the fire, and when the local monks arrived she called on them to hit her on the head with a stone and kill her so that the Chinese would not take her into custody alive," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

When the monks took Dolkar Tso to the monastery, her family members arrived and insisted they take her home, but she died on the way, the sources said.

She was a resident of Tsoe Tasa village in the Kanlho area.

"Despite the best efforts of the Chinese government, Tibetan protests continue and Tibetans continue to share information with the world about them," said London-based advocacy group Free Tibet's director Stephanie Brigden.

“The Tibet Spring will not go away simply because the world chooses to look away. It is time for leaders around the world to break the silence and speak out for Tibetan freedom,” she said.

Religious significance

Free Tibet said the Tso monastery in Tso city is of great religious significance to Tibetan Buddhists. People from the area participated in large-scale protests against Chinese rule in 2008.

Dolkar Tso’s self-immolation was the 46th by Tibetans challenging Beijing’s rule since the current wave of fiery protests began in February 2009, with nearly all of the protests taking place in Tibetan-populated provinces in western China.

A day earlier, a Tibetan monk at the restive Kirti monastery in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan prefecture burned himself while protesting Chinese rule and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama. He is believed to have been taken away by Chinese security forces.

Lobsang Tsultrim, a 21-year-old monk from Kirti Monastery, set himself on fire in Ngaba’s main street, which the local people have re-named “Martyrs Street” due to the large number of Tibetans who have self-immolated there.

“Following his protest, local authorities drove him to the county hospital. He was removed after 30 minutes and his current well-being and whereabouts are unknown,” Free Tibet said.

Lobsang Tsultrim, a keen basketball player, was beaten by Chinese forces for taking part in demonstrations against Chinese rule in 2008, it said.

Underlying problems

Tibetan groups say the wave of self-immolation protests will continue until the underlying problems in the Tibetan-populated areas are addressed by the Chinese authorities.

Beijing’s increased restrictions in the wake of the burnings have only served to increase the sense of injustice and discrimination felt by Tibetans under Chinese rule, said U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet’s vice-president Bhuchung Tsering.

“As long as Tibetans continue to be denied the opportunity to live a life of equality, respect, and dignity, it is clear that they will undertake actions to convey

their feelings,” he told a recent congressional hearing.

Chinese authorities however have labeled the self-immolators as terrorists, outcasts, criminals, and mentally ill people, and have blamed the Dalai Lama for encouraging the burnings.

Two Tibetans Die in Self-Immolation in Western China

By Jack Phillips, *The Epoch Times* Staff, August 7, 2012

A Tibetan woman set herself on fire to protest Chinese rule over Tibet, and died on the grounds of a monastery on Tuesday in China’s Gansu Province. A day earlier, a young Tibetan monk set himself alight in the protest hub of Ngaba in Sichuan Province, and his condition is unknown.

Dolkar Tso, a 26-year-old mother of two, self-immolated near a stupa in Tso monastery in the city of Gannan, according to the Free Tibet activist group.

Other Tibetans who were near the monastery saw the woman burning. The Tibetans tried to put the fire out, and recounted how she shouted slogans for freedom in Tibet during the incident.

“She survived initially when the Tibetans put out the fire, and when the local monks arrived she called on them to hit her on the head with a stone and kill her so that the Chinese would not take her into custody alive,” the source said, according to the Radio Free Asia. She died as her family members were taking her home.

Dolkar’s death comes just one day after a Lobsang Tsultrim, a 21-year-old Tibetan monk from Kirti Monastery in Sichuan Province, set himself on fire on the main street, which locals have renamed “Martyr’s Street,” in Ngaba.

“Local authorities drove him to the county hospital. He was removed after 30 minutes and his current wellbeing and whereabouts are unknown,” Free Tibet said, referring to Tsultrim. The group said he was “beaten by Chinese forces for taking part in demonstrations against Chinese rule in 2008.”

Dolkar is the 46th Tibetan to self-immolate since February 2009. According to Bhuchung Tsering, the vice-president of the International Campaign for Tibet, who testified on Capitol Hill in late July, 34 of them have died and the remaining 12 are missing or “hospitalized.”

“Instead of addressing the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people, the Chinese authorities have responded to the self-immolations by increasing restrictions, torturing members of the self-immolators’ family or their acquaintances and taking several into custody without any judicial process,” Tsering said.

He added that as long as China is restricting the freedoms of Tibetans, they will “undertake actions to convey their feelings.”

A Tibetan woman dies of self-immolation

tibet.net, August 7, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Dolkar Tso (Kyi), a 26-year-old Tibetan woman from Kanlho, Amdo in north-eastern Tibet set herself on fire today at around 2:30 pm local time. It was the second self-immolation in two days.

Latest reports coming out of Tibet say she died on the spot after setting herself on fire near Tsoe monastery in Kanlho. She was protesting against the continued occupation of Tibet by the People’s Republic of China.

Tibetans who witnessed the incident tried to douse the fire and carried her body to the monastery. It was reported that more and more Tibetans are making their way to the monastery to pay their respects to her.

Dolkar, daughter of Druk Gyalkhar and Sangye Tso, is from Tsoe Tasar village.

Since 2009, 46 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans

Tibetans warn of major protests as tension rises over Dolkar Tso’s self-immolation

Phayul, August 09, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Around 300 monks sat down on the streets for a prayer protest in eastern Tibet after they were barred by Chinese authorities from paying their last respects to Dolkar Tso, Wednesday afternoon.

Dolkar Tso, mother of a 5-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son, set herself on fire near the Tsoe Monastery in Kanlho on August 7. According to exile sources with contacts in the region, Dolkar Tso raised slogans for the return of

His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and shouted that there was no freedom in Tibet.

She later succumbed to her injuries.

Monks from the nearby Labrang Tashikhyil Monastery were traveling in a large convoy of vehicles to Tsoe when local Chinese authorities apprehended them.

The authorities reportedly told the monks that their actions were illegal and warned that their vehicles will be confiscated if they proceeded further. They were also threatened with further actions.

However, the monks declared that they will walk on foot if necessary and warned of a major uprising if they were stopped.

As tension began to flare, representatives of the Monastery's administration came and pleaded with monks to stop their march. Compelled to listen to the requests, the monks instead sat down on the street and offered prayers for Dolkar.

Latest reports indicate that monks and lay Tibetans from the region have started joining the prayer service in large numbers.

There are also reports of growing tensions in Tsoe after two monks of the Tsoe Monastery were arrested late in the night of Dolkar Tso's self-immolation protest by Chinese authorities on charges of sheltering her body inside the monastery.

The monks at the Tsoe Monastery had carried Dolkar Tso's body inside the monastery premises immediately after extinguishing the flames. Later, the monks also helped carry her body back to the village where she was born, Tasur, in Nawu Township, around 10 km from Tsoe.

According to reports, when the fire was put out from her body, Dolkar Tso, barely alive, pleaded with the monks to hit her on the head with a stone and kill her so that she will not fall into Chinese hands alive.

Following the late night arrest of the monks, Chinese security personnel in about a dozen vehicles arrived at the Monastery early Wednesday morning to arrest 17 more monks.

A large number of monks and laymen then gathered at the Monastery to prevent the arrest and also to demand the release of the monks earlier detained.

According to exile sources, the gathered Tibetans have pledged to continue their protest.

Chodpa

Age: 24

Occupation: Nomad

Date of self-immolation: 10 August 2012

Place: Meruma near Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Choepa Self-Immolates in Amdo, Tibet

Tibet.net, August 10, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Choepa, a 24 year old Tibetan youth, set himself on fire at 10:15 am (local time) today at Meuruma, Amdo in north-eastern Tibet, protesting against the Chinese government.

Choepa is the son of Palho (father) and Madon (mother). Meuruma is a small nomadic village in Ngaba, north-eastern Tibet's Amdo region.

Eyewitnesses said, Chinese police came to the place within seconds after the incident happened and started beating him while he was still engulfed in flames.

He was taken away by Chinese police in a military convoy. He was said to be seriously injured, therefore whether he is alive or not is still unknown. His whereabouts is also unavailable.

Since 2009, a total of 47 Tibetans have set themselves on fire for the freedom of Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Young Tibetan nomad sets himself on fire

TCHRD, 10 August 2012

Taking the toll of self-immolation protests to three in less than a week, one more Tibetan, a young Tibetan nomad, set himself on fire in Meruma township in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), Sichuan Province Friday morning.

"A 24-year old Tibetan man, Choepa set himself ablaze at 10:15 (local time) on Friday in protest against the Chinese government, and the local security officers

arrived within minutes and doused the fire on his body, and forcibly took him away,” a reliable source told TCHRD.

Following the self-immolation, officers from the People’s Armed Police (PAP) have reportedly gathered in large numbers in and around Meruma area; some were seen patrolling the area. The atmosphere is tense as PAP officers have surrounded the town on all sides following the self-immolation.

Quoting local eyewitnesses, the same source said Choepa had severe burn injuries on his body triggering the speculation that he may have succumbed to his injuries. However, our source is unable to confirm whether Choepa is alive.

“A man in Meruma who witnessed the fiery protest told me that Choepa has suffered severe burn injuries,” the source said, adding that Choepa has most likely not survived the self-immolation.

The security officers took Choepa to an undisclosed location, the source said.

Young Tibetan dies after setting himself on fire in Ngaba

Asia News, 13 August 2012

Lhasa (AsiaNews) - A young Tibetan, Choepa, 24, died in Meruma Township, some 20 kilometres from Ngaba (Sichuan Province) after he set himself on fire on Friday in protest against Chinese repression in Tibet.

Local sources said Choepa died soon after his self-immolation. To avoid disorders, the authorities seized the body, eventually returning his ashes to the family.

Police also surrounded the township to avoid further unrest or more attempts at self-immolation.

On 23 January, the young man had taken part in a protest in Meruma, but was able to avoid arrest.

He is the third activist to take his life in self-immolation in the past week. On 7 August, a woman, Dolkar Tso, set herself on fire in Kanlho (Gansu province) in front of a monastery. On 6 August, Lobsang Tsultrim did the same near Kirti Monastery. He died a few days later in hospital in Barkham.

Since February 2009, 47 Tibetans, both religious and members of the laity, set themselves on fire to protest against Chinese repression and Beijing’s tight control over religious practices, which includes closing and opening monasteries

at will.

Pro-Tibet activists say that extreme actions will continue until China's grip on Tibetans does not relent, and this despite the Dalai Lama's condemnation of self-immolation.

According to Beijing, those who set themselves on fire are terrorists, rejects or mentally insane, and Tibet's spiritual leader is largely to blame for encouraging young activists to take their own lives

Man in Besieged Town Self-Immolates

REA, 10 August 2012

The 24-year old Choepa torched himself at the Meruma township in the Ngaba (Aba, in Chinese) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, attracting local police who extinguished the flames and took him away, exiled Tibetan monks in India said.

"The local witnesses could not confirm whether he was dead or alive, but their best guess is that he was severely injured in the fire and that there is little chance for his survival," monks Lobsang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering in the Indian hill town of Dharamsala said in a statement.

"[Even] if he died, the witnesses could not confirm the present location of his body," they said, citing local residents.

Free Tibet, a London-based advocacy group, said Chinese security forces stepped up deployment in Meruma, a nomadic town 27 kilometers (about 17 miles) east of the Ngaba county center, following the fiery protest.

Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden suggested that the self-immolation could have been sparked by ongoing tensions in Meruma, since protests there in January led to "detentions and disappearances."

"Like too many Tibetans, [Choepa] felt he had no recourse other than to set himself on fire to protest against China's occupation," she said.

"Since security forces used tear gas against unarmed protesters in Meruma in January, Free Tibet has documented large numbers of detentions and disappearances from the township, fueling a climate of fear and defiance," she pointed out.

Third burning

Choepa is the third Tibetan this week to set fire to himself while protesting

Chinese rule and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader who is living in exile in Dharamsala.

In total, 47 Tibetans have now self-immolated since the current wave of fiery protests began in February 2009, with nearly all of the protests taking place in Tibetan-populated provinces in western China.

On Tuesday, A Tibetan woman took off her clothes and set herself on fire in a monastery's grounds in the southern part of Kanlho (Gannan, in Chinese) prefecture in Gansu province. Dolkar Tso died shortly after monks doused the flames.

A day earlier, a Tibetan monk at the restive Kirti monastery in Ngaba also self-immolated. Lobsang Tsultrim, 21, was taken away by Chinese security forces and died on the same day.

Tibetan groups say the wave of self-immolation protests will continue until the underlying problems in the Tibetan-populated areas are addressed by the Chinese authorities.

Chinese authorities however have labeled the self-immolators as terrorists, outcasts, criminals, and mentally ill people and have blamed the Dalai Lama for encouraging the burnings.

Self-immolator Choepa passes away

Phayul, August 11, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, August 11: Choepa, the 24 –year-old Tibetan who set himself on fire on August 10 in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet, has passed away.

According to the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, Choepa breathed his last hours after his fiery protest in the Me'uruma region of Amdo Ngaba, eastern Tibet.

"Martyr Choepa passed away at around 3 pm (local time) the very day of his protest," Kanyag Tsering, a researcher at the Kirti Monastery said. "He died while he was being forcibly taken to the nearby region of Barkham."

Earlier, eyewitnesses had expressed deep concerns over Choepa's survival after seeing the severe burn injuries that he had sustained.

Choepa, while engulfed in high flames had raised slogans, before Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene within minutes, doused the flames on his body and forcibly took him away to an undisclosed location.

Tsering said the deceased's family members were denied the right to give him a traditional Tibetan funeral.

"Chinese authorities cremated Choepa's body in Barkham itself and later handed over his ashes to the family members."

This wasn't Choepa's first peaceful protest against the Chinese government. Earlier this year, he, along with other Tibetans had led a massive candle light vigil and demonstration in Me'uruma on January 23.

"Following the protests, Chinese security personnel carried out a large-scale manhunt for Choepa, but he had managed to escape," Tsering said.

Choepa is survived by his parents Paelo and Madron and three other siblings.

As an immediate result of Choepa's self-immolation protest, the situation in Me'uruma has grown tense with the deployment of a large number of Chinese armed forces in the region.

Since 2009, the growing wave of self-immolations has witnessed 48 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibet Self-Immolations: 3 Tibetans Set Self On Fire Within Week

Huffington Post, 10 August 2012

BEIJING - A 24-year-old Tibetan nomad set fire to himself Friday to protest China's rule in the third reported self-immolation within a week, said the London-based Tibetan rights group Free Tibet.

The latest incident adds to more than 40 self-immolations in about a year and a half.

Free Tibet said that the nomad it identified as Jopa was taken away by police after he set himself on fire in Maierma town in Aba county in southwest China's Sichuan province.

Free Tibet said Jopa was believed to be severely injured and might not survive.

It said authorities had deployed military and security forces in the town.

Free Tibet previously reported that Dolkar Kyi, 26, set fire to herself on Tuesday at a monastery in Tso city in northwest China’s Gansu province and that Lobsang Tsultrim, a 21-year-old monk, self-immolated in Aba county on Monday.

Supporters say the self-immolators were protesting Beijing’s heavy-handed rule in Tibetan regions. China has blamed the Dalai Lama for inciting the immolations. The exiled spiritual leader denies this.

Lungtok

Age: 20
Occupation: Monk
Date of self-immolation: 13 August 2012
Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet
Current status: Deceased



Tashi

Age: 21
Occupation: nomad
Date of self-immolation: 13 August 2012
Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet
Current status: Deceased



China: Self-Immolations Continue

By Eward Wong, *The New York Times*, August 14, 2012

Two young Tibetan men set themselves on fire on Monday in a Tibetan region of western China to protest Chinese rule, according to Free Tibet, an advocacy group in London, and Radio Free Asia, a news organization financed by the United States government. The men, who were identified as Lungtok and Tashi, self-immolated in the town of Ngaba, known in Chinese as Aba. Free Tibet identified both as former monks of Kirti Monastery, while Radio Free Asia said Lungtok was a monk and Tashi was believed to be a layperson. Forty-eight

Tibetans have self-immolated since March 2011. The condition of the two men was unclear on Tuesday, though Free Tibet reported that Lungtok is believed to have died.

Tibetan self-immolations: ‘Clashes’ in Sichuan province

BBC Online, 14 August 2012

Two more Tibetans are reported to have set themselves on fire in Tibetan areas of China, in protest against Chinese rule.

A monk named Lungtok and a man identified as Tashi set themselves alight in Aba, Sichuan province, on Monday evening, said Tibetan sources.

Clashes between Chinese security personnel and Tibetans reportedly broke out following the self-immolations.

More than 40 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the past year.

Five - these two men and three previous protesters - have self-immolated in the last 10 days alone, say campaigners, in what appears to be an escalation of Tibetan protests inside China.

An unconfirmed report says one Tibetan was beaten to death.

‘Batons spiked with nails’

Twenty-year-old Lungtok and 21-year-old Tashi “set themselves on fire inside a prayer-wheel hut near Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Town”, reported campaign group Free Tibet, using the Tibetan name for the town which China refers to as Aba.

“Once they were in flames, [they] came out of the hut and walked towards the street now known as Martyrs’ Street,” overtly linking their action to the protests of previous self-immolators, it said.

Chinese paramilitary police quickly moved in with extinguishers, local sources said, and whisked away the two men. Free Tibet said Lungtok died and Tashi’s condition was unknown.

Multiple reports suggest that following the self-immolations Tibetans began to demonstrate and their numbers quickly increased.

“Eyewitnesses report that some demonstrators were beaten with metal batons

spiked with nails and that some people were dragged away,” said Free Tibet.

Many people were injured and some were detained, it said.

A source who spoke to Radio Free Asia (RFA) said one Tibetan was beaten to death, but this report has not been confirmed. RFA also carried a report of a third self-immolation, but this too was unconfirmed.

‘Incitement’

A woman who answered the phone at the Aba police department denied any self-immolations or protests had taken place, reported the Associated Press news agency.

Kirti Monastery has been the focus of protests for over a year now and is ringed by Chinese security forces, says the BBC’s Damian Grammaticas in Beijing.

But they have proved unable to halt the self-immolations.

China’s leaders blame the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans’ exiled spiritual leader, for inciting the self-immolations and encouraging separatism.

He rejects this, and both activist groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile say the self-immolations are protests against tight Chinese control of the region and religious repression.

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Beatings-and-arrests-while-two-Tibetans-set-themselves-on-fire-25551.html>

Beatings and arrests while two Tibetans set themselves on fire

By Nirmala Carvalho, *Asia News Online*, 14 August

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - Chinese police have indiscriminately beaten and arrested protesters after two young Tibetans themselves on fire in the main street of Ngaba (Sichuan).

At about 18:50 yesterday, the layman Tashi (about 21) and monk Lungtok (about 20) of the Kirti monastery have self-immolated in protest against Chinese oppression in Tibet.

According eye witness accounts related to exiles, “Tashi and Lungtok set themselves on fire, shouting slogans and running towards the center of the road”

which the Tibetans now call “the path of martyrs,” because of the large number of self-immolations that have occurred there.

A group of policemen ran towards them, throwing themselves upon the two young men and beating them to extinguish the flames. They were first brought to the Ngaba hospital and then Barkham (Chinese: Maerkang).

Immediately after the self-sacrifice, a group of Tibetans held a protest and the Chinese security forces began beating them with clubs and iron-picks. Many were wounded and a number of them were arrested. One of the protesters’ neck and face were covered in blood. No one knows what became of her.

According to different sources, monk Lungtok died from burns. It is not known if the body will be given to family members. Tashi’s conditions are not known.

Lungtok was a student of medicine and astrology at the Menpa Dratsang (Department of Medicine) of the Kirti monastery. Tashi was a classmate of Lungtok, but in 2011 he left the monastery.

Since 2009 about 50 Tibetans have decided to self-immolate for the liberation of Tibet and the Dalai Lama’s return to his country. At least 17 of them were monks or laymen at the Kirti monastery.

Kirti is a rather young place of worship, led by an abbot that the Tibetans call “not very well-educated” in doctrine. Suicide is not condoned in the spirituality of Buddhism in Tibet, but the young Kirti monks see this as the only way to counter Chinese repression that is stifling their religion and culture.

Two Tibetans self-immolate in China protest

By Alexis Lai, *CNN*, August 15, 2012

Two Tibetans set themselves on fire on Monday, adding to a string of self-immolations in protest against Chinese rule in the troubled region, according to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) and various media reports.

The men were taken by Chinese security forces to a hospital and their condition remains unclear.

TCHRD and Radio Free Asia named the two Tibetans as Lungtok, a monk from Kirti monastery in southwest China, and an ordinary citizen named Tashi.

The self-immolations took place on Monday evening in Ngaba county, Sichuan province. It set off protests and a confrontation at the scene between Tibetans and Chinese police, according to the TCHRD.

CNN could not confirm the claims, while China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

In recent years, self-immolation as a form of protest by Tibetans was first seen in February 2009, when a young monk named Tapey from Kirti monastery set himself ablaze. In March 2011, another young monk named Phuntsog followed in his footsteps, becoming the first monk to die from self-immolation in protest against Chinese rule.

As of August 8, 45 more Tibetans have resorted to self-immolation inside Tibet, 35 of whom have died, according to the International Campaign for Tibet. The incidents on Monday would bring the total number of self-immolations since February 2009 to 48.

Tibetans in exile have also resorted to self-immolation. In March this year, a Tibetan man died after setting himself ablaze in New Delhi during Chinese president Hu Jintao's visit to the city.

Many of the monks who have resorted to self-immolation belonged to the Kirti monastery, which has been a hub for protests against Chinese rule, including the violent uprisings across Tibetan regions on the 2008 anniversary of the 1959 rebellion.

Beijing argues that Tibet has been a part of China since the 13th century, when the Mongol empire, which conquered China and formed the Yuan dynasty, also conquered Tibet. Western and central parts of Tibet are administered by China as the Tibet Autonomous Region, while eastern parts of the region fall under China's Sichuan, Qinghai, Yunnan and Gansu provinces.

After several decades of de facto independence beginning in 1912, Tibet was invaded by China's People's Liberation Army in 1950 to enforce the newly-formed People's Republic of China's claim of sovereignty over Tibet.

In 1959, thousands of Tibetans surrounded the Dalai Lama's palace in Lhasa — the Tibetan capital — to protect him against what was rumored to be a plot by the Chinese military to abduct him. The gathering turned into an all-out revolt against Chinese rule, which was suppressed by the PLA. The Dalai Lama fled to

India, where he has remained in exile ever since. Tibetans have resisted Chinese rule on and off since then, and many have called for independence.

The Dalai Lama has said that he no longer advocates independence, but rather, genuine autonomy for all ethnic Tibetan areas of China.

The Chinese government maintains that it has improved the Tibetans' standard of living, and accuses the Dalai Lama of inciting the protests in Tibet, calling him a "splittist" and "terrorist."

Self-immolator Lungtok passes away, Situation in Ngaba tense

Phayul, August 14, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, August 14: Latest reports coming out from the beleaguered Ngaba region of eastern Tibet confirm that Lungtok, the Tibetan monk who self-immolated yesterday, has succumbed to his burn injuries.

Lungtok, a monk at the besieged Kirti Monastery and his former classmate, Tashi, now a layman, both in their early 20s, set themselves on fire protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet yesterday at around 6:50 pm (local time).

According to the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, Lungtok and Tashi set themselves on fire near the Kirti Monastery and began walking on the main road in Ngaba, now referred to as the 'Martyr's Street' in honour of the number of self-immolations that have been carried out there.

"Lungtok, with his body enveloped in flames, marched down the Martyr's Street raising slogans but was overpowered by Chinese security personnel before he could reach the crossroad," Kirti Monastery said in a release today. "Eyewitnesses have said that Lungtok was alive when he was forcibly removed from the scene."

"Tashi was marching on the Martyr's Street raising slogans when a number of Chinese security personnel surrounded him and started beating him," the release said. "He was bundled in a vehicle and taken away."

According to eyewitnesses, both the self-immolators had minimal chances of survival, as their bodies were severely burned.

Lungtok and Tashi were first taken to the local hospital in Ngaba after which they were shifted to the nearby region of Barkham.

“Lungtok passed away in Barkham and it is not yet known whether his body has been handed over to his family for cremation,” the release said.

In the morning of August 13, the day of his self-immolation protest, Lungtok had made individual offerings to his monk colleagues, requesting prayers for Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives for Tibet.

“During the morning prayers, Lungtok offered one Chinese yuan each to the monks at his monastery and requested them to offer prayers for all the martyrs of Tibet,” Kirti Monastery said.

The Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration in a release today confirmed earlier reports of a Tibetan protestor being beaten to death for taking part in demonstrations that followed the self-immolation protests.

“Immediately after the incident, a large number of police were deployed at the site after local Tibetans raised slogans in protest,” CTA said in its release. “The police beat the Tibetans with spiked batons, leaving one Tibetan dead with his entire head covered with blood, and many severely injured.”

Latest reports from the region attest to heightening tensions and a large scale deployment of armed forces throughout the Ngaba region.

The exile Tibetan administration “strongly condemned” the use of force by the Chinese authorities in dealing with the peaceful Tibetan protestors, urging “utmost restraint.”

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 50 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tashi passes away, Self-immolation toll reaches 40

NetWork 99, 15 August 2012

The death toll in the ongoing wave of Tibetan self-immolations has now risen to 40 with the passing away of Tashi, a former Kirti Monastery monk, on August 14, a day after his fiery protest.

Tashi, 21, set himself ablaze along with his former classmate Lungtok, a Kirti Monastery monk, protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet Monday at around 6:50 pm (local time).

Lungtok and Tashi carried out their fiery protest on the main road in Ngaba, eastern Tibet now referred to as the 'Martyr's Street' in honour of the number of self-immolations that have been carried out there.

The exile base of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala in a release today said that Tashi passed away on August 14 in the nearby region of Barkham.

Lungtok had succumbed to his injuries earlier that day also in Barkham.

It is not yet known whether Tashi's body has been handed over to his family for last rites.

According to eyewitnesses, Tashi, engulfed in flames, marched on the Martyr's Street raising slogans when a number of Chinese security personnel surrounded him and started beating him.

Both Lungtok and Tashi were first taken to the local hospital in Ngaba after which they were shifted to Barkham.

Shortly after the self-immolations, a large number of armed police were deployed in the region to quell an impromptu protest by the gathered Tibetans. The Chinese security personnel beat the Tibetans with spiked batons, leaving one Tibetan dead and many severely injured.

The Central Tibetan Administration said that following the twin self-immolations and the public demonstration, all Tibetan businesses in Ngaba remained closed on August 14, as a mark of respect.

Local Tibetans visited monasteries to offer prayers for the deceased and also expressed solidarity with the family members.

With heightening tension in the region, local Chinese authorities on Monday summoned Kirti Monastery's disciplinarian and other senior officials several times to the town office, CTA said.

Police beat Tibetans with batons spiked with nails after 2 burn themselves in Ngaba

Tibet.net, **Press Release**, 14 August 2012

Fresh reports coming out of Tibet say Chinese police beat Tibetan protesters with batons spiked with nails after two more Tibetans self-immolated in Ngaba

in north-eastern Tibet yesterday (13 August). One Tibetan was reported to have died during the police beating, but this report could not be independently verified. The police beating has also left many Tibetans severely injured.

The Central Tibetan Administration has strongly condemned the use of force by the Chinese authorities in dealing with the peaceful Tibetan protesters and urge them to exercise utmost restraint.

Lungtok, 20, a monk of Kirti monastery, and Tashi, 21, a former monk of Kirti monastery, shouted slogans while walking on the main street in Ngaba with their bodies engulfed in flame. They were forcibly taken away by the police, but local people fear they might not survive due to severe burning.

Immediately after the incident, a large number of police were deployed at the site after local Tibetans raised slogans in protest. The police beat the Tibetans with batons spiked with nails, leaving one Tibetan with his entire head covered with blood, and many severely injured.

Additional contingent of armed police have been deployed throughout the Ngaba region.

A latest report says one the self-immolators, Lungtok, has died in Barkham.

With the latest two self-immolations, 49 Tibetans have so far set themselves on fire demanding His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and crying for freedom for Tibetans.

CTA holds prayer service for Tibetan self-immolators

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, August 16, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: A mass prayer service was held today in the exile Tibetan headquarters of Dharamshala for the men and women of Tibet who have sacrificed their lives for the freedom of Tibet.

Special prayers were offered for Choepa, Lungtok, and Tashi, the three self-immolators who recently passed away protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Hundreds of Tibetans and foreigners attended the service held at Tsug-la Khang, the main temple.

The entire staff of the exile Tibetan administration led by Kalon Tripa Dr Lob-

sang Sangay were in attendance.

Choeпа, 24, set himself ablaze on August 10 in the Me'uruma region of Amdo Ngaba, eastern Tibet and succumbed to his injuries later that day.

Earlier this year, Choeпа had taken part in the massive anti-China protests that swept the entire region and was in hiding following a large manhunt for suspected protesters.

He is survived by his parents Paelo and Madron and three siblings.

Lungtok, 20 and Tashi, 21 set themselves on fire near the Kirti Monastery on August 13 and began walking on the main road in Ngaba, now referred to as the 'Martyr's Street' in honour of the number of self-immolations that have been carried out there.

Both Lungtok and Tashi, who were former classmates, passed away within hours of their protests.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 50 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

The self-immolation death toll has reached 40.

Earlier this week, two senior US Congressmen, in an open letter to the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted that "more visible, public and coordinated diplomacy is necessary for the Chinese government to feel pressure to alter its conduct."

Congressmen James P McGovern and Frank R Wolf called on Secretary Clinton to organise an international conference on Tibet as an effective means of expressing concern over the humanitarian crisis in the region.

The two Congressmen asserted that Washington "can and must significantly increase diplomatic and international pressure on the Chinese government to reverse the crisis in Tibet."

"As the United States continues to "pivot" towards Asia, it is important that the US demonstrate that it is not deaf to the desperate appeals for help and support emanating from Tibetans," Congressmen McGovern and Wolf had written.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/08/20/self-immolations-rise-among-tibetans.html>

Self-immolations on the rise among Tibetans

By Ho Ai Li, *The Jakarta Post*, August 20 2012

Once unheard of among Tibetans, the number of self-immolation cases in Tibetan areas has reportedly climbed to nearly 50 since 2009, with Beijing and Tibet activists clashing over what has caused these suicides.

Last week, Tibetan monk Lungtok, 21, and his friend Tashi, 20, from the troubled Ngaba county in Sichuan province, became the latest to torch themselves to protest against Chinese repression, said activist groups Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet.

Most of the fiery attempts involve monks or former monks from the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county but have also spread across the Tibetan plateau, to places including Lhasa, capital of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Those who resort to self-immolations range from monks to lay men, nuns to mothers, young to old. These cases picked up pace from a year ago, with four on average each month.

Beijing has accused the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and his supporters of instigating the suicides.

Beijing-based Tibetan studies scholar Lian Xiangming argued that the 76-year-old and his followers had encouraged the acts by publicizing them and framing them as acts of sacrifice instead of condemning them outright.

“Shouldn’t they take a certain responsibility for these self-immolations?” he told foreign reporters at a talk in March.

Other China-based scholars say the cases might be sparked by economic grievances like the loss of land, which is not uncommon in China. Chinese farmers elsewhere have also been known to burn themselves to protest against land grabs for instance, they note.

But foreign observers believe these suicides reflect intense resentment on the ground against the Chinese repression of Tibetan culture and religion.

Among other things, monks and nuns are not allowed to worship freely but have to hang up portraits of political leaders like Chinese President Hu Jintao,

note Tibetan exile groups.

Professor Michael Davis, a human rights expert at the University of Hong Kong, said the resort to self-immolation shows the lack of channels for Tibetans to voice their unhappiness.

“Such extreme forms of protest come about because the Chinese government has been very thorough in cutting off other forms of protests, even moderate self-expression,” he said, adding: “There doesn’t seem to be a way out of this until the Chinese government changes its policy.”

The leader of Tibet’s government in exile Lobsang Sangay argued in a commentary in *The Washington Post* last month that were the Chinese government to offer to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully through dialogue, the self-immolations would end immediately.

On the other hand, Beijing says that the onus is on the Dalai Lama and his supporters to come out to condemn the suicides.

In any case, with the two sides clashing over the cause of these self-burnings and talks between Beijing and the Dalai Lama at an impasse, scholars say it is very hard to say if an end to these suicides is likely any time soon.

“I can’t judge. I just hope these will end as soon as possible,” said analyst Tanzen Lhundup of the Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Centre.

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/chinese-regime-cracks-down-on-tibetans-after-self-immolations-280558.html>

Chinese Regime Cracks Down on Tibetans After Self-Immolations

By Jack Phillips, *The Epoch Times* Staff, August 16, 2012

China’s crackdown on Tibetans escalated this week in Sichuan Province after three more self-immolations, with reports of beatings and senior Tibetan monks being summoned by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities for questioning.

Several Tibetans in Sichuan Province were “severely beaten by armed police” with one man suffering severe head injuries, following two self-immolations on August 13 and one on August 10, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)

said on their website on Aug. 15.

“Local people who gathered at the scene of the self-immolations, shouting slogans of protest, were confronted by police carrying sticks studded with nails,” ICT said, citing Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe, two exiled monks from Dharamsala, India.

After arriving on the scene armed with their spiked clubs, police then indiscriminately beat protesters and made arrests.

“One person was covered in blood after being hit in the head with the spiked clubs, but nothing more is known of his situation. Security forces were then deployed throughout the county town in large numbers,” the monks told ICT.

The two Tibetans who set themselves on fire on Aug. 13 near Kirti monastery, were identified as 21-year old former monk Tashi and a Tibetan monk by the name of Lungtok, aged about 20. After they set themselves on fire, they walked down Ngaba Street, which has been dubbed “Heroes Road.” Both men were taken to hospital with severe burns. According to the ICT report, Lungtok has passed away.

At the Kirti monastery, CCP authorities summoned two senior monks after the fresh self-immolation incidents. Since 2009, approximately four dozen Tibetans have set themselves alight to protest against what they describe as harsh Chinese repression of their culture and religion.

“The disciplinarian in charge and the head of religious affairs at Kirti monastery have been called in for meetings at the Ngaba county center several times,” Tsering and Yeshe, in a joint statement, told Radio Free Asia. They said that authorities harass top Tibetan monks whenever there is unrest or a self-immolation.

According to the two monks, this time, CCP authorities will try to exert more control over monks at Kirti monastery.

“To express their solidarity with the two self-immolators of August 13 and to console family members, all shops, hotels, and restaurants owned by Tibetans remained closed on August 14 in Ngaba town,” they told RFA.

“Many Tibetans also visited monasteries to make offerings and pray for the dead protesters,” the monks said.

Tibetan man 'beaten to death during police clash'

The Telegraph, 14 Aug 2012

The violence occurred Monday in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, which has emerged as a centre of political activism and the site of dozens of self-immolations in the past few years. The area, home to the influential Kirti Monastery, has been flooded with security forces, but they have been unable to stop the immolation protests.

Radio Free Asia said in an emailed statement that a Kirti monk named Lungtok and another man, identified only as Tashi, set themselves alight Monday evening. It cited a Tibetan in the Aba area who was not identified by name and other unidentified people inside Tibet.

The report said a large number of police tried to clear the immolation site and ended up clashing with Tibetans. It said one man was beaten to death, but gave no other details. There was no way to independently confirm the report.

A woman who answered the telephone at the Aba police department said there had been no immolations or confrontations between police and Tibetan locals. "Nothing like that has happened," said the woman, who like many bureaucrats in China refused to give her name. The phone of the local Communist Party Propaganda Office rang unanswered.

Radio Free Asia said the two men who self-immolated were taken to a hospital by Chinese security forces, but that their condition was unknown.

Nearly 50 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in China since 2009, with many shouting anti-government slogans and calling for the return of their exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. At least 17 were monks or former monks from Kirti, according to an earlier tally from the International Campaign for Tibet.

Monday's clash with police marked the worst flaring of violence in Sichuan since a series of protests in January that Tibetan activist groups say left six Tibetans dead. The Chinese government said at the time that two rioters were killed.

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1950s.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for fanning anti-government sentiment and routinely purges monasteries and nunneries, where support for the Dalai Lama and

Tibetan independence runs high.

Chinese police said to kill a Tibetan man amid outbreak of violence

By Alexa Olesen, *The Associated Press*, August 15, 2012

(This story also appeared in *The Boston Globe*, August 15, 2012)

BEIJING — Police in far west China beat a Tibetan man to death during a clash that broke out after two Tibetans set themselves on fire, a US broadcaster said Tuesday, the worst outburst of violence in the region in months.

The violence occurred Monday in Sichuan Province's Aba prefecture, which has emerged as a center of political activism and the site of dozens of self-immolations in the past few years. The area, home to the influential Kirti Monastery, has been flooded with security forces, but they have been unable to stop the immolation protests.

Radio Free Asia said in an e-mailed statement that a Kirti monk named Lungtok and another man, identified as Tashi, set themselves alight Monday evening. Free Tibet, a London-based Tibetan rights group, said the two men torched themselves inside a prayer-wheel hut near the monastery before stepping out and walking toward the town's main street.

Free Tibet said police put out the flames on both men before taking them away. It said Lungtok was reported to have died and that Tashi was last seen being taken away from the county hospital with severe injuries.

The Radio Free Asia report said a large number of police tried to clear the immolation site and ended up clashing with Tibetans. It said one man was beaten to death, but it gave no other details.

Free Tibet did not confirm the death but — citing an eyewitness — said one person was dragged away with a severe head injury.

The group said the police used metal batons spiked with nails to beat demonstrators.

It also said a protest broke out Tuesday in Tongren, a monastery town in neighboring Qinghai Province, but did not provide details.

Tibetan protests follow surge in self-immolations

The Irish Times, August 17, 2012

HUNDREDS OF ethnic Tibetans have demonstrated in western China to protest police brutality, following a surge in the number of self-immolations within the Tibetan community to protest against Chinese rule.

Five Tibetans set themselves on fire in China in the past week to protest at the growing influence of Han China in the Tibetan plateau and to seek the return of the Dalai Lama, who fled in 1959 amid a failed uprising against Chinese rule.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for encouraging the monks and nuns in their actions, and has deployed thousands of troops to western China and Tibet itself to try and stop the wave of protest. He denies he is behind the surge in self-immolations.

The London-based Free Tibet group said hundreds of Tibetans protested outside the police headquarters in the Tongren county of Qinghai province.

The group said the protests began after police dragged four ethnic Tibetans from a car, severely beat them and threatened them with guns.

Two Tibetans set themselves on fire on Monday in Aba county in Sichuan province, which triggered clashes between Tibetans and police that ended up with a Tibetan being beaten to death, advocacy groups say, quoting sources in the remote Himalayan region.

Lungtok, a monk from the restive Kirti monastery in Ngaba, and another Tibetan, believed to be a layperson and identified as Tashi, torched themselves around 6pm local time, a Tibetan source in the area told Radio Free Asia.

“A large contingent of police and armed PSB [Public Security Bureau] personnel arrived at the site of the self-immolation and imposed stern restrictions in the area,” the source said.

“The local Tibetans gathered in the area clashed with police and the situation became very tense. One Tibetan died from being beaten by the police,” the source said.

There were reports of a third immolation in Aba, but it could not be confirmed. There were no immediate details of the condition of the two self-immolators.

Riot police patrol the streets near Kirti monastery carrying fire extinguishers, so

frequent have the self-immolations become in the town over the past year.

Once the latest incidents are included, at least 47 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2011 to protest Chinese rule over Tibet, according to rights groups.

Most of the immolations have taken place outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region, in Sichuan province, which has a sizeable Tibetan population, focused on two prefectures – Aba, which the Tibetans call Ngawa, and Ganzi, or Kardze in Tibetan. About one million Tibetans live in these areas.

“In the last week alone, we have seen numerous cases of self-immolations and other protests in Tibet. Tensions are high as Tibetans are not prepared to sit back and allow Chinese state oppression to continue unchallenged,” said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden.

China has ruled Tibet since 1950, when communist troops marched in and announced its “peaceful liberation” from feudal rule by the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy. Beijing insists Chinese rule has brought economic development, and denies that it is trying to contain Tibetans’ ability to practice their religion.

Demonstrations calling for greater independence, including an outbreak of rioting in March 2008 which focused on the Tibetan city of Lhasa but spread to many areas where Tibetans live in China, have been brutally suppressed.

The Chinese government is expected to go through a difficult leadership transition in the autumn, and it usually cracks down on ethnic unrest in the run-up to these kind of events. At the same time, it is wary about inflaming tensions at a time of broader sensitivity.

Police Beat Tibetan Man to Death after Self-immolations

By Alexa Olsen, *Democratic China*, 14 August 2012

BEIJING — Police in far west China beat a Tibetan man to death during a clash that broke out after two Tibetans set themselves on fire, a U.S. broadcaster said Tuesday, in the worst flaring of violence in the region in months.

The violence occurred Monday in Sichuan province’s Aba prefecture, which has emerged as a center of political activism and the site of dozens of self-immolations in the past few years. The area, home to the influential Kirti Monastery,

has been flooded with security forces, but they have been unable to stop the immolation protests.

Radio Free Asia said in an emailed statement that a Kirti monk named Lungtok and another man, identified as Tashi, set themselves alight Monday evening. Free Tibet, a London-based Tibetan rights group, said the two men torched themselves inside a prayer-wheel hut near the monastery before stepping out and walking toward the town's main street.

Free Tibet said police put out the flames on both men before taking them away. It said Lungtok was reported to have died and that Tashi was last seen being taken away from the county hospital with severe injuries.

The Radio Free Asia report said a large number of police tried to clear the immolation site and ended up clashing with Tibetans. It said one man was beaten to death, but gave no other details.

Free Tibet did not confirm the death but – citing an eyewitness – said one person was dragged away with a severe head injury.

The group said the police used metal batons spiked with nails to beat demonstrators.

It also said a protest broke out Tuesday in Tongren, a monastery town in neighboring Qinghai province, but did not provide details.

Clashes in Tibet after monks burn themselves

The Gulf Times, 15 August, 2012

The clash late Monday followed the self-immolation of two Tibetans around 6pm (1000 GMT) in Sichuan's Aba county, or Ngaba in Tibetan, US-based Radio Free Asia quoted a source in Ngaba as saying.

Police rushed to seal off the area and took away the two Tibetans, one of whom was a monk from the local Kirti monastery.

"The local Tibetans who gathered in the area clashed with police, and the situation became very tense," the source told the broadcaster, founded by the US government to promote democracy. "One Tibetan died from being beaten by the police."

The London-based Tibetan rights group Free Tibet said the monk, identified as

Lungtok, 20, died after setting fire to himself.

The second man who self-immolated, Tashi, 21, was a former monk and class-mate of Lungtok. His condition was unknown, Free Tibet said.

Several Tibetans were injured in the clashes that followed the self-immolations, with police reportedly using spiked metal batons, Free Tibet and the India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy reported.

The police detained several Tibetans during the clashes, the two groups said.

Free Tibet reported another protest yesterday in the Rebkong area of nearby Qinghai province, but it gave no immediate details.

State media did not report the clashes or the self-immolations.

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden condemned the use of “disproportionate force against Tibetan protesters” in Kirti.

“The use of metal batons spiked with nails to beat Tibetan demonstrators is deeply shocking,” Bridgen said.

“Such a brutal response to protests can only deepen Tibetan grievances,” she said. “Tibetans are united in their rejection of Chinese rule.”

More than 50 Tibetans have set fire to themselves in China since 2009, most of them in the past two years. Many of the previous self-immolations were in Ngaba.

The ruling Communist Party tightened security in most Tibetan areas this year after an escalation of self-immolations & other protests against the government.

Officials from the Aba police and government, reached by telephone, denied knowledge of the latest incident.

Ethnic Tibetans in Tibet and surrounding regions have long-resented Chinese rule, saying it has curbed their religious freedom and diluted their culture through an influx of Han Chinese, the country’s main ethnic group.

China counters that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and have enjoyed improved living standards thanks to China’s economic expansion.

The Tibetan capital Lhasa saw violent anti-Chinese government protests in 2008 that later spread to other areas inhabited by Tibetans. Authorities have kept the city under tight security since then.

Tibetan unrest follows a string of self-immolations

MSN News, 15 August 2012

Hundreds of Tibetans protested outside the police headquarters in the Tongren county of China's northwest Qinghai province. The Free Tibet group, which is based in the UK, told the media that the protests began after police "dragged four ethnic Tibetans from a car, severely beat them and threatened them with guns."

On Monday, the Tibetan rights groups claimed that a 20-year-old monk Lungtok, & 21-year-old former monk Tashi set themselves on fire in Aba prefecture of Sichuan. Lungtok died whereas Tashi was hospitalized with severe injuries.

After the self-immolations, which took place around 6pm local time, a clash broke out between ethnic Tibetan protesters and the police. The rights groups said the police tried to block the area and took away two Tibetans. According to the independent media reports, the clash left one protester dead.

Use of force by the Chinese

The Free Tibet and the India-based Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy alleged that the police used "disproportionate force" against the protesters.

"It is shocking that the police use metal batons spiked with nails to beat Tibetans," said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden. Such a response can only make the grievances of the Tibetans deepened," he said, adding that the Tibetans are united against the Chinese rule.

The Chinese authorities are silent about the recent clashes.

Tibetan groups say that Tibetans carry out self-immolations to highlight their frustrations with the Chinese rule in the region. According to Tibetan groups, around 50 Tibetans have self-immolated since March 2011 to protest against the restrictions on their religious freedom.

However, Beijing claims that the Tibetans are free to religiously practise their religion. The communist government also says that the living standard of the Tibetans has improved under the Chinese rule. It calls self-immolators "terrorists and criminals" and blames the self-exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for instigating violence in Tibet.

Police Beat Tibetan Man to Death after Self-immolations

By Alexa Olsen, *Democratic China*, 14 August 2012

Monday in the Aba prefecture of Sichuan, the two men who set themselves alight were taken away by police who then attempted to clear the area. A clash between police and Tibetans then broke out, with witnesses reporting that batons spiked with nails were used on protesters.

BEIJING — Police in far west China beat a Tibetan man to death during a clash that broke out after two Tibetans set themselves on fire, a U.S. broadcaster said Tuesday, in the worst flaring of violence in the region in months.

The violence occurred Monday in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, which has emerged as a center of political activism and the site of dozens of self-immolations in the past few years. The area, home to the influential Kirti Monastery, has been flooded with security forces, but they have been unable to stop the immolation protests.

Radio Free Asia said in an emailed statement that a Kirti monk named Lungtok and another man, identified as Tashi, set themselves alight Monday evening. Free Tibet, a London-based Tibetan rights group, said the two men torched themselves inside a prayer-wheel hut near the monastery before stepping out and walking toward the town's main street.

Free Tibet said police put out the flames on both men before taking them away. It said Lungtok was reported to have died and that Tashi was last seen being taken away from the county hospital with severe injuries.

The Radio Free Asia report said a large number of police tried to clear the immolation site and ended up clashing with Tibetans. It said one man was beaten to death, but gave no other details.

Free Tibet did not confirm the death but — citing an eyewitness — said one person was dragged away with a severe head injury.

The group said the police used metal batons spiked with nails to beat demonstrators.

It also said a protest broke out Tuesday in Tongren, a monastery town in neighboring Qinghai province, but did not provide details.

Lobsang Kalsang

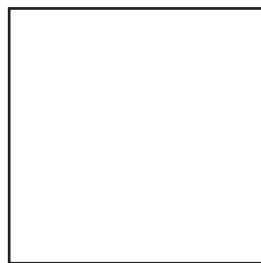
Age: 18

Occupation: Monk

Date of self-immolation: 27 August 2012

Place: Kirti Monastery, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Damchoe

Age: 17

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 27 August 2012

Place: Kirti Monastery, Ngaba, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tibetan teenagers set themselves on fire in China

The Associated Press in Beijing, 28 August 2012

Two Tibetan teenagers have died after setting themselves on fire outside a monastery in the latest protest against Chinese rule, according to an overseas rights group.

The deaths pushed to 51 the number of confirmed self-immolations since 2009, London-based Free Tibet said in a statement.

The group said 18-year-old monk Lobsang Kalsang and 17-year-old former monk Damchoek set themselves on fire on Monday outside Kirti monastery in Aba county in the south-west Chinese province of Sichuan. They died later that day in hospital, Free Tibet said.

Citing witnesses, Free Radio Asia said the two teenagers shouted slogans condemning Chinese policies in Tibet.

Police in Aba county said on Tuesday they had no information on the self-im-

mulations, which are rarely reported by Chinese state media. There have been at least 27 self-immolations in Aba, according to an earlier tally by the International Campaign for Tibet.

Supporters say the self-immolations are done in protest against Beijing's heavy-handed rule in Tibetan regions and to call for the return of the Dalai Lama. China has blamed the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader for inciting the deaths, but the Dalai Lama denies the claim. He has never publicly supported or denounced the acts.

Lobsang Sangay, the political leader of Tibetan exiles, said earlier this month the incidents were against the movement's commitment to non-violence but it was his duty to highlight why the protesters were dying.

He expressed his disappointment that the self-immolations by Tibetans have not received the same international attention as the similar suicide of a Tunisian man that sparked the Arab spring.

In Washington, the state department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said on Monday the US had called on Beijing to "meet the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people within China to protect their human rights, to protect their way of life, and to work on these issues through dialogue".

Two Tibetan teenagers die in self-immolations

BBC, 28 August 2012

Lobsang Kalsang, an 18-year-old monk, and Damchoek, a 17-year-old former monk, set themselves on fire on Monday morning, London-based Free Tibet said.

It happened outside the Kirti Monastery in Aba county, where many of the self-immolations have taken place.

This brings the number of Tibetans who have set themselves on fire since 2009 to 51, the group added.

The BBC is unable to verify this figure. Foreign media are banned from the region, making reports hard to confirm. Chinese state media have confirmed some of the self-immolations but not all.

More than half of those who have set themselves on fire are believed to have

died.

‘No information’

The teenagers died on Monday evening after being taken to a hospital by Chinese authorities, Free Tibet said.

The young men were shouting slogans against Chinese rule and policies in Tibet as their bodies burned, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported, citing witnesses.

“Witnesses saw them run about 20 steps with their bodies on fire, and then they fell to the ground,” two monks based in India told RFA.

Former monk Damchoek has been identified as the brother of Tenzin Choe-don, a teenage nun who died after setting herself on fire earlier this year, the reports said.

Lobsang Kalsang’s roommate at the monastery was detained on Monday, both Free Tibet and RFA reported.

Aba county police said they had no information on the self-immolations, an Associated Press report said.

Kirti Monastery, which has been the focus of protests for more than a year, is surrounded by heavy security.

China’s leaders blame the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans’ exiled spiritual leader, for inciting the self-immolations and encouraging separatism.

He rejects this, and both activist groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile say the self-immolations are protests against tight Chinese control of the region and religious repression.

Two Tibetan teenagers self-immolate and die

By Daniel DeFraia, *Global Post*, August 28, 2012

Two Tibetan teenagers died today after self-immolating in protest of China’s occupation of Tibet.

Free Tibet reported: “Lobsang Kalsang, an 18-year-old monk, and Damchoek, a 17-year-old former monk, set themselves alight outside Kirti Monastery in Ngaba.”

Free Radio Asia said witnesses heard the two denounce China's rule of Tibet as they burned.

"Witnesses saw them run about 20 steps with their bodies on fire, and then they fell to the ground," two monks in India said, according to the BBC.

China's state media rarely reports on self-immolations. Activist say since March 2011, about 51 Tibetans have set fire to themselves. This number could not be confirmed.

Yesterday, US State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Beijing needed to "meet the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people within China to protect their human rights, to protect their way of life, and to work on these issues through dialogue."

Two Tibetans self-immolate in China: groups

The Bangkok Post, 28 August 2012

Two Tibetan men have died after setting fire to themselves in China, a US broadcaster and two overseas pressure groups said Tuesday, taking the number of such protests to more than 50 since 2009.

Lobsang Kalsang, 18, a Buddhist monk, and former monk Damchoe, 17, died in hospital on Monday after setting themselves on fire in southwest China's Aba town, which has become a flashpoint for protests against Beijing's rule.

The two men shouted slogans condemning Chinese policies in Tibet as they set themselves alight, Radio Free Asia said, citing two India-based monks with contacts in Aba, Sichuan province.

They protested close to Aba's Kirti monastery, which has been under heavy security since a monk self-immolated in March 2011, kicking off a wave of dramatic protests by mostly young ethnic Tibetans in the region.

The latest deaths take the number of ethnic Tibetans to have self-immolated since 2009 to 51, according to tallies by overseas-based pressure groups Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet.

"Tibetans' fundamental human rights are being ignored by international leaders who are afraid of risking their relationships with China," said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden in a statement.

“The time has come for each one of us to speak up and demand Tibetan freedom.”

Free Tibet said Damchoek, who like many Tibetans used only one name, was the brother of Tenzin Choedon, a teenage nun who set fire to herself in February this year.

No one at the Kirti monastery or the hospital where the monks reportedly died could be reached by telephone, while authorities in Aba declined to comment on the latest self-immolation reports.

China has accused the Dalai Lama -- who fled Tibet following a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959 and is vilified as a “separatist” by Communist authorities -- of encouraging the protests.

The Dalai Lama has himself condemned self-immolations, which many Buddhists believe are contrary to their faith, but blamed them on hardline Chinese rule of Tibetan-populated areas.

Tibetans have long chafed under China’s rule over the vast Tibetan plateau, saying that Beijing has curbed religious freedoms and their culture is being eroded by an influx of Han Chinese, the country’s main ethnic group.

Beijing, however, says that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and have benefited from improved living standards brought on by China’s economic expansion.

Breaking: Two young Tibetans set themselves on fire, Self-immolation toll breaches 50

Phayul, August 28, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, August 28: In confirmed reports coming out of Tibet, two young Tibetans set themselves on fire Monday in an apparent protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

The two have been identified as Lobsang Kalsang, an 18-year-old monk of the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba eastern Tibet and Damchoe, a former monk at the monastery, aged around 17.

Both of them succumbed to their injuries later in the day.

Damchoe was the younger brother of Tenzin Choedron, a nun at the Mamae nunnery, the largest nunnery in the Ngaba region, who passed away in her self-

immolation protest earlier this year on February 11.

The exile base of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, in release said Lobsang Kalsang and Damchoe set themselves on fire at around 8:30 am (local time) near the eastern gate of the Kirti Monastery.

“According to eyewitnesses, the two Tibetan martyrs, engulfed in flames, walked around 20 steps before falling down on the ground,” the release said. “They raised slogans against the Chinese government policies of annihilating the Tibetan race.”

Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene and after dousing the flames, took both of them to Ngaba hospital, where they were kept for a short period.

Lobsang Kalsang and Damchoe were then taken to the nearby Barkham hospital where they succumbed to their injuries.

It is not yet known whether the bodies have been handed over to the families.

“Following the protest, Lobsang Kalsang’s room-mate at the Kirti Monastery, Lobsang Palden was detained by Chinese security personnel,” the release said.

The wave of self-immolations that began in 2009 has now witnessed 52 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding freedom in Tibet and the return of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from exile.

US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland, during a daily press briefing on Monday, reiterated the US government’s appeal to China to address the legitimate grievances of Tibetans through dialogue.

“Whenever we see these tragic incidents, we again call on China to meet the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people within China to protect their human rights, to protect their way of life, and to work on these issues through dialogue,” Nuland said.

Teen pair burn as Tibet torch toll climbs

The Standard Online, August 29, 2012

Two Tibetan teenagers have died after setting fire to themselves, a US broadcaster and two overseas pressure groups say, taking the number of such protests to more than 50 since 2009.

Lobsang Kalsang, 18, a Buddhist monk, and former monk Damchoe, 17, died in hospital on Monday in Sichuan province's Aba town, which has become a flashpoint for protests against Beijing's rule.

The two men shouted slogans condemning Beijing's policies in Tibet as they set themselves alight, Radio Free Asia said, citing two India-based monks with contacts in Aba.

They protested close to Kirti monastery, which has been under heavy security since a monk self-immolated in March last year, kicking off a wave of the dramatic protests by mostly young Tibetans.

The latest deaths take the number of Tibetans to have self-immolated since 2009 to 51, according to pressure groups Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet.

"Tibetans' fundamental human rights are being ignored by international leaders who are afraid of risking their relationships with China," said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden.

"The time has come for each one of us to speak up and demand Tibetan freedom."

Free Tibet said Damchoe, who like many Tibetans used only one name, was the brother of Tenzin Choedon, a teenage nun who set fire to herself in February.

China has accused the Dalai Lama - who is vilified as a "separatist" by communist authorities - of encouraging the protests.

The Dalai Lama has himself condemned self-immolations, which many Buddhists believe are contrary to their faith, but blamed them on hardline Chinese rule of Tibetan-populated areas.

Tibetans say Beijing has curbed religious freedoms and their culture is being eroded by an influx of Han Chinese, the country's main ethnic group.

Two Tibetans self-immolate in China

The Telegraph, 28 Aug 2012

Lobsang Kalsang, 18, a Buddhist monk, and former monk Damchoe, 17, died in hospital on Monday after setting themselves on fire in southwest China's Aba town, which has become a flashpoint for protests against Beijing's rule.

The two men shouted slogans condemning Chinese policies in Tibet as they set themselves alight, Radio Free Asia said, citing two India-based monks with contacts in Aba, Sichuan province.

They protested close to Aba's Kirti monastery, which has been under heavy security since a monk self-immolated in March 2011, kicking off a wave of the dramatic protests by mostly young ethnic Tibetans in the region.

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"The time has come for each one of us to speak up and demand Tibetan freedom."

Free Tibet said Damchoek, who like many Tibetans used only one name, was the brother of Tenzin Choedon, a teenage nun who set fire to herself in February this year.

No one at the Kirti monastery or the hospital where the monks reportedly died could be reached by telephone, while authorities in Aba declined to comment on the latest self-immolation reports.

China has accused the Dalai Lama – who fled Tibet following a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959 and is vilified as a "separatist" by Communist authorities – of encouraging the protests.

The Dalai Lama has himself condemned self-immolations, which many Buddhists believe are contrary to their faith, but blamed them on hardline Chinese rule of Tibetan-populated areas.

Tibetans have long chafed under China's rule over the vast Tibetan plateau, saying that Beijing has curbed religious freedoms and their culture is being eroded by an influx of Han Chinese, the country's main ethnic group.

Beijing, however, says that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and have benefited from improved living standards brought on by China's economic expansion.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/immolate-08272012150023.html>

Two Tibetans Self-Immolate

RFA, 27 August 2012

Two young Tibetan men set themselves on fire near a restive monastery in China's Sichuan province and died Monday in protest against Chinese rule in Tibetan areas, Tibetan sources in exile said.

Their self-immolation came two days after a nun in a neighboring prefecture braved tight security restriction and staged a solitary protest, also challenging Beijing's rule, before she was detained and taken away.

Lobsang Kalsang, 18 and a monk at Kirti monastery, and Damchoe, 17 and an ex-monk, self-immolated at a site near the eastern gate of Kirti monastery and close to Heroes' Street in Ngaba, the sources said, referring to a main road in Ngaba town which has become the epicenter of burning protests challenging Chinese rule.

As they burned, both shouted slogans condemning Chinese policies in Tibet, India-based monks Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe said, citing contacts in the region.

"Witnesses saw them run about 20 steps with their bodies on fire, and then they fell to the ground," they said, adding that sounds of "Ki! Ki!" a Tibetan battle cry, could later be heard coming from the flames.

Police took both men to Ngaba hospital, and then to a hospital in nearby Barkham county, "but later in the evening, both men died, and their bodies are still in the possession of the authorities," Tsering and Yeshe said.

"No information is available as to whether the authorities have handed the bodies over to their relatives," they said.

Total now at 51

Speaking separately to RFA on condition of anonymity, two Ngaba residents confirmed the self-immolations on Monday, saying the two protesters set themselves ablaze at about 11:00 a.m. local time.

"They held their protest ... close to Heroes' Street in Ngaba," one source said.

Their burnings bring to 51 the total number of self-immolations since the wave

of fiery protests began in February 2009, with nearly all of the protests taking place in Tibetan-populated provinces in western China.

Most were protests against Chinese rule and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader who now lives in exile in Dharamsala, India.

The last reported self-immolation before Monday's protest was on Aug. 13 when two young Tibetan men, one a Kirti monk and the other a former monk, set themselves on fire and walked, burning and shouting slogans, along the main street of Ngaba town before being overwhelmed and taken away by police.

The burnings triggered protests by residents, leading to a Chinese security crackdown in which one Tibetan was beaten to death.

Damchoe, one of the men who died on Monday, was a nephew of the other self-immolator, Lobsang Kalsang, and was the younger brother of a nun named Tenzin Chodron who died in an earlier protest, Tsering and Yeshe said.

"He was a monk of Kirti monastery, but later he disrobed and lived with his mother in a nomadic community."

After Monday's protest, Chinese police detained Lobsang Kalsang's roommate Lobsang Palden at Kirti monastery, Tsering and Yeshe said.

Nun protests, is detained

Meanwhile, a 39-year-old Tibetan nun staged a lone protest on Saturday in Sichuan's Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) prefecture, calling for freedom for Tibet, a Tibetan source in exile said, citing sources in the region.

"A nun by the name of Shedrub Lhamo protested at around 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 25 in Kardze town," India-based monk Pema Tsewang said, citing sources in Kardze.

"She shouted slogans calling for the long life of the Dalai Lama and for his return to Tibet and for freedom for Tibet. She also threw several leaflets in the air before she was detained by police," he said.

What was written on the leaflets is not known, but a foreign tourist who was present took a photo of a leaflet and was also immediately detained, Pema Tsewang said.

"The police seized his camera and took him away in a vehicle. It is not clear whether or not he was later released."

“Relatives of the nun protester went to the detention center to bring her some clothes,” he said. “The police took them and said they would hand them over.”

Shedrub Lhamo’s father was identified as Tsewang Gyurme and her mother as Tsering Palmo. A native of Shang Khag village in the Khadrag subdivision of Sichuan’s Kardze county, she is a nun belonging to Ganden Choeling monastery in Kardze, Pema Tsewang said.

Two Tibetans Self-Immolate in China: Groups

The Jakarta Post, August 28, 2012

Two Tibetan men have died after setting fire to themselves in China, a US broadcaster and two overseas pressure groups said Tuesday, taking the number of such protests to more than 50 since 2009.

Lobsang Kalsang, 18, a Buddhist monk, and former monk Damchoe, 17, died in hospital on Monday after setting themselves on fire in southwest China’s Aba town, which has become a flashpoint for protests against Beijing’s rule.

The two men shouted slogans condemning Chinese policies in Tibet as they set themselves alight, Radio Free Asia said, citing two India-based monks with contacts in Aba, Sichuan province.

They protested close to Aba’s Kirti monastery, which has been under heavy security since a monk self-immolated in March 2011, kicking off a wave of the dramatic protests by mostly young ethnic Tibetans in the region.

The latest deaths take the number of ethnic Tibetans to have self-immolated since 2009 to 51, according to tallies by overseas-based pressure groups Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet.

“Tibetans’ fundamental human rights are being ignored by international leaders who are afraid of risking their relationships with China,” said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden in a statement.

“The time has come for each one of us to speak up and demand Tibetan freedom.”

Free Tibet said Damchoek, who like many Tibetans used only one name, was the brother of Tenzin Choedon, a teenage nun who set fire to herself in February this year.

No one at the Kirti monastery or the hospital where the monks reportedly died could be reached by telephone, while authorities in Aba declined to comment on the latest self-immolation reports.

China has accused the Dalai Lama — who fled Tibet following a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959 and is vilified as a “separatist” by Communist authorities — of encouraging the protests.

The Dalai Lama has himself condemned self-immolations, which many Buddhists believe are contrary to their faith, but blamed them on hardline Chinese rule of Tibetan-populated areas.

Tibetans have long chafed under China’s rule over the vast Tibetan plateau, saying that Beijing has curbed religious freedoms and their culture is being eroded by an influx of Han Chinese, the country’s main ethnic group.

Beijing, however, says that Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and have benefited from improved living standards brought on by China’s economic expansion.

Yungdrung

Age: 27

Occupation: --

Date of self-immolation: 29 September 2012

Place: Zatoe, Yulshul, Tibet

Current Status: unknown



Youth self-immolates in Zatoe in eastern Tibet

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 30 September 2012

MCLEOD GANJ: A Tibetan youth from eastern Tibet has set fire to himself in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, calling for the independence of Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa.

The self-immolation comes days after exile Tibetans appealed to their fellow countrymen to end the fire protests.

Sources in exile who have contacts in Tibet confirmed the self-immolation and

organised a candlelight vigil to stand in solidarity with the youth.

Yungdung, 27, set himself ablaze and shouted slogans against Chinese rule, in Dzatoe (Ch: Zaduo) county in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. He was severely burnt when he was taken away by Chinese security forces.

While on fire he additionally shouted slogans acknowledging Sikyong Lobsang Sangay, the political leader of the exile Tibetans, is the King of Tibet, and that Chinese return to China, stop mining in Tibet and stop religious persecution.

Yungdung becomes the 52nd Tibetan to have self-immolated since Tapey's immolation in February 2009. More than forty have died.

Tibetan Man Self-Immolates, Ignoring Exiles' Pleas

By Jack Phillips, *The Epoch Times* Staff, 1 October 2012

Just a few days after Tibetan exile leaders made a plea to end the practice, a Tibetan man set himself on fire on Saturday to protest against harsh Chinese rule in west-central Qinghai Province.

The man, who was dressed in Tibetan garb, self-immolated in Dzatoe county in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and was then taken by Chinese security forces, reported Radio Free Asia, citing local sources.

"While burning, he shouted various slogans—calling for the independence of Tibet," a source, who was not named due to security reasons, told the broadcaster.

"He walked past several Tibetan shops in Dzatoe county's shopping complex with his body on fire," the source said, adding that local shopkeepers attempted to douse the man with water to put out the fire. Other sources added more gruesome details before he was taken by Chinese authorities.

Exiled Tibetan leaders last week called on Tibetans inside of China to put an end to self-immolations, saying they go against the nonviolent nature of the movement. At least 52 Tibetans have set themselves ablaze since March 2009, most taking place in Sichuan Province and other heavily Tibetan areas, with more than 40 dying.

The most recent self-immolation may have been linked to Chinese authorities forcing local Tibetans to participate in the filming of a movie which depicts

Tibetans as being happy under Chinese rule, reported the pro-Tibet Phayul publication, which cited the Tibet Express newspaper. The publication reported that the man who set himself on fire was a 27-year-old man called Yungdrung.

“The Tibetans expressed their unwillingness to take part in the show this year thus leading to the protest by Yungdrung against the Chinese government,” the report said.

The Central Tibetan Administration met in the Indian town of Dharamsala for four days, telling Tibetans “not to take drastic actions” and set themselves on fire.

“Tibet is a thinly populated country, and in the present situation losing even one life is a great loss for the Tibetan people,” the organization said last week, according to RFA. “Please preserve your lives in the future.”

The exiled officials, however, called on China to end its repressive policies against Tibetans in the country, which has led to the deterioration of their culture, religion, and language.

In many Tibetan areas including in Lhasa, capital of the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Chinese security forces have clamped down hard in recent months on dissent and the spreading of information regarding the self-immolations.

China’s ‘Happy Tibetans’ filming the immediate provocation for yet another self-immolation

TibetanReview.net, October 01, 2012

A Tibetan youth was reported to have immolated himself in Dzatoe (Chinese: Zaduo) County of Yushu Prefecture, Qinghai Province, on Sep 29, just a day after a conclave of more than 400 exile Tibetans from 26 countries issued a fervent appeal from Dharamsala that such an act conveying the depth of frustration with Chinese rule be not carried out. Dressed in full traditional Tibetan outfit, Yungdrung, 27, shouted slogans calling for Tibet’s independence and the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa’s return from exile, and prayers for long life for His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he walked by the county’s shopping complex in raging flames, reported Radio Free Asia (RFA, Washington) Sep 29 and other Tibetan news services Sep 30.

Shopkeepers were reported to have thrown water on him, but to little effect. The RFA report cited witnesses as saying his entrails were falling out as raging

flames kept leaping from his body.

The reports did not say how the fire eventually subsided; they only said Chinese police took him away. His conditions remain unknown amid fears that he may have died the next morning.

The fiery protest by Yungdrung brings to at least 52 the number of Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, who have immolated themselves thus in Tibet since Feb 2009.

The immediate provocation for the latest self-immolation was suspected to be the Chinese authorities' coercion on the local Tibetans to participate in a shooting of a propaganda film with the theme of 'happiness in Tibet'. The Tibetans were reported to have staged protests against the filming and the coercion.

On the same day, the Dalai Lama led a prayer service at Dharamsala for those who had immolated themselves for the Tibetan cause, joined by the heads of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion Bon.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/burning-10012012141037.html>

Clampdown in Wake of Burning

REA, 1 October 2012

Chinese forces have tightened security in a Tibetan-populated county of Qinghai province following the self-immolation Saturday of a Tibetan man protesting rule by Beijing, according to Tibetan sources.

Yungdrung, 27, set himself ablaze on Saturday on a shop-lined street in Dzatoe (in Chinese, Zaduo) county in the restive Yulshul (in Chinese, Yushu) prefecture.

Wearing traditional Tibetan dress, he shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence and for the return to Tibet of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama before Chinese police took him away, witnesses said.

Details concerning his present condition and whereabouts are unknown, but witnesses described him as severely burned.

"Authorities have now imposed fresh restrictions on the movements of Tibetan residents in Dzatoe, and the area of the town including the street crossing and its immediate vicinity are filled with Chinese security personnel," Tenpa Yarphe, a

member of Tibet's India-based exile parliament, said on Sunday.

Yungdrung was originally a resident of the Karma subdistrict of Chamdo prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region, but later moved to Dzatoe, Yarphel said.

"When he was rushed to a hospital by the Chinese police, he could only utter the words 'Tibet, Tibet ...,'" Yarphel said, citing witnesses.

Survival doubted

Though Chinese authorities said on Sept. 30 that Yungdrung had been taken out of the county for medical treatment, witnesses believe that he may have died on the way, Yarphel added.

In separate reports, both the online Tibet Express and the website of Tibet's India-based exile government, the Central Tibetan Administration, confirmed Yungdrung's identity and age.

Yungdrung's self-immolation, the 52nd in the wave of fiery protests since February 2009, came a day after more than 400 Tibetan exiles from 26 countries meeting in India called for an end to self-immolations by Tibetans challenging Chinese rule.

The meeting held in the hill-town of Dharamsala expressed "grave concern" over the burnings and urged Tibetans living under Chinese rule not to take "drastic actions."

"Tibet is a thinly populated country, and in the present situation losing even one life is a great loss for the Tibetan people," said one of 31 recommendations and resolutions adopted by the delegates to the four-day gathering, the largest meeting of its kind in four years.

"Please preserve your lives in the future," it said.

Similar expressions of concern from exile figures and from the Dalai Lama himself over the burnings have gone largely unheeded in the past.

Gudrup

Age: 43

Occupation: Writer/poet

Date of self-immolation: 29 September 2012

Place: Driru town in Nagchu, Central Tibet

Current Status: Deceased



The last message of Gudrup:

My brothers and sisters of the Land of Snows, although looking back at our past we have nothing but a sense of loss, anger, sadness, and tears, I pray that the coming new year of the Water Dragon brings you health, success, and the fulfillment of aspirations.

We must identify and give prominence to our pride in ourselves as a people and even in the face of loss and suffering, must never lose our courage and spirit in our endeavour to uphold our unity.'

(Translation by Phayul.com)

Tibetan writer commits self-immolation in China: Monks

By Ananth Krishnan, *The Hindu*, 5 October 2012

A Tibetan writer and poet who studied in India died on Thursday after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese policies in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), according to monks in Dharamsala and Tibetan sources.

Gudrup (43) set himself on fire on Thursday morning in a town in TAR's Nagqu prefecture, they said. He had left a note on a popular Chinese social networking website, called QQ, in which he called for "unity among all Tibetans", the monks added.

More than 50 self-immolation protests have taken place in China since 2011. The protests have been predominantly carried out by monks and nuns in Tibetan monastery towns outside the TAR, in the western provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai.

Gudrup's self-immolation marked the first instance of such a protest by a Tibetan writer in China known for his political activism, monks in India said. His

writings and poems, posted online, were followed by many in the Tibetan community, although they were frequently subjected to censorship restrictions. In a blog post in March, Gudrup wrote of a widening “non-violent movement”, speaking of the spreading self-immolation protests close to the anniversary of the 2008 riots.

His self-immolation came less than a week after reports said a young Tibetan had died in a similar protest in northwestern Qinghai. Earlier this week, exiled groups reported four Tibetans, including two teenage monks, were jailed by authorities for allegedly conveying news of the protests and assisting a monk in carrying out a self-immolation in Aba, the Sichuan town where most of the protests have taken place. The jail terms ranged from seven to 11 years, the groups said.

According to a monk in India, Gudrup studied at the Tibetan Transit School in Dharamsala before returning to Tibet in 2005. He often used the pen name “Youth of the Snow Realm”.

The self-immolation protests have appeared to divide the Tibetan community. In Dharamsala this week, members of the exiled community met to discuss the protests. While the Dharamsala exiled administration has issued appeals for the protests to stop, others in the Tibetan community have called for more support for those have carried out the immolations.

Some Tibetan writers in China have issued an appeal calling for the self-immolations to stop, arguing that Tibetans needed “to cherish life” to fight for their rights.

Underscoring the sensitivity of the issue, even the Dalai Lama has said he would “remain neutral” on the question. The exiled Tibetan spiritual leader told *The Hindu* in an interview in July in his first detailed comments on the self-immolations that the protests were “a very, very delicate” political issue. He pointed out that it would not be appropriate for him to say anything “negative” about those who had sacrificed their lives. At the same time, he rejected Chinese accusations of a “plot” and stressed that he was not encouraging the protests, instead calling on the Chinese government to examine its policies in Tibet.

The Beijing-based Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser on Friday posted on her blog a translation of one of Gudrup’s writings. “Brothers and sisters of the snow-covered Tibetan land, when looking back at our past it is rarely a joyful scene,” he wrote. “We must not lose our faith, we must strengthen our unity”.

Breaking: Tibetan man dies in self-immolation protest, Leaves message of pride and unity

Phayul, Thursday, October 04, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, October 4: In reports coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan man has set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet, taking Tibet's self-immolation toll to 53.

Sources from inside Tibet, using a popular phone interface programme, have said that Gudrub, 43, torched himself in Nagchu town in central Tibet at around 10 am (local time). He is believed to have passed away at the site of his protest.

Dharamshala based Tibetan language new portal, *Tibet Express*, in a report cited eyewitnesses as saying that Gudrup raised slogans for Tibet's freedom and the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama before setting himself on fire.

"Eyewitnesses have said that Gudrup shouted, "Wherever we go, we have no freedom," "Freedom for Tibet," "Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet," before setting himself on fire," the report said.

At the time of reporting, Gudrup's body has not been handed over to his family members.

Before carrying out his self-immolation protest, Gudrup left a last message addressed to all Tibetans calling for unity and pride in one's race on qq.com, China's largest online network.

"My brothers and sisters of the land of snows, although, looking back at our past, we have nothing but a sense of loss, anger, sadness, and tears, I pray that the coming new year of the Water Dragon brings you health, success, and the fulfillment of aspirations," Gudrup writes.

"We must distinguish and give prominence to our pride in ourselves as a people and even in the face of loss and suffering, must never lose our courage and spirit in our endeavour to uphold our unity."

Gudrup is a native of Driru in Kham eastern Tibet and was a writer who read extensively on Tibet's history.

Tibetan Blogger Self-Immolates, Leaves Posts Behind

By Jeff Seldin, *VOA News*, October 04, 2012

Sources tell VOA's Tibetan Service a 43-year-old poet and blogger named Gudrup engulfed himself in flames Thursday in Dreru, Tibet - part of the area China has designated the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Witnesses said Gudrup was badly burned when he was brought to a hospital. A doctor later told them Gudrup had died, but the authorities so far are refusing to release his body to his family.

This past March, Gudrup blogged about the anti-China protests that had gripped southwestern China and Tibet, writing on March 14 "Tibetans who refuse to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama or accept China's rule on Tibet are secretly killed or made to disappear."

In the same post, Gudrup called on fellow Tibetans to "win the battle through truth, by shooting arrows upon our lives."

He also warned Tibetans "are sharpening our nonviolent movement... declaring the reality of Tibet by burning our own bodies to call for freedom."

Gudrup's actions bring the number of self-immolations to 53 since February 2009, and are part of a slowly growing number taking place within the Tibet Autonomous Region. Most of the self-immolations have occurred in southwestern China.

China has repeatedly denounced self-immolations as terrorist acts, calling the practice barbaric. But representatives of the Dalai Lama and the prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile say the practice is a sign Tibetans can no longer tolerate Beijing's push against their culture and religion.

"The fact that Tibetans after 50-plus years are still protesting, and in [the] drastic form of self-immolation, clearly indicates that they are protesting against the occupation of Tibet and the repressive policies of the Chinese government," Lobsang Sangay told a gathering in Dharamsala, India last week.

The Tibetan government-in-exile says 51 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March of 2009 to protest Chinese rule.

China views Tibet as a non-negotiable part of its territory and has long accused

the Dalai Lama of trying to separate the Himalayan region from China. The Dalai Lama has said repeatedly that he is not pushing for Tibetan independence, but for greater autonomy.

A Tibetan Writer Self-immolates in Nagchu: Report

Tibet.net, October 4, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Reports coming out of Tibet say a Tibetan writer today set himself on fire and died in Driru county in Nagchu in eastern Tibet. The incident has raised the total number of self-immolations in Tibet to 53, out of which 43 have died.

Gudrup, 43, set himself on fire around 10 AM in Nagchu town and succumbed to his injuries. Chinese police bundled off Gudrup's charred dead body from the spot instead of handing it to his family, the report said.

While engulfed in flame, he raised slogans saying "there is no freedom in Tibet, let His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet."

Before the fiery protest, he has reportedly left a message on his QQ account, calling for "unity among all Tibetans and not to give up in the face of Tibet's struggle for freedom."

"Gudrup studied at Sherab Gatsel Lobling school in Dharamsala in India before returning to his homeland in 2005 upon completion of his studies and described him as a "prolific writer who goes by the pen name "Gangtro Kyi Nashon" or Youth of Snow Realm". He takes keen interest in political developments concerning the issue of Tibet and regularly reads Tibet's history books," Tibet Express quoted a source from the region as saying.

Tibetan burns himself to death in China protest

(Sunday Times Newspaper, Sri Lanka)

BEIJING, Oct 6, 2012 (AFP) - A writer who spoke out against Chinese repression towards Tibet has burned himself to death, a rights group said, the 53rd person to set themselves ablaze protesting Beijing's rule.

The International Campaign for Tibet said in a statement that Gudrub, 42, called for freedom for the region and the return of the exiled spiritual leader the

Dalai Lama while flames engulfed him in Tibet's Nagchu county on Thursday.

Gudrub, who was only identified by one name, was taken to a local hospital by authorities where he was pronounced dead, the London-based group said, citing multiple exile Tibetan media outlets.

Calls to authorities in Nagchu on Saturday went unanswered.

China's Tibetan-inhabited areas have seen an explosion in such protests since February 2009, with at least 53 Tibetans setting themselves alight, mostly since March last year, the campaign said.

"Tibetans who are concerned about the welfare of the people are subjected to arbitrary arrests and beatings," Gudrub wrote earlier this year in an essay translated by the Tibetan service of the US-based Voice of America.

"Tibetans who refuse to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama or accept China's rule (of) Tibet are secretly killed or made to disappear." As a result, Gudrub added, Tibetans "are sharpening our non-violent movement (and) declaring the reality of Tibet by burning our own bodies to call for freedom in Tibet." Gudrub's death comes after a 27-year-old Tibetan man named Yangdang self-immolated on Sept. 29 in Dzato county, a Tibetan-inhabited region in northwest China's Qinghai province, the campaign said.

The recent incidents come after the prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile last week called on the international community to resist growing pressure from China and stand up for human rights in his homeland.

Lobsang Sangay, who last year took over political duties from revered Buddhist spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, said that spate of self-immolation protests were proof of severe Chinese repression in Tibet.

"Now I have more responsibilities, the Chinese government is raising pressure on the West," Sangay told a meeting in the northern Indian hilltown of Dharamshala. "We have to re-establish our strong contacts with these countries."

Tibetan dies after self-immolation protest in Nagchu

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 5 October 2012

A Tibetan writer has died on Thursday after he set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, according to exile Tibetan sources who have con-

tacts in Tibet.

Gudup, 43, self-immolated in Diru, Nagchu, in eastern Tibet. Chinese police carried away Gudup's charred body from the spot. He is believed to have died in Chinese custody.

He shouted slogans calling for "free Tibet" and "let the Dalai Lama get back in Tibet" as his body was consumed by fire.

Gudup wrote under the pen name "Youth of Snow land", and left a note on his QQ account before the fiery protest calling for "unity among all Tibetans and to never give up in the Tibetan freedom struggle."

Sources say Gudup came to India in 2005 and studied at the Tibetan Transit School for newly-arrived refugees in Dharamshala. Upon his return to Tibet in 2006, Gudup was arrested, and later released in 2008.

With Gudup's self-immolation, the number of fire protests reached 53 since it first began with Tapey's immolation in February 2009. More than 40 of these are believed to have died.

Dharamshala pays homage to Tibetan self-immolators

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, October 07, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Tibetans and supporters in the Tibetan exile headquarters of Dharamshala held special prayers and led a candle light protest Friday in solidarity with Tibetan self-immolators.

The Central Tibetan Administration held a prayer service at the Tsug-la Khang in honour of Tibetans who have sacrificed their lives in protest against China's occupation in Tibet. Hundreds of Tibetans, including the Chief Justice Commissioners, Kalons and Members of Parliament paid tribute to Jamyang Palden, Yungdrung, and Gudrup, three Tibetans who recently passed away after setting themselves on fire demanding freedom and the Dalai Lama's return.

Jamyang Palden, a monk at the Rongwo Monastery in Rebkong, eastern Tibet, succumbed to his injuries at his monastery quarters on September 29, after an ordeal that lasted for more than six months.

On March 14, Jamyang Palden had set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government on a ground in front of his monastery.

Yungdrung, 27, set himself ablaze in Zatoe town of Yushul, eastern Tibet on September 29, while calling for independence of Tibet, the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Gyalwang Karmapa from exile. He also addressed Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay (the elected leader of Tibetan people) as the “king of Tibet.”

Yungdung reportedly passed away while being taken by Chinese security personnel to a nearby place.

On October 4, a Tibetan writer, Gudrup, 43, set himself on fire in Nagchu town in central Tibet and later succumbed to his injuries.

Before carrying out his self-immolation protest, Gudrup left a last message addressed to all Tibetans calling for unity and pride in one’s race.

“My brothers and sisters of the land of snows, although, looking back at our past, we have nothing but a sense of loss, anger, sadness, and tears, I pray that the coming new year of the Water Dragon brings you health, success, and the fulfillment of aspirations,” Gudrup writes.

“We must distinguish and give prominence to our pride in ourselves as a people and even in the face of loss and suffering, must never lose our courage and spirit in our endeavour to uphold our unity.”

Later in the evening, hundreds of Tibetans and foreigners marched in McLeod Ganj, carrying candles in one hand and with the other, holding a long stretch of khatak (Tibetan scarf) fastened together, as a mark of respect and solidarity with the Tibetan self-immolators.

Organisers said that a similar vigil was carried out in Ngaba, eastern Tibet after the demise of 20-year-old monk Losbang Puntsok who self-immolated on March 16, 2011.

Speaking at the a candle light protest organised by the regional chapters of the Tibetan youth and women’s groups and SFT, India, Tenzin Kalden, a monk who is from Gudrup’s village relayed the last moments before his fiery protest.

“Gudrup went inside a public toilet in the market of Nagchu town, poured kerosene on himself and set himself on fire,” Kalden said citing sources inside Tibet. “He then started walking towards a Chinese government office located nearby but was resisted.”

Gudrup was born in Kham Driru and had one sister and four brothers. He lost

his parent at the very young age.

Gudrup had stayed in India for over a year and upon his return to Tibet in 2006, was arrested and later released in 2008.

Gudrup always had a keen interest in Tibetan history and kept a blog. Two of his short writings have emerged, one written in March 2012.

Sangye Gyatso

Age: 27

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 6 October 2012

Place: Tsoe town in Kanlho, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current Statue: Decased



New self-immolation ‘by Tibetan in China’

Agence France Press, 6 October 2012

BEIJING — A Tibetan has burned himself to death inside a Buddhist monastery in China as part of a grisly series of protests against Beijing’s hardline rule of the region, Radio Free Asia reported.

Saturday’s self-immolation by Sangay Gyatso meant that 44 ethnic Tibetans have now burned themselves to death since the protests began in February 2009, the US network reported.

Another 10 people are said to have set themselves on fire but survived.

Citing sources inside Tibet, RFA’s Tibetan service said the latest protest happened inside the Dokar monastery, in the south of China’s western province of Gansu.

RFA’s Chinese-language website showed photographs of Gyatso’s charred body but the station said that its sources had provided little information about the

27-year-old's background.

AFP was unable to obtain confirmation of the death from local authorities in Gansu, one of several Chinese provinces near Tibet proper that are home to large ethnic Tibetan minorities.

The International Campaign for Tibet reported this weekend that a writer who spoke out against Chinese repression had burned himself to death on Thursday.

Gudrub, 42, called for freedom for the region and the return of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama while flames engulfed him in Tibet's Nagchu county, the London-based ICT said, giving only one name for the writer.

"Tibetans who are concerned about the welfare of the people are subjected to arbitrary arrests and beatings," Gudrub wrote earlier this year in an essay translated by the Tibetan service of the US-based Voice of America.

"Tibetans who refuse to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama or accept China's rule (of) Tibet are secretly killed or made to disappear."

As a result, Gudrub added, Tibetans "are sharpening our non-violent movement (and) declaring the reality of Tibet by burning our own bodies to call for freedom in Tibet".

Gudrub's death came after a 27-year-old Tibetan man named Yangdang self-immolated on September 29 in Dzato county, a Tibetan-inhabited region in north-west China's Qinghai province, the ICT said.

The latest incidents come after the prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile called on the international community to resist growing pressure from China and stand up for human rights in his homeland.

Lobsang Sangay, who last year took over political duties from the Dalai Lama, said the spate of self-immolations were proof of severe Chinese repression in Tibet.

Tibetan father of 2 dies after setting self on fire to protest Chinese rule, rights group says

By the *Associated Press*, Appeared in *Washington Post*, 6 October 2012

BEIJING — A Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese rule over the Himalayan region, a rights group said, the latest in a line of

dozens of Tibetans to use self-immolation as a form of dissent.

Sangye Gyatso, a 27-year-old father of two, called out for freedom of religion and language in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader, before setting himself on fire Saturday in northwest China's Gansu province, Free Tibet said in a statement.

The incident happened around midday near a monastery outside the city of Tsoe, known as Hezuo in Chinese, the London-based group said.

A man from the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture propaganda office said he had no information about the reported incident. Calls to the local police rang unanswered. Independent verification of events and conditions in Tibet is nearly impossible because of restrictions on travel.

"Sangye Gyatso's protest demonstrates the absolute determination of Tibetans to secure their freedom, no matter what the personal cost may be," Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement late Saturday.

According to Free Tibet, more than 50 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in China since 2009 to protest Chinese rule.

The group said Sangye Gyatso's body was carried to nearby Dokar Monastery, where monks prayed for him, and was then taken a short distance to Dzeruwa village, where his family had gathered. He had a 7-year-old son and a 5-year-old daughter, according to Free Tibet.

There was a large military presence at the monastery and the village following the self-immolation, Free Tibet said.

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the region was virtually independent for centuries and that Beijing's control is draining Tibetan culture.

Breaking: Tibet continues to burn, Second self-immolation in three days

Phayul, October 06, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, October 6: In confirmed reports and photos coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Exile sources say that a Tibetan man, Sangay Gyatso, 27, set himself on fire in

Tsoe region of Kanlho, Amdo eastern Tibet at around 12 pm (local time).

He carried out his protest near the Dokar Monastery.

Sangay Gyatso, a father of two, is believed to have passed away in his self-immolation protest. In the photos of his fiery protest that have reached exile, Sangay Gyatso's body is seen completely charred.

Since 2009, a known number of 54 Tibetans have now set themselves on fire demanding freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Sangay Gyatso's protest comes only two days after a Tibetan writer, Gudrup passed away in his self-immolation protest on October 4 in Nagchu.

The recently concluded meeting of exile Tibetans to discuss the ongoing crisis in Tibet had sent a strong message of unity and solidarity with Tibetans inside Tibet and a call for greater activism in exile.

The special meeting, while expressing concern over the loss of Tibetan lives, declared that the Chinese government will be held solely responsible in the event of the situation inside Tibet escalating further.

In light of the critical situation inside Tibet, the meeting had also recommended the revival of the 'Tibetan Solidarity Committee' to head the global Tibet activities and also pushed for the creation of a 'voluntary emergency fund' to finance the campaigns.

Latest Self-Immolation in Tibet Brings Total to 54

VOA News, October 06, 2012

Reports from Tibet say another protester demanding Tibetan freedom has set himself on fire, bringing the number of Tibetans known to have self-immolated to 54.

Sources in Tibet say a father of two, Sangay Gyatso, 27, set himself on fire in eastern Tibet near the Dokar monastery, on Saturday. He is believed to have died.

On Thursday a Tibetan writer named Gudrup died in a self-immolation in Nagchu.

And on Friday the leader of Tibet's government-in-exile, Prime Minister Lob-

sang Sangay, said his government is willing to engage in dialogue with the Chinese government about autonomy for Tibet anytime. But he added that he does not expect any clear indication in how China wants to approach Tibet until after Chinese leadership changes later this year.

Sangay Gyatso's actions bring the number of self-immolations to 54 since February 2009 and are part of a slowly growing number of such incidents taking place within the Tibet Autonomous Region. Most of the self-immolations have occurred in southwestern China.

China has repeatedly denounced self-immolations as terrorist acts, calling the practice barbaric. But representatives of spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and the prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile say the practice is a sign Tibetans can no longer tolerate Beijing's push against their culture and religion.

Lobsang Sangay told a gathering in Dharamsala, India last week, "The fact that Tibetans, after 50-plus years, are still protesting, and in [the] drastic form of self-immolation, clearly indicates that they are protesting against the occupation of Tibet and the repressive policies of the Chinese government."

New self-immolation 'by Tibetan in China'

Bangkok Post, 7 October 2012

A Tibetan has burned himself to death inside a Buddhist monastery in China as part of a grisly series of protests against Beijing's hardline rule of the region, Radio Free Asia reported.

Saturday's self-immolation by Sangay Gyatso meant that 44 ethnic Tibetans have now burned themselves to death since the protests began in February 2009, the US network reported.

Another 10 people are said to have set themselves on fire but survived.

Citing sources inside Tibet, RFA's Tibetan service said the latest protest happened inside the Dokar monastery, in the south of China's western province of Gansu.

RFA's Chinese-language website showed photographs of Gyatso's charred body but the station said that its sources had provided little information about the 27-year-old's background.

AFP was unable to obtain confirmation of the death from local authorities in Gansu, one of several Chinese provinces near Tibet proper that are home to large ethnic Tibetan minorities.

The International Campaign for Tibet reported this weekend that a writer who spoke out against Chinese repression had burned himself to death on Thursday.

Gudrub, 42, called for freedom for the region and the return of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama while flames engulfed him in Tibet's Nagchu county, the London-based ICT said, giving only one name for the writer.

"Tibetans who are concerned about the welfare of the people are subjected to arbitrary arrests and beatings," Gudrub wrote earlier this year in an essay translated by the Tibetan service of the US-based Voice of America.

"Tibetans who refuse to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama or accept China's rule (of) Tibet are secretly killed or made to disappear."

As a result, Gudrub added, Tibetans "are sharpening our non-violent movement (and) declaring the reality of Tibet by burning our own bodies to call for freedom in Tibet".

Gudrub's death came after a 27-year-old Tibetan man named Yangdang self-immolated on September 29 in Dzato county, a Tibetan-inhabited region in north-west China's Qinghai province, the ICT said.

The latest incidents come after the prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile called on the international community to resist growing pressure from China and stand up for human rights in his homeland.

Lobsang Sangay, who last year took over political duties from the Dalai Lama, said the spate of self-immolations were proof of severe Chinese repression in Tibet.

Dharamsala holds prayer service to mourn self-immolations

Tibet.net, October 10, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration today organised a prayer service at the main temple here, to mourn and express solidarity with all those Tibetans who have self-immolated for the cause of Tibet, including Sangay Gyatso. 27-year-old Sangay Gyatso, a father of two children, set himself on fire

in Tsoe, Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet, on 6 October. He shouted slogans demanding the swift return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and freedom of religion and language in Tibet. He died on the spot. Dokar Gelug Monastery, where the incident took place, is currently under the occupation of Chinese security forces.

Thousands of Tibetans, including the entire officials of the CTA attended today's prayer service organised by the Department of Religion and Culture.

Since 2009, 54 Tibetans in Tibet have self-immolated demanding freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Tamdrin Dorje

Age: 54

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 13 October 2012

Place: Mila Serkhar Choten near Tsoe,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current Status: Deceased



Tibet man dies in self-immolation in China

BBC News, 13 October 2012

Tamdrin Dorjee killed himself near the Tsoe monastery in China's north-west Gansu province.

Tibet campaigners said an increased military presence was reported to have been deployed around the monastery.

More than 50 ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire since such protests began in 2009.

The majority of them are believed to have died in the self-immolations.

Earlier this month, another Tibetan - 27 year-old Sangay Gyatso - set himself on fire in the same region.

Tamdin Dorjee has been identified as the grandfather of the seventh Gungthang Rinpoche, who Tibetan Buddhists believe is the reincarnation of an important religious figure.

Kate Saunders from the International Campaign for Tibet told the BBC that monks from the Tsoe monastery and local people were attending a prayer service for him.

She said they had received reports that security deployments had been stepped up in the region and transportation has been shut down in the city of Tsoe - considered by Tibetans to be in north-eastern Tibet - for several hours.

China's leaders blame the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader, for inciting the self-immolations and encouraging separatism.

He rejects this, and both activist groups and the Tibetan government-in-exile say the self-immolations are protests against tight Chinese control of the region and religious repression.

Tibetan man sets himself on fire to protest China

By DIDI TANG, *The Associated Press*, October 13, 2012

BEIJING (AP) — The grandfather of a revered Tibetan Buddhist figure died Saturday after setting himself on fire in protest of Chinese rule, the London-based rights group Free Tibet said.

The incident is the latest of dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans since 2009.

Free Tibet said 52-year-old Tamdrin Dorjee died at the scene near Tsoe Monastery in northwestern China's Gansu province.

It said the man is the grandfather of the 7th Gungthang Rinpoche, believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be the reincarnation of an important religious figure.

Dorjee's body was taken to his home village, Free Tibet said. Photos said to be from the scene show dozens of villagers and monks gathered around a body in smoke.

The self-proclaimed Tibetan government-in-exile confirmed the report. It said

a heavy presence of paramilitary police in and around the monastery followed the self-immolation.

More than 50 Tibetans have self-immolated to protest China's rule of the Himalayan region, and most of them have died, according to tallies by Tibetan rights groups.

The government-in-exile has urged Tibetans not to give up their lives in self-immolation protests. Meanwhile, it tries to gain international support for their struggles against China's rule.

Calls to the government and police offices for Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, where the self-immolation took place, rang unanswered Saturday evening.

China has blamed the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for inciting the immolations, but he denies the claim.

Tibetan man sets himself on fire

The Telegraph, 13 October 2012

It is the latest of dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans since 2009.

The London-based Free Tibet says 52-year-old Tamdrin Dorjee died at the scene on Saturday near Tso Monastery in northwestern China's Gansu province.

It says the man is the grandfather of the seventh Gunghang Rinpoche, believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be the reincarnation of an important religious figure.

It says Dorjee's body was taken to his home village. Photos said to be from the scene show dozens of villagers and monks gathered around a body in smoke.

Free Tibet says more than 50 Tibetans have self-immolated to protest China's rule of the Himalayan region.

Tamdrin Dorjee, Tibetan man, self-immolates in protest of Chinese rule

The Global Post, 13 October 2012

Tamdrin Dorjee, the grandfather of revered Buddhist figure Gunghang Rinpoche, self-immolated as a protest of Chinese rule.

The 52-year-old lit himself on fire near the Tso Monastery in northwestern China's Gansu province, the Associated Press reported. He reportedly shouted slogans demanding Tibetan freedom as he did it, the Tibetan Post reported.

"The local Tibetans refused to hand over his body to Chinese authorities and they took his body back to his home. As a mark of respect, they then gathered to pay their last respects to Tamdrin Dorjee and offered traditional scarves to his body," Gedhun Tsering, a Tibetan writer in exile, reported to the Tibetan Post.

Dorjee's is the latest in a string of protest immolations by Tibetans, and the fourth so far this month. 27-year-old Tibetan Sangay Gyatso set himself on fire in the same region last week, UPI reported.

Over 50 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009, and most have died in the process, according to BBC News.

Though China blames the Dali Lama for inciting the protests, though he (along with activist groups and the Tibetan government in exile) denies the allegations, blaming the immolations on China's tightened control and religious oppression in the region, BBC reported.

China protest Tibetan man on fire

Press Association, 13 October 2012

The grandfather of a revered Tibetan Buddhist figure has died after setting himself on fire in protest at Chinese rule, a human rights group has said.

It is the latest of dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans since 2009.

The London-based Free Tibet group said 52-year-old Tamdrin Dorjee died at the scene near Tso Monastery in north-western China's Gansu province.

The man was thought to be the grandfather of the seventh Gunghang Rinpoche, believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be the reincarnation of an important religious figure.

Mr Dorjee's body was taken to his home village. Photographs said to be from the scene showed dozens of villagers and monks gathered around a body in smoke.

Free Tibet says more than 50 Tibetans have self-immolated to protest at China's rule of the Himalayan region.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Punjab/Chandigarh/Tibetan-religious-leader-s-grandfather-set-himself-on-fire/SP-Article1-944244.aspx>

Tibetan religious leader's grandfather set himself on fire

Hindustan Times, October 13, 2012

Dharamsala – In less than two weeks, a third case of self-immolation has been reported from Tibet in which a Tibetan man, reportedly grandfather of the 7th Gunthang Rinpoche, died. A Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) official said that a Tibetan man died after setting himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government near Tsoe Monastery at Tsoe in north-eastern Tibet's Kanlho prefecture, Gansu Province.

"Tamdin Dorjee, 52, set himself on fire on Saturday afternoon. His body was later taken to his home, following which a prayer service was conducted by monks at Tsoe Monastery," said the official, adding that local Tibetans were visiting his home to pay their last respects.

"The Chinese government has sealed off the monastery by deploying a large number of paramilitary forces in and around the monastery," said the official.

He said, "Tamdin Dorjee is reportedly the grandfather of 7th Gunthang Rinpoche, who is one of the most revered religious leaders in north-eastern Tibet's Amdo province."

"This is the third self-immolation incident in Tsoe after Dolkar Tso, 26, and Sangay Gyatso, 27, set themselves on fire and died on August 7 and October 6 respectively," said the official.

Till now 55 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since February 2009, out of which 45 died.

New Tibetan self-immolation: rights groups

The Cambodia Herald, 14 October 2012

The grandfather of a revered Tibetan Buddhist figure has burned to death in northwest China after setting himself on fire in protest at Beijing's rule in the restive region, rights groups said Sunday.

Tamdin Dorjee killed himself near a monastery in China's Gansu province, according to the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and Free Tibet groups, the latest in a series of protests against Beijing's rule in Tibetan areas.

The 52-year-old was said by the ICT to be the grandfather of the seventh Gungthang Rinpoche, who is believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be the reincarnation of an important religious figure.

The rights group also said an increased military presence had been witnessed around the monastery following the incident on Saturday.

More than 50 ethnic Tibetans, many of them monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire in the local area since February 2009 to protest against Beijing's rule.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of enacting religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

But China rejects this, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and pointing to huge ongoing investment, which it says has brought modernisation and a better standard of living.

The latest incident comes after the prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile called on the international community to resist growing pressure from China and stand up for human rights in his homeland.

A local official at Hezuo city, which is near the scene of Tamdin Dorjee's death, told AFP: "I can't talk about this kind of thing on the telephone. Please come here if you want to do an interview."

Lhamo Kyab

Age: 27

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 20 October 2012

Place: near Bora monastery in Sangchu,
Kamlho, Amdo

Current status: Deceased



Another Tibetan burns to death in protest against China, Fourth self-immolation this month

Phayul, 20 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA, October 20: Another Tibetan has set himself on fire today in protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet in Bora, Sangchu region of Amdo, eastern Tibet.

Lhamo Kyab, 27, father of two young daughters, today set himself on fire near the Bora Monastery at around 2 pm (local time) in Sangchu district. According to eyewitnesses, he succumbed to his burn injuries at the site of his protest.

According to Sonam, a Tibetan living in south India with close contacts in the region, Lhamo Kyab set himself on fire on a road near the Bora Monastery.

"Engulfed in flames, Lhamo Kyab raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and then fell to the ground after walking a few steps," Sonam told Phayul.

Following the self-immolation, a minor scuffle broke out at the site of the protest between Chinese security personnel and local Tibetans, who succeeded in carrying Lhamo Kyab's charred body inside the Monastery's main prayer hall.

"The monks began to offer prayers for the deceased, even as a large number of Tibetans started to arrive at the Monastery upon hearing about the protest," the same source said.

As of latest information received, monks and local Tibetans have carried Lhamo Kyab's body to his home.

He is survived by his wife Droji Kyi and two daughters Pema Tso and Drugmo

Tso, both under 10 years of age.

The month of October has now witnessed four self-immolations in Tibet. Gudrub, 43, Sangya Gyatso, 27, and Tamdin Dorjee, 52, all passed away in their fiery protests.

On May 27 this year, Dorjee Tseten, a native of Bora, set himself on fire in front of the historic Jokhang Temple in Tibet's capital Lhasa, along with his colleague at work, Dhargey.

On March 20 earlier this year, more than 100 monks from the Bora Monastery had marched towards the township-level government buildings carrying Tibetan flags and pictures of the Dalai Lama calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama.

The next day, Chinese security officers entered the Monastery at around 2 am (local time) and arrested 40 monks, prompting a gathering of a large number of monks calling for the immediate release of fellow monks.

The local security officials, fearing more protests, released all 40 monks a few hours later, but told the monks to make "personal statements" admitting that they have made a "mistake" which they will not repeat in future.

Bora monastery has faced heavy restrictions since the 2008 uprisings in Tibet. The restrictions were tightened after Losar, Tibetan New Year this year when monks in the monastery displayed a picture of the Dalai Lama.

The Chinese government, in the lead up to next month's Party Congress, which will see its once in a decade top leadership change, has called for stricter measures to maintain stability and suppress dissenting voices.

56 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 in Tibet demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibetan Sets Self on Fire, Charges Chinese Police

By Jack Phillips, *Epoch Times Staff*

Another Tibetan man set himself on fire to protest Chinese rule, and ran at a group of plainclothes police officers in western Gansu Province over the weekend. It was the fifth self-immolation in a month.

Nearly 60 Tibetans have set themselves ablaze since 2009, and the frequency of

the self-immolations has only increased in the past year. Tibet's leaders in exile have essentially condemned the practice, saying there are too few Tibetans inside China to be giving up their lives so easily.

Lhamo Kyab, 27, and a father of two, set himself on fire near the Bora monastery and died in the incident, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, or Save Tibet, rights group, which cited local Tibetans in the area.

"The same sources said that police tried to put out the flames, and a local man took off his shirt and tried to fling it over Lhamo Kyab but the blaze was too strong," the rights group said. He shouted slogans against Chinese rule.

Locals took the man's body to Bora monastery after "some tension" between them and Chinese security forces, Save Tibet added.

An unnamed Tibetan source told Radio Free Asia that Kyab attempted to run to the Bora monastery while he was on fire.

"When he encountered some policemen in plainclothes, who were pretending to circumambulate [walk around] the monastery and tried to stop him, he charged at them," the source continued. "They avoided him."

Bora monastery was the site of mass protests earlier this year where more than 100 monks marched to local government buildings.

On Sunday, the exiled Tibetan government reacted to Kyab's self-immolation, and called for a coordinated global effort to end the crisis.

"The tragic self-immolations by Tibetans would stop only if the Chinese government address their genuine and long-standing grievances, and find a lasting solution to the problem of Tibet through dialogue," Kalon Dicki Chhoyang, with the Central Tibetan administration, said in a statement.

The Chinese regime has stepped up security in Tibetan regions, likely due to the impending 18th National Party Congress that will see a change in key leadership positions in the ruling Communist Party. Chinese authorities have cracked down on dissent across the country ahead of its largest national conclave.

Rights group Free Tibet said the frequency of the self-immolations has taken place at an unprecedented rate, with Tibetans protesting in this manner for more than 18 months, terming it the Tibet Spring.

"As news of the protests and self-immolation has spread, more and more Ti-

betans are prepared to risk imprisonment by sharing photos and videos to make sure the world sees what is happening in their country,” it said.

There are more Chinese security forces deployed in key Tibetan areas, including Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, and hundreds of people have been reported missing or arrested, Free Tibet said. The self-immolations will continue to take place unless the Chinese regime addresses Tibetans’ underlying rights issues, it added.

CTA appeals for global intervention to end crisis in Tibet as one more Tibetan self-immolates

Tibet.net, 21 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration reiterates its deep sadness and serious concern over the grim situation in Tibet with the death of one another Tibetan due to self-immolation yesterday.

Reports coming out of Tibet say Lhamo Kyab, 27, set himself on fire in Bora village in Sangchu County, Kanlho, in north-eastern Tibet, around 2pm (local time) Saturday (20 October). Eyewitnesses said while engulfed in flames, he ran towards Bora monastery, shouting slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Security forces tried to douse the flames, but Kyab succumbed to his burn injuries on the spot.

Lhamo Kyab is survived by his wife, Dorjee Kyi, and two daughters, Drukmo Tso, 10 and Pema Tso, 7.

Over 56 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government’s repressive policies. All of them raised slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

“The tragic self-immolations by Tibetans would stop only if the Chinese government address their genuine and long-standing grievances, and find a lasting solution to the problem of Tibet through dialogue,” stated Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of exile Administration’s Department of the Information & International Relations.

“We again strongly reiterate our long-standing appeal to the international community to press the Chinese government to end the deepening crisis in Tibet,” Kalon Dicki Chhoyang said.

Tibetan self-immolations continue in northwestern Gansu

By Ananth Krishnan, *The Hindu*

A Tibetan farmer set himself on fire outside the Labrang monastery, one of Tibetan Buddhism's most important sites, in the northwestern Chinese province of Gansu on Monday morning, according to monks in India and overseas groups.

Monday's self-immolation followed another protest in Gansu on Saturday, when a man set himself on fire near the Bora monastery.

Tibetan monks based in India said a farmer named Dundrup (65) carried out the self-immolation on Monday morning near the walls of the famous Labrang monastery, adding that initial reports out of Labrang, known as Xiahe in Chinese, said he had died following the protest. The monastery is a key site of pilgrimage for the Gelugpa or Yellow Hat sect, for whose members the Dalai Lama is the most important figure.

Monks in India were sent photographs showing dozens of monks gathered outside Labrang and the body of a man engulfed in flames lying near the walls of a temple. Dundrup, the monks said, had lived in a village called Ngagpa, located next to the monastery, for 15 years.

On Saturday, another self-immolation was reported in Gansu, near the Bora monastery which is located a few hours' drive from Labrang. Overseas groups said a 27-year-old Tibetan named Lhamo Kyab carried out the protest near the monastery, which was the site of protests in April when State media reported 60 monks carried out a protest march.

More than 56 Tibetans have now set themselves on fire to protest Chinese policies since the series of self-immolations began in the Sichuan town of Aba in 2009. While the Aba prefecture has been the site of most protests, the immolations have spread to other Tibetan areas in recent months.

Tibetan areas in Gansu, which lie across the provincial border to the north of Aba, have witnessed several protests since March this year. Fewer incidents have been reported in Tibetan areas in Qinghai, home to the important Rebkong monastery where two people set themselves on fire in March. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) had also not seen any immolations until May, when two monks from Gansu and Sichuan carried out protests in Lhasa.

In Gansu, the protests have appeared to spread beyond monastery walls. Dun-

drup, who reportedly died on Monday, was a farmer, while in March, Tsering Kyi, a student in the town of Maqu, died after setting herself on fire. While Tsering Kyi's protest and the march by monks in Bora in April were both confirmed by State media, this week's self-immolations have, as yet, not been officially confirmed.

In recent months, Chinese authorities have increased security deployments in Tibetan areas in Sichuan and Gansu, which are now entirely off-limits for journalists. This correspondent was stopped outside Labrang, the site of Monday's protest, during a visit in April, when the town was sealed off by checkpoints of police forces.

Local security officials said then that Tibetan areas were out of bounds because of the "sensitive" situation.

<http://tibet.net/2012/10/25/cta-organises-prayer-service-to-mourn-self-immolation/>

CTA Organises Prayer Service to Mourn Self-Immolations

Tibet.net, 25 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration organised a prayer service yesterday at the main temple here, to mourn and express solidarity with all those Tibetans who have self-immolated for the cause of Tibet. Three more Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the last four days, protesting against the Chinese government's wrong policies in Tibet. The prayer service was presided over by Dakri Tulku from Sera Jey monastery.

Lhamo Kyab, 27, set himself on fire in Bora village in Sangchu County, Kanlho, in north-eastern Tibet, around 2pm (local time) Saturday (20 October). Dhondup, 61, set himself on fire near Labrang Monastery on 22 October. Dorjee Rinchen, a 57-year-old Tibetan man set himself on fire in front of the local police station in Sangchu county, north-eastern Tibet around 04:30 pm (local time) on 23 October.

Kalon Pema Chhinjor, the officiating Sikyong, delivered the statement of the Kashag.

Since 2009, 58 Tibetans in Tibet set themselves on fire calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/11/23/china-last-words-of-19-tibetans-who-committed-self-immolation/>

Lhamo Kyap, a herdsman in his 20s with two young daughters, self-immolated on October 20, 2012 near Bora Temple in Xiahe County, Gansu Province. A Tibetan friend of Lhamo recorded the details of a conversation he had with him

Lhamo Kyap asked his close friend in a phone conversation if he could pick him up at Bora Temple. His friend said that he did not have his motorbike with him and might not be able to help. Lhamo said, it's OK, today you may hear news. He asked if his friend knew when exactly the 18th Congress of the CCP would take place. He sighed, China does not allow us to live in peace. Then he hung up the phone.

Dhondup

Age: 60s

Occupation: farmer/petty business

Date of self-immolation: 22 October 2012

Protest: Serkhang temple in Labrang

Tashikyil Monastery in Kanlho, Amdo

Current status: Deceased



Breaking: Tibet continues to burn, second immolation in 48 hours

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, 22 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA, October 22: In less than 48 hours of the self immolation of Lhamo Kyab on Saturday in Sangchu county, another Tibetan man from the same county has set himself on fire earlier today in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Sonam, a monk of Drepung Monastery in South India, said Dhondup, 61, of Hor Khagya (spelled as pronounced) set himself ablaze at 9:47 am (local time) on the main road near Labrang Monastery in Sangchu County, Eastern Tibet. He became the oldest Tibetan from Tibet to end his life due to self-immolation.

Sonam cited eyewitnesses saying people circumambulating the monastery formed human cover around Dhondup's charred body to stop it from getting into the hands of Chinese authorities. Later, the management committee of the monastery took Dhondup to hospital where he was declared dead.

Dhondup is survived by his wife Dolma Tso and foster son Rinzin Choephel.

The same source said no further details were available due to tense situation and heavy security presence in the area.

On Saturday, Lhamo Kyab died near Bora monastery in Sangchu county moments after he set himself on fire.

The month of October alone has witnessed five deaths due to self-immolation in Tibet. The deceased were Gudrub, 43, Sangya Gyatso, 27, Tamdin Dorjee, 52, Lhamo Kyab, 27 and Dhondup, 61.

The Central Tibetan Administration has reiterated its appeal for global intervention to end the crisis in Tibet

"We again strongly reiterate our long-standing appeal to the international community to press the Chinese government to end the deepening crisis in Tibet," said Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of the Department of the Information & International Relations.

"The tragic self-immolations by Tibetans would stop only if the Chinese government address their genuine and long-standing grievances, and find a lasting solution to the problem of Tibet through dialogue,"

Chhoyang said.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 57 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

<http://chinadailymail.com/2012/10/23/the-57th-tibetan-set-himself-on-fire-to-fight-for-a-free-tibet-that-is-less-and-less-likely/>

57th Tibetan sets himself on fire to fight for a free Tibet, that is less and less likely

By Chloe, *China Daily Mail*, 23 October 2012

Another Tibetan Monk set himself on fire on the morning of October 22. It is the second self-immolation of Tibetan monks in 48 hours, third in ten days and the 57th since 2009, said Free Tibet.

The 50-year-old monk named Dhondup finished his morning meditation as usual, walked to the side of the Serkhang temple (meaning golden house) in Xiahe County, and demolished in a golden blaze. His body was immediately seized by the police.

Xiahe, a county in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (GTAP), Gansu province, China, has seen two such cases in the past 48 hours. On Saturday, a 27-year-old Tibetan man named Lhamo Kyeb, a layman and father of two young children self-immolated.

Reports described him as “running along the road in a ball of flames, calling for the Dalai Lama to come home.” His family managed to get hold of his remains., said a London-based rights group.

They followed a self-immolation of Tamdin Dorje, the grandfather of a prominent young Tibetan reincarnation lama on October 13, near a monastery in Kanlho, GTAP, at the same spot where a 21-year-old Tibetan mother set herself in August.

“They sacrificed their lives, for sincere motivation, for Buddha Dharma, for the wellbeing of the people”, said the Dalai Lama in a broadcast interview with NBC’s Ann Curry during his visit to New York in October.

“In the short-term, the power of the gun is stronger than the power of truth, but in the long run, the power of truth is much stronger.”

Under Chinese control

Nobody can tell what exactly instigated these immolations, as Tibetan communities are still very much fenced from the outside by the Chinese government.

Foreigners are restricted from travelling to Tibet or Tibetan settlements in China.

Foreign media were closely monitored if not entirely intersepted. Though the Chinese make up more than 90% of the population in most Tibetan settlements outside of Tibet, genuine interactions are scarce, while in Tibet the number of Chinese tourists doubled this year, they usually stay in Chinese hotels and eat in Chinese restaurant.

Ever since it came to the international spotlight for the 2008 riot, Tibet has been under strict control, as the Chinese government does not want to be shamed again.

The continued immolations even hardened its attitude and the sacrifices are described as terrorist acts to the outside, while within China, their names are banned entirely.

On Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter, during the whole day, nothing about the incidents was mentioned. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama has always been portrayed as a fascist.

A bleak future

Young Tibetans are forced to learn Chinese, and many are encouraged to attend higher education in China. There were more than forty Tibetan students in my previous University in China, none of them could write Tibetan and some of them do not speak the language.

Though government reports say the unemployment rate in Tibet is only 3.8%, the jobs are mostly for the Chinese settlers, and the actual unemployment rate among Tibetan remains high.

Today's Tibet is caught in a difficult situation. As the exiled regime is getting old and faces the prospect of perishing, the young remaining in China get simulated and gradually digested in the Chinese culture and materialism.

Despite their frequent sacrifices for cultural and political freedom, it is more and more likely that they will never get there.

Dorje Rinchen

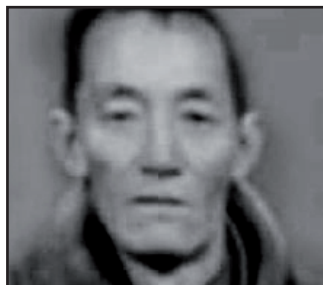
Age: 58

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 23 October 2012

Place: Near a military camp Gyugya market
on the main street of Labrang, Amdo

Current status: Deceased



Third Self Immolation in Tibet in four days

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, 23 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA, October 23: News have just come in of another self immolation protest in Tibet. 3 Tibetans from Sangchu County have resorted to self immolation since Saturday to express their protest against China's policies and demand the return of the exile Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Dorjee Rinchen, 58, today set himself ablaze near the Chinese Army camp at 3:30 PM (local time) in Sangchu county where two others, Lhamo Kyab and Dhondup, had died after setting themselves ablaze on Saturday and Monday respectively.

Amchok, a Tibetan living in South India with close contacts in the region, said, Dorjee Rinchen succumbed to his burns at the site of his protest and that his charred body was currently with his family member.

"The monks of the Labrang Monastery offered special prayers for the deceased on the streets as they were not allowed to visit Dorjee Rinchen's house."

Following the self-immolation, a minor scuffle broke out at the site of the protest between Chinese authorities and local Tibetans.

A new report by the United States Congress released this month found that the increasing use of repressive measures by the Chinese government and the failure of the stalled Sino-Tibet dialogue process were concurrent with the demands of the growing number of self-immolation by Tibetans.

The bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China in its 2012 Annual Report said that during the reporting year, the incidence of Tibetans resorting to self-immolation "accelerated sharply" with the Chinese government

refusing to accept its policy failure in Tibet.

“The Party and government have not indicated any willingness to consider Tibetan grievances in a constructive manner and to hold themselves accountable for Tibetan rejection of Chinese policies, and handled the crisis as a threat to state security and social stability instead of as a policy failure,” the report said.

Since 2009, 58 Tibetans have set themselves on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile and Freedom in Tibet.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2222340/Second-self-immolation-death-Tibetan-sets-outside-Chinese-government-building.html>

Second self-immolation death in Tibet after man sets himself on fire outside Chinese government building

By Sara Malm, *Daily Mail*, 24 October 2012

A Tibetan man died after setting himself on fire outside a Chinese government building yesterday afternoon.

Dorjee Rinchen, 58, burned to death outside the Armed Forces department in Labrang, occupied Tibet, in the second fatal self-immolation protest this week.

Security forces later clashed with mourners when they tried to bring his body back to his village in Gansu province, northwestern China.

On Monday a 50-year-old man died in Labrang after setting himself alight at a nearby monastery, whilst shouting slogans for Dalai Lama's return to the Himalayan region.

Mr Rinchen's death is the eight self-immolation death in ethnic Tibetan areas this month, London-based organisation Free Tibet said.

The horrific protest action has increased in the last 18 months, with 58 incidents reported since March 2011.

Chinese security forces tried to prevent local people from returning Mr Rinchen's body to his home in a nearby village, but after a brief confrontation, they were allowed to pass.

When Tibetan monks from the Labrang Monastery, the scene of Monday's self immolation, later attempted to visit Mr Rinchen's home to pray, they were

stopped by security and forced to pray by the roadside.

Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said: 'Dorjee Rinchen is the second Tibetan to set himself on fire in Labrang in two days.

'Like many Tibetans in the last eighteen months, he set himself on fire in front of a government building that symbolises China's occupation.

'Tibetans are paying a terrible price for the Communist Party leadership's determination to maintain stability.

China maintains that Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1950s.

Streets in Tibetan areas are lined with Chinese military personnel, and recent changes in education policies have seen almost all subjects in Tibetan schools now taught in Mandarin.

Beijing blames the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for fanning anti-government sentiment and routinely purges monasteries and nunneries, where support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan independence runs high.

Tibet man self-immolates to protest China rule

CBS News, 4 November 2012

The Tibetan government-in-exile said Sunday that a man died after setting himself on fire in the latest self-immolation protesting Chinese rule.

The exile government based in Dharamsala, India, said the Tibetan self-immolated on Sunday morning in Tongren, a monastery town in western China's Qinghai province. A photo on its website showed a burned body surrounded by monks.

It had no other details.

Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire in heavily Tibetan regions since March 2011 to protest what activists say is Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. Many have called for the return of their exiled

A man at Tongren county government said he couldn't hear clearly and asked the AP to call back. Calls then rang unanswered, as did calls to police.

<http://www.blottr.com/breaking-news/tibetan-man-burns-himself-death-third-self-immolation-protest-four-days>

Tibetan Man burns himself to death in third self-immolation protest in four days

Blottr.com, 24 October 2012

On Tuesday (Oct 23) a 58-year-old man became the third to die in a self-immolation protest since Saturday.

Dorje Rinchen, set himself alight near the Chinese Army camp in Sanchu county, China, close the to Labrang monastery, at 3:30pm (local time). Images show him running down the street before collapsing to the ground. He is surrounded by troops as his body remains ablaze. The troops attempt to stop passersby and monks from taking the body away, as is religious tradition.

According to the 'International Campaign for Tibet': *In Tibetan tradition, it is important to protect the body of someone who has died for religious ritual and offerings in order to ensure an auspicious rebirth. Since the self-immolations began in Tibet in 2009, many Tibetans have taken great risks to retrieve the bodies of those who have self-immolated in order to carry out religious practice.*

According to an eye-witness and as the video shows, the troops were successfully resisted following a minor scuffle, and the man's body was taken away, reportedly to his village, Upper Zayu.

Rinchen "self-immolation was confirmed in a brief report in official Chinese media on Tuesday:

"Dorje Rinchen got up very early this morning and went to pray at Labrang monastery. He walked around the monastery several times, and walked three times between the monastery and his home, a source said. After that, he cleaned his house inside and out and then went to the Chinese police station, where he self-immolated and died."

Labrang is Tibetan Buddhism's most important monastery town outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the immolation on Monday was the first instance of the sacrificial protest at the monastery.

Tsepo

Age: 20

Occupation:

Date of self-immolation: 25 October 2012

Place: Near a government building
in Nagshod, Driru, Kham, Tibet

Current status: Deceased



Tenzin

Age: 25

Occupation:

Date of self-immolation: 25 October 2012

Place: Near a government building
in Nagshod, Driru, Nagchu, Tibet

Current status: unknown



Tsepo, Tenzin, Tibetan Cousins, Self-Immolate To Protest Chinese Rule

The Associated Press, By Didi Tang, 27 October 2012

BEIJING — Two Tibetan cousins set fire to themselves in their village to protest Chinese rule, bringing the total number of self-immolations this week to seven, the highest since the protests began last year, a rights group said Saturday.

The London-based group Free Tibet said cousins Tsepo, 20, and Tenzin, 25, called for independence for Tibet as they set themselves ablaze Thursday in front of a government building in their village in Biru county north of Lhasa, Tibet's main city.

Tsepo reportedly died and Tenzin's condition was unknown after he was taken away by authorities, Free Tibet said.

Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire in heavily Tibetan regions since March 2011 to protest what activists say is Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. Many have called for the return of the Dalai Lama, their exiled spiritual leader.

The protests have intensified as Beijing nears a once-a-decade power transfer in early November.

On Friday, a 24-year-old Tibetan farmer, Lhamo Tseten, died from self-immolation near a military base and a government office in Amuquhu town in Xiahe county in western China's Gansu province, Free Tibet said. China's official Xinhua News Agency reported the self-immolation of a Tibetan man by the same name, though it gave slightly different details. Xinhua said Lhamo was a 23-year-old villager and that he set himself on fire near a hospital.

Later on Friday, Tsepag Kyab, 21, set fire to himself and died, also in Amuquhu town, the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile said Saturday.

Earlier reports said three other Tibetans died after setting themselves on fire in the past week in Xiahe county.

Calls to local governments in the area rang unanswered Saturday.

Xiahe is home to Labrang Monastery, one of the most important outside of Tibet and the site of numerous protests by monks following deadly ethnic violence in Tibet in 2008 that was the most sustained Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in decades.

Police in the region are offering a reward of \$7,700 for information about planned self-immolations in a bid to stem the protests.

7 Tibetans self immolate in one week

Reuters, 28 October 2012

BEIJING: A total of seven Tibetans have set fire to themselves in the past week in protest against what they claim is heavy-handed Chinese rule in the Himalayan region, a human rights group said in a statement issued late on Saturday.

Cousins Tsepo, 20, and Tenzin, 25, set themselves aflame outside a government building in Driru County, north of regional capital Lhasa on Thursday, London-based group Free Tibet said.

Tsepo died on the way to hospital and Tenzin was taken away by officials, Free Tibet said. His whereabouts are unknown.

Last week saw the highest number of self-immolations since the latest wave of anti-China demonstrations began in 2011, the group said. Since March last year,

nearly 60 people have set themselves on fire in protest against Beijing. At least half of them have died.

“It has taken two days for information about this latest protest to emerge,” Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement.

“Across Tibet, the Chinese state is employing force and intimidation to quell calls for freedom and suppress information about protests.”

China has branded the self-immolators “terrorists” and criminals, and has blamed the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Dalai Lama, for inciting them.

Beijing brands the Dalai Lama a dangerous separatist, but he denies supporting violence and says he merely seeks greater autonomy for his homeland, which he claims is a victim of Chinese “cultural genocide”.

Activists say China tramples on religious freedom and culture in Tibet, which has been ruled with an iron rod since the 1950 takeover. China rejects such criticism, saying its rule ended serfdom and brought development to a backward area.

7 Tibetans Self-Immolate in Last 7 days, Toll reaches 62

tibet.net, 28 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA: With the confirmation of twin self-immolations in Driru county in Nagchu Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region earlier reported by Central Tibetan Administration, a total of 7 Tibetans have self-immolated within the last 7 days.

Tsepo, 20, and Tenzin, 25, set themselves on fire near a school in Nagro Phampa village in Driru county on Thursday (25 October). They raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, independence, and unity among the Tibetan people.

Tsepo died on the spot, while the whereabouts and well-being of Tenzin remain unknown.

Local Tibetans in Driru county say the Chinese government has poured in a large number of security forces across the region during the widespread peaceful protests in 2008. The security clampdown was further intensified following the first self-immolation incident took place there last month.

The Central Tibetan Administration is gravely concerned by the worsening situation in Tibet. Despite repeated appeals by the Central Tibetan Administration to refrain from drastic actions, over 62 Tibetans have now set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies. All of them have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9639035/Seven-Tibetan-self-immolations-hit-China-in-a-week.html>

Seven Tibetan self-immolations hit China in a week

The Telegraph, 28 October 2012

The two men, identified as Tsepo, 20 and Tenzin, 25, called for independence for Tibet as they set themselves ablaze in front of a government building in their village, north of regional capital Lhasa on Thursday, Free Tibet said.

One of the cousins died as he was being taken to hospital but the whereabouts and condition of the other was not immediately known, the group said in a statement on Saturday.

"It has taken two days for information about this latest protest to emerge," Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said.

"Chinese state security forces have been deployed in large numbers across (the area)... Tibetans are afraid to talk about what is happening because they fear that their communications are being monitored by the government."

Calls to government and police offices in Driru county, where the incident occurred, went unanswered on Sunday.

Last week saw a total of seven self-immolation incidents, a significant number since the latest wave of anti-China protests erupted in the region.

About 60 ethnic Tibetans, many of them monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire in China since February 2009 to protest against Beijing's rule in Tibet. Only a small minority are thought to have survived.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of enacting religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly

moves into historically Tibetan areas.

China rejects this, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom. Beijing points to huge ongoing investment it says has brought modernisation and a better standard of living to Tibet.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32356&t=1>

China arrests three Tibetans for possible self-immolation links

Phayul, 01 November 2012

Three Tibetans - two monks and a layman - have been detained on unknown charges by Chinese security personnel from Trido town in the Sog region of Kham, Tibet on October 26.

The arrested have been identified as Thubten Nyendak, 34, and Tsewang, 24, both monks of Drilda Monastery and Phurbu, 27, a lay Tibetan.

Ngawang Tharpa, an exiled Tibetan, while citing unnamed sources in the region, said the reason for their detention was not clear.

“Although no clear reasons are known to the families about the detention, local Tibetans believe that it is either linked to an earlier incident of pro-independence protest in Drilda Monastery in December last or to the recent twin self-immolation protests by Tsepo and Tenzin,” Tharpa said.

The same source added that military presence in the area has increased in recent days and Drilda Monastery continues to remain under constant surveillance by Chinese authorities stationed inside the monastery premises.

The two cousins, Tsepo, 20 and Tenzin, 25, set themselves ablaze near a Chinese government building in their home village of Nagro Phampa village in Driru on October 25.

According to eyewitnesses, Tsepo and Tenzin called out for Tibet’s independence, for all Tibetans to unite, and for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile as they set themselves alight.

Wangyal, a Tibetan living in New Delhi, who is a cousin of the two self-immolators, told Phayul that Tsepo died on the way to hospital while Tenzin was taken away by Chinese government officials. His current wellbeing and whereabouts

still remain unknown following severe restrictions and clampdown on the internet and telephone communications in the region.

The three arrested Tibetans from Trido town were natives of the twin self-immolator's village. Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people, while speaking at the Regional Council of Piemonte, Torino, Italy this month said the self-immolations inside Tibet will stop when China stops its repression.

"Political repression, economic marginalisation, environmental destruction and cultural assimilation in Tibet by the Chinese government are leading to self-immolations by the Tibetans," Dr Sangay said.

62 Tibetans inside Tibet have set themselves on fire since 2009 demanding freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Lhamo Tseten

Age: 24

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 26 October 2012

Place: at a local court in Amchok township
in Sangchu Dزون, Amdo

Current status: Deceased



4th Tibetan in a week sets himself on fire to protest Chinese rule

The Associated Press, October 26, 2012,

BEIJING: A U.S.-based rights group says a 24-year-old Tibetan farmer has become the fourth man to set himself on fire this week in a far western Chinese county to protest against Chinese rule.

The International Campaign for Tibet said Lhamo Tseten self-immolated on

Thursday in front of a military base and a government office in Amuquhu town in Xiahe county.

The official Xinhua News Agency on Friday reported the self-immolation of a Tibetan man by the same name, though details were slightly different. Xinhua said Lhamo Tseten was a 23-year-old villager and that he set himself alight near a hospital.

In the past week in Xiahe, in Gansu province, a herdsman, a farmer, and a man in his late 20s have done the same in various locations. All four died.

Xiahe county is home to Labrang Monastery, which is one of the most important outside of Tibet, and was the site of numerous protests by monks following deadly ethnic violence in Tibet in 2008 that was the most sustained Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in decades.

Police in the region are offering tipsters a reward of \$7,700 for information about planned self-immolations in a bid to stem the tide of fiery protests.

Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire in heavily Tibetan regions since March 2011 to protest what activists say is Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. Many have called for the return of the Dalai Lama, their exiled spiritual leader.

Tibetan man becomes fourth self-immolation in a week

The Telegraph, 26 October 2012

Lhamo Tseten, in his 20s, set himself on fire in front of a hospital in Xiahe, a county in western China's Gansu province known as Labrang in Tibetan, state-run news agency Xinhua said.

Tibet's government-in-exile confirmed the incident on its website.

Tseten "died after setting himself on fire", Xinhua said, adding that authorities were "handling the incident".

He is survived by his parents, wife and a two-year-old daughter, according to the India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).

The self-immolation follows that of another Tibetan man, Dorje Rinchen, who set fire to himself near a military camp in the region on Tuesday. Two other Tibetan men have self-immolated in the same county since Saturday.

Nearly 60 ethnic Tibetans, many of them monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire in China since February 2009 to protest Beijing's policies in Tibet, according to rights group Free Tibet. A small minority are thought to have survived.

Tseten called out for "freedom in Tibet and for the return of the Dalai Lama" while self-immolating, the London-based rights group Free Tibet said in a statement, citing eyewitnesses.

Security in Xiahe county has intensified following Tseten's death Friday, with "troops" headed to the region, US-based rights group International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said, citing exiled Tibetan sources.

Tseten's home village in Xiahe has also been put under "heavy military control", after protracted protests by locals who oppose the construction of an airport near to a local mountain they believe to be sacred, the ICT said.

Calls to local authorities in Xiahe went unanswered Friday evening.

Previous self-immolation incidents have occurred in the more western province of Sichuan.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of enacting religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

China rejects this, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom. Beijing points to huge ongoing investment it says has brought modernisation and a better standard of living to Tibet.

Chinese police on Thursday offered a cash reward of up to \$32,000 to gain information about what they call as the "black hands" behind a string of self-immolations in a Tibetan-inhabited region.

http://www.buffingtonpost.com/2012/10/26/lhamo-tseten_n_2022548.html

Lhamo Tseten, Tibetan Farmer, Self-Immolates In China

Huffington Post, 26 October 2012

BEIJING — A 23-year-old man has become the fifth Tibetan in a week to set himself on fire and die in a county in far western China to protest against Chinese rule, a rights group said Saturday.

Tsewang Kyab set himself on fire Friday evening on the main street of Amuquhu town in Xiahe county, London-based Free Tibet said.

Earlier Friday, a 24-year-old Tibetan farmer, Lhamo Tseten, died from self-immolation near a military base and a government office in Amuquhu, the group said. China's official Xinhua News Agency reported the self-immolation of a Tibetan man by the same name, though details were slightly different. Xinhua said that Lhamo Tseten was a 23-year-old villager and that he set himself on fire near a hospital.

Calls to local governments in both Xiahe and the higher administration Gannan prefecture rang unanswered Saturday.

In the past week in Xiahe, which is in Gansu province, a herdsman, a farmer and a man in his late 20s also died after setting themselves on fire.

Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire in heavily Tibetan regions since March 2011 to protest what activists say is Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. Many have called for the return of the Dalai Lama, their exiled spiritual leader.

Xiahe is home to Labrang Monastery, which is one of the most important outside of Tibet and was the site of numerous protests by monks following deadly ethnic violence in Tibet in 2008 that was the most sustained Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in decades.

Police in the region are offering tipsters a reward of \$7,700 for information about planned self-immolations in a bid to stem the tide of fiery protests.

The protests are coming at a sensitive time, with China's Community Party planning a once-in-a-decade power transfer in less than two weeks in Beijing.

Thubwang Kyab

Age: 23

Occupation:

Date of self-immolation: 26 October 2012

Place: Setri village in Sangkok township
in Sangchu Dzong, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan youth self-immolates in Tibe

Tibet.net, 28 October 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Few hours after 24-year-old Lhamo Tseten burned himself to death in Sangchu county in north-eastern Tibet's Amdo province (incorporated into China's Gansu Province) Friday, a 21 year old Tibetan man self-immolated in the county's Sangkhog township.

Thupwang Kyab set himself on fire on the main street of Sangkhog around 8:00 pm (local time) in protest against the Chinese government's repressive rule. He raised slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and the immediate release of the Panchen Lama and other Tibetan political prisoners. He died on the spot.

A photo shows Thupwang's body being engulfed in flames.

Thupwang, son of Lumo Jam, is a native of Ruming village in Sangchu county. He is survived by his wife, Dorjee Dolma.

Local Tibetans prevented the police from taking away Thupwang's body, and they then took it to his wife's native village of Sertri. The Chinese government has deployed a large number of paramilitary forces and police in the region following the incident.

Latest reports coming out Tibet say two more Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Driru county in Nagchu prefecture in Tibet Autonomous Region, where a 43 year old Tibetan man named Gudrub died of self-immolation last month. Details of the incident are currently not available.

Two Tibetans Self-immolate in Protes Against China's Rule

Tibet Post International, 26 October 2012

Dharamshala: - Two young Tibetan men died in two separate self-immolation incidents in Tibet today. Another Tibetan man died on Friday evening after setting himself on fire in north-eastern region of Tibet, an information received by The Tibet Post International Friday evening said, in the fifth self-immolation protest in the region in less than a week.

Thupwang Kyab, a 23-year-old man from a Sertri village of Sangkhok area in the Sangchu county, North-eastern Tibet, (Xiahe County, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, northwest China's Gansu Province.) died after setting himself alight around 8.0 p.m. near a local bus stand at the township, said Ajam Achok, a Tibetan from Bangalore, south India, citing sources inside Tibet.

"The local Tibetans protected him from Chinese authorities during his protest and later they took him back to his home town. Traditional prayer services are also reportedly being held for Thupwang," he added.

He also said that "the local Tibetans paid their last respects to Tsephak and offered traditional white scarfs to his body."

"Thupwang shouted slogans calling for "return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, freedom in Tibet, and release of the Panchen Lama, including all the Tibetan political prisoners," Ajam further said.

A photo shows that local Tibetans were surrounding him paying their respects, while his body still burning and smoking from the ground.

The incident follows that of another Tibetan man today, Lhamo Tseten, a father of two years old daughter who set fire to himself near a hospital in the region today at around 2.30pm. Three other Tibetan men have self-immolated in the same county since Saturday, October 20.

The tragic wave of protesting against Beijing's heavy-handed rule in Tibet have been taking place since 2009, demanding freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Over 60 Tibetans - including monks, nuns, students and lay people - have set themselves on fire and that 50 of them already passed-away.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32353&t=1>

Thousands attend Tibetan self-immolator's funeral

Phayul, November 01, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In an overwhelming show of support and solidarity, thousands of Tibetans attended the funeral of Tibetan self-immolator Thubwang Kyab Wednesday morning in his native town of Labrang Sangkho in Sangchu, eastern Tibet.

Speaking to Phayul, Gendun Phuntsok, an exile Tibetan monk living in south India, said that tens of thousands of Tibetans from around the region gathered to pay their last respects to Thubwang Kyab.

“Tens of thousands of Tibetans attended the funeral of martyr Thubwang Kyab in his native hometown,” Phuntsok said citing sources inside the region. “Even though Chinese armed forces were present, but they failed to reach near the deceased’s body due to the overwhelming presence of Tibetans.”

Thubwang Kyab, 23, (Tsewang Kyab in earlier reports) set himself ablaze on the main street of Sangkog town in Sangchu on October 26 in an apparent protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Thubwang Kyab passed away at the scene of his protest following which Tibetans present there encircled him to prevent Chinese security personnel from taking away his body, and then carried the body back to his home in Sertri village.

Earlier that day, another Tibetan, Lhamo Tseten, 24, self-immolated in front of the local military base and township administration in Amchok in the same Sangchu region.

Father of a two-year-old daughter, Lhamo Tseten passed away at the site of his protest and his body was later taken to his home village. According to reports, Lhamo Tseten was cremated on Tuesday.

In a release this week, the Dharamshala based Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile reiterated its “deep concern” over the spate of self-immolations in Tibet, which has now witnessed 62 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

The Tibetan Parliament warned the situation would “aggravate” if the Chinese leadership failed to address the underlying causes of the crisis.

The Tibetan lawmakers said the Chinese government’s hardline policies in Tibet and the levelling of “baseless allegations” against His Holiness the Dalai Lama will only “exacerbate resentment” among the Tibetan people.

“We again strongly urge the Chinese leadership to address the underlying causes of the tragic self-immolations in Tibet,” the release said, while noting that the self-immolation protests are the highest form of non-violent campaign.

CTA holds prayer service for Tibetan self-immolators

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, 02 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 2: Thousands of Tibetans and supporters, including the Tibetan Chief Justice Commissioners, Speaker Penpa Tsering, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, Kalons, members of the Tibetan Parliament and school students attended a mass prayer service held in honour of Tibetan self-immolators at the Tsug-la Khang, the main temple in Dharamshala today.

Special prayers were offered for Lhamo Tseten, 24, Thubwang Kyab, 23, Tsepo, 20, and Tenzin, 25, who set themselves ablaze in protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet last week, making it the deadliest week, with seven self-immolations, since the spate of fiery protests began in 2009.

The two cousins, Tsepo and Tenzin, set themselves ablaze near a Chinese government building in their home village of Nagro Phampa in Driru on October 25, calling out for Tibet’s independence, for all Tibetans to unite, and for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile,

Tsepo is believed to have passed away while Tenzin was taken away by Chinese government officials. His current wellbeing and whereabouts still remain unknown following severe restrictions and clampdown on the internet and telephone communications in the region.

Lhamo Tseten and Thubwang Kyab set themselves on fire in Sangchu region of Amdo, eastern Tibet on October 26 in two separate incidents. Both of them succumbed to their injuries at their protest sites.

Thubwang Kyab’s [last rites](#) were performed on October 31 in his native town

of Labrang Sangkho. Tens of thousands of Tibetans from the adjoining areas reportedly attended his funeral ceremony to pay their last respects.

Speaking at the prayer service today, Sikyong Dr Sangay blamed China's failed policies in Tibet for the series of self-immolation protests.

"The seven self-immolations that occurred in just one week clearly speak of the deepening crisis inside Tibet," Dr Sangay said. "Though the international media has failed to give the deserving attention to the self-immolations, some leaders of the world have expressed their support and solidarity."

Last month, French Parliamentarian Lionnel Luca, while expressing his dismay over the lack of concern from the world governments to the self-immolations in Tibet, called for a boycott of all Chinese goods.

"Total indifference is triggering a succession of self-immolations of Tibetans to protest against the repression of the Chinese government against freedom of religion and culture of the Tibetan people, guaranteed by the constitution," Luca said. "No government seems willing to react; thus, it is up to the people to do so by boycotting all Chinese goods, which will be the only means to exert pressure on a government that tramples International law." Following the prayer service, students of the Tibetan Children's Village School, Upper Dharamshala, carried out a candlelight vigil from the Tsugla Khang back to their school, in solidarity with the Tibetan self-immolators. The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 62 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Dorjee Lhundup

Age: 24

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 4 November 2012

Place: Rebkong, Amdo, Noreastern Tibet

Current Status: deceased



New Tibetan self-immolation in China: rights groups

AFP, 4 November 2012

BEIJING — A young Tibetan set himself on fire in northwestern China on Sunday, two overseas rights groups said, continuing a series of self-immolations by Tibetans apparently protesting Chinese rule.

About 60 others have set themselves alight since 2009, including seven within one week late last month in a significant escalation.

Dorjee Lhundrup died soon after setting himself ablaze in Qinghai province, said the US-based International Campaign for Tibet, citing photographs of the body and Tibetans outside China in touch with those inside.

Security forces deployed on the streets after the incident and restricted residents' movements, said the UK-based Free Tibet, citing local Tibetans.

Free Tibet used a different spelling, Dorje Lungdup, for the man's name and said he was 25, while International Campaign for Tibet said he was in his mid-twenties.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of repressing their religion and undermining their culture, as China's majority Han ethnic group increasingly relocates into historically Tibetan areas.

China says Tibetans enjoy religious freedom as well as improved standards of living thanks to government investment.

UN human rights chief Navi Pillay on Friday urged China to address the many grievances in Tibetan areas that have given rise to the protests.

"I recognise Tibetans' intense sense of frustration and despair which has led

them to resort to such extreme means,” she said, noting reports of “continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans”.

Also last week, the US ambassador to China Gary Locke urged Beijing to re-examine policies toward Tibetans as he acknowledged that he had quietly visited monasteries during the spate of self-immolation protests.

“We have very serious concerns about the violence, of the self-immolations, that have occurred over the last several years,” he said from Beijing to an online forum in the US, calling the incidents “very deplorable”.

Activists say Tibetan Artist Sets Himself on Fire in China

VOA News, 4 November 2012

A Tibetan artist has died after setting himself on fire in the latest self-immolation to protest Chinese rule, and residents are said to be afraid to leave their homes because large numbers of security forces are in the area.

The Tibetan government-in-exile and activist groups said the man set fire to himself Sunday in Tongren, a monastery town in western China’s Qinghai province.

The London-based Free Tibet identified the dead person as Dorje Lungdup, 25, a father of two children. The U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet used a different spelling -Dorjee Lhundrup- for the man’s name.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of repressing their religion and undermining their culture, as China’s majority Han ethnic group increasingly relocates into historically Tibetan areas. Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire since March 2011 and many have called for the return of the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan exile government is based in Dharamsala, India.

China says Tibetans enjoy religious freedom as well as improved standards of living thanks to government investment.

Tibetan artist dies in self-immolation protest against Chinese rule

The Associated Press in Beijing, 4 November 2012

A Tibetan artist has died after setting himself on fire in the latest self-immola-

tion protesting against Chinese rule, and residents are afraid to leave their homes because large numbers of security forces are in the area, it was reported on Sunday.

The man set fire to himself on Sunday morning in Tongren, a monastery town in western China's Qinghai province, said the government in exile and the London-based activist group Free Tibet.

A photo on the exile government's website showed a burned body wrapped in orange scarves and surrounded by monks.

Free Tibet identified the dead man as Dorje Lungdup, 25, a father of two children and an artist of traditional Thangka religious paintings. It said thousands of people gathered to say prayers for him, and that people decided to cremate his body soon after to prevent authorities from interfering.

A representative of the family told the crowd that he set fire to himself to call for the return of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and begged them not to protest for the sake of their own safety, Free Tibet said.

Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire in heavily Tibetan regions since March 2011 to protest against what activists say is Beijing's heavy-handed rule in the region. Many have called for the return of the Dalai Lama.

Free Tibet said residents of Tongren were afraid to leave their homes because of large numbers of security forces on the streets and restrictions on movement. It said internet and mobile phone communications were being interrupted to prevent the spread of information.

A man at the Tongren county government said he could not hear clearly and asked the Associated Press to call back. Calls then rang unanswered, as did calls to police.

Dorjee

Age: 15

Occupation: monk

Date of self-immolation: 7 November 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Samdrup

Age: 16

Occupation: monk

Date of self-immolation: 7 November 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: unknown



Dorjee Kyab

Age: 16

Occupation: monk

Date of self-immolation: 7 November 2012

Place: Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: unknown



Tamding Tso

Age: 23

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 7 November 2012

Place: Dowa town in Rebkong,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Tsegyal

Age: 27

Occupation:

Date of self-immolation: 7 November 2012

Place: Bekar village in Driru, Kham, Tibet

Current status: deceased



Kelsang Jinpa

Age: 18

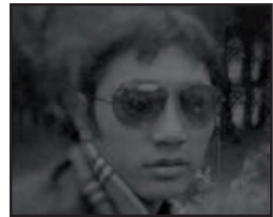
Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 8 November 2012

Place: Dolma Ground near Rongpo Monastery,

Rebkong, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Five Tibetans Self-Immolate Today Across Tibetan Regions

VOA Tibetan, 7 November 2012

Three monks from Ngaba, a mother from Rebkong and a Tibetan man from Driru are reported to have self-immolated on Wednesday in an apparent China protest, a day before the Chinese Communist Party's 18th National Congress.

Ngaba

Three Tibetan monks from Ngoshul monastery burned themselves in Ngaba, Sichuan around 3pm (local time) today. 15-year-old Dorji, 16-year-old Samdrup and Dorji Kyab set themselves on fire outside Ngoshul monastery calling for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and freedom for Tibet. Security personnels are reported to have arrived at the scene shortly after their self-immolations. Dorji, 15, is known to have died at the scene of the protest and the other two have been admitted to a hospital in Ngaba. Sources with contacts in the area report heavy presence of security and severe restrictions around Gomang and Ngoshul monastery. Ngoshul monastery, located about 12 kilometers from Ngaba county, has about 130 monks

As many as 6,000 people demonstrated against the government Thursday afternoon in Tongren, a monastery town in Qinghai province, after two self-immolations — a 23-year-old woman on Wednesday and a young former monk on Thursday, exile groups reported.

“The situation there is very tense as Chinese armed forces have placed severe restrictions on movement in the town and are now closing in on the protesters,” a member of the Tibetan parliament in exile told the Tibetan news service Phayul.

“We have heard that 2,000 to 6,000 people demonstrated, which are plausible numbers given that there have been protests of that size before,” said Harriet Beaumont, a spokeswoman for the London-based group Free Tibet.

She said the protests were carried out in response to the heavy troop presence and other stifling security measures, intimidating footage on television and harsh sentences for involvement in a protest or disclosure about demonstrations to outsiders.

“Tibetans were also aware of the approach of the congress and that might be a factor in the serious escalation in the last few days,” Beaumont said.

In a speech opening the congress, outgoing President Hu Jintao acknowledged criticism that China’s economic development had come at the expense of many of its people, and said authorities would crack down on high-level corruption. The government also faces widespread accusations of repression leveled by ethnic groups such as Tibetans and Uighurs in the country’s far northwest.

In the run-up to the congress, Chinese authorities blanketed Tibetan neighborhoods with armed police in riot gear bearing fire extinguishers and erected barricades and checkpoints. Some Tibetans suspected of disseminating anti-government information via email or social networking sites were arrested.

Wednesday was the deadliest day since Tibetans began setting themselves on fire last year.

Three such protesters were monks ages 15 and 16 from a monastery on the outskirts of Aba, the Sichuan province county where the self-immolations began. They set themselves ablaze simultaneously outside the town’s Public Security Bureau, chanting “freedom for Tibet” and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader.

The youngest, 15-year-old Dorje, died on the spot, but the other two were taken

to a hospital by police. The teenagers were all said to be from nomadic families.

About three hours later, 200 miles to the north, the woman in Tongren immolated herself in a pasture near her village. She was identified as Tamdrin Tso, the mother of a 5-year-old boy.

Five Tibetans Self-immolate

REA, 7 November 2012

Five Tibetans, including a young mother and three teenage boys, set fire to themselves on Wednesday in protest against Chinese rule in the largest number of self-immolations in a single day, triggering massive demonstrations in at least one area, according to exile and local sources.

The burnings—which raised the self-immolation toll to 68 so far—came ahead of the ruling Chinese Communist Party’s highly anticipated Congress beginning Thursday, which is expected to endorse Vice President Xi Jinping as successor to President Hu Jintao in a once-a-decade leadership transition.

At least two of the self-immolators have died.

Three of the self-immolations occurred in Sichuan province’s Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture and one each in Qinghai province’s Malho (Huangnan) prefecture and in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the sources said.

The three boys—monks Dorje, 15, Samdrub, 16, and Dorje Kyab, 16—set themselves ablaze in front of a police station in Ngaba town, calling for a free Tibet and the return of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, according to monks Lobsang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering, who live in India’s hill town of Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama lives in exile.

“The three self-immolated in front of the Ngatoe Gomang police station in the evening at around 3:00 p.m.,” Lobsang Yeshe said, citing local sources.

“Dorje, who died at the scene, Samdrub, and Dorje Kyab are monks from the Ngoshul monastery,” Lobsang Yeshe said.

“Samdrub and Dorje Kyab have been taken to the Ngaba county hospital. Now there is a severe security clampdown restricting any movement in the streets,” he said.

Mother dies

In the Malho prefecture, a 23-year-old Tibetan mother of a young son set fire to herself and died in the Gemar market area of Rebgong (in Chinese, Tongren) county, drawing several thousand Tibetans to the streets in a protest against Chinese rule.

Tamdrin Tso set herself ablaze at about 6:00 p.m. and died shouting slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, local sources said.

Tamdrin Tso came originally from the Dro Rongwo township of Rebgong county, sources said. She leaves behind a son, Nyingjam Tsering, aged 5 or 6, and her father, Tamdrin Kyab, and mother, Konchog Tso.

“Over the last 15 days, Tamdrin Tso had performed prayers for other self-immolation protesters in Tibet, and today she set herself on fire,” Dorje Wangchuk, director of the Literary and Culture Research Centre of the Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala, citing sources in the region.

Following the burning, around 3,000 local Tibetans gathered in the Gemar market area, a central location with a school and many shops, and shouted slogans calling for freedom for Tibet, sources said.

Tamdrin Tso’s self-immolation was the second to occur in the Rebgong area this week.

On Nov. 4, Tibetan artist Dorjee Lhundrub, 25, set himself ablaze and shouted slogans against Chinese rule and calling for the Dalai Lama’s return as he burned to death.

A large crowd of local monks and township residents then gathered at the site, with many placing traditional Tibetan scarves on Lhundrub’s charred remains as a mark of respect for the father of two, sources said.

Protests intensify

Wednesday’s fifth self-immolation occurred in Bekhar township in Driru county, Nagchu prefecture, of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

“I learned about the self-immolation at 8:00 p.m., as it happened, while I was speaking on the phone,” said a Tibetan monk living in South India, citing contacts in the region.

“There was a lot of commotion, and there were shouts at the scene by the

Tibetans. The Chinese security forces arrived immediately, but details, such as the name of the self-immolator, remain unknown,” the monk said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Tibetan self-immolation protests have intensified in recent weeks and may have entered a new phase, some analysts have said.

And the failure to contain the fiery protests, the analysts say, poses a major challenge to Beijing, which has offered cash rewards to Tibetans to inform on potential self-immolators and has tightened security restrictions on Tibetan monasteries and towns.

The burnings continue despite calls to end them by a special meeting of Tibetan exile groups convened in Dharamsala on the advice of the Dalai Lama.

‘No meaningful response’

Sophie Richardson, China Director for Human Rights Watch, described the self-immolation protests as “extraordinary acts of desperation.”

“And they continue because there is no meaningful response from the central government, which has the ability to change the situation for the better.”

“It has to be profoundly unnerving to [China’s] leadership that not only has this continued for as long as it has, but that you see different age groups, you see religious figures, you see people from urban areas and rural areas, men and women, young and old,” Richardson said.

“The number and scope of cases suggest that this is a more thoroughgoing statement or expression of despair than the Chinese government would have you believe it is.”

Breaking: Tibet burns on eve of crucial China meet

Phayul, 7 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In confirmed reports coming out of Tibet, a Tibetan woman set herself on fire today in an apparent protest against China’s occupation, on the eve of the Chinese Communist Party’s 18th National Congress.

Tamdin Tso, a 23-year-old mother of one, passed away in her self-immolation protest in Rebkong region of Amdo, eastern Tibet.

In unconfirmed reports, Phayul is hearing of two to three more self-immolation protests today in Rebkong and Ngaba regions of Tibet. As of now, Phayul cannot independently confirm these reports.

Sources have told Phayul that Tamding Tso of Dro Rongwo set herself on fire near the Ghe Mar thang (a ground) at around 5.30 pm today. She is survived by her six year-old son.

According to eyewitnesses, Tamding Tso shouted, “His Holiness the Dalai Lama must come to Tibet,” before setting herself on fire.

Following the self-immolation protest, monks of the Dowa Monastery carried her charred body to her home. At the filing of this report, over two thousands Tibetans are reportedly gathered in the region, raising slogans for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile and offering prayers.

64 known Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 in Tibet, protesting China’s continued occupation and demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Last week, Dorjee Lhundup, 25, father of a four-year-old son and two-year-old daughter, passed away in his self-immolation protest in Rebkong calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Thousands of Tibetans gathered to pay their last respects to Dorjee Lhundup later that day.

Speaking to reporters in Japan earlier this week, the Dalai Lama said that Xi Jinping, who is expected to take over the reins from Hu Jintao at the Party Congress beginning tomorrow, will have no choice but to embark on political reforms.

“Now Hu Jintao’s era (is the) past, now Xi Jinping is coming as president. I think there’s no alternative except some political change, so political reform. Economy reform (is) already there,” reporters quoted the Dalai Lama as saying.

Rights groups: 5 Tibetans self-immolate in 2 days

By Louise Watt, *The Associated Press*, 8 November 2012

BEIJING—Tibetan protests against Chinese rule intensified around the opening of a pivotal Communist Party congress as three teenage monks and two other Tibetans set themselves on fire over two days, activists reported Thursday.

Four of the self-immolations took place on Wednesday and were followed by a fifth involving a nomad in western Qinghai on Thursday. Since March 2011, dozens of ethnic Tibetans have self-immolated in ethnically Tibetan areas to protest what activists say is China's heavy-handed rule over the region. Such protests have become more frequent in recent weeks, apparently aimed at the party's weeklong conference to unveil the country's new leadership that opened Thursday.

"These protests are aimed at sending the next generation of China's unelected regime a clear signal that Tibetans will continue to fight for their freedom despite China's efforts to suppress and intimidate them," Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said in a statement.

Free Tibet also said that the three monks, at ages 15 and 16, were the youngest to self-immolate. They set fire to themselves Wednesday afternoon outside a police office in southwest Sichuan province calling for freedom for Tibet and the return of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, the group said, adding it was the first documented case of a triple self-immolation.

The youngest monk, identified as 15-year-old Dorjee, died at the scene and his companions, Samdup and Dorjee Kyab, both 16, were taken to a hospital by security forces and their conditions were unknown, Free Tibet said.

Then in the evening a 23-year-old Tibetan nomadic woman, Tamdin Tso, died after self-immolating in another ethnically Tibetan area in western Qinghai province, it said. She took petrol from a motorbike and set fire to herself in the family's winter pasture near Tongren, a monastery town, and her body was taken back to her family's home whether people gathered to pray, it said. She had a 5-year-old son.

Tibetan nomad Jinpa Gyatso, who was from the same area, became the fifth in two days to set himself on fire, said Kate Saunders, spokeswoman for the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet. His death Thursday outside a monastery, as well as the woman's, prompted hundreds of Tibetans to gather and mourn, Saunders wrote in an email.

The pro-Tibet groups' accounts could not immediately be confirmed. The self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile reported one other self-immolation on Wednesday but provided few details.

A man at Qinghai provincial government's news office said he didn't know about the case and hung up. The Aba prefecture's communist party propaganda

department referred queries to prefectural and provincial authorities, where calls rang unanswered.

Chinese authorities routinely deny Tibetan claims of repression and have accused supporters of the Dalai Lama of encouraging the self-immolations. The Dalai Lama and representatives of the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile in India say they oppose all violence.

Free Tibet said the three boys came from a village in Aba county, a region of high-altitude valleys grazed by yaks on the Tibetan plateau, and belonged to Ngoshul Monastery, which houses around 130 monks and is approximately 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Ngaba town where other self-immolations have taken place. Free Tibet said security forces had been deployed to the monastery and the nearby town of Gomang, and already heavy restrictions in Ngaba county had been intensified, with people unable to leave or enter Ngaba town.

Free Tibet says over two thirds of those who have self-immolated are younger than 25 and have grown up under Chinese rule. "Their protests belie China's propaganda that Tibetans are happy and thriving. Tibetans young and old, men and women from all walks of life across a vast area of Tibet are setting fire to themselves in protest at China's occupation," it said in a statement.

The Chinese government has poured money into the region for years to spur development and helping to raise living standards. But many Tibetans say China's tight control, including on religious observance, is draining them of their culture and identity.

Six Tibetans set themselves on fire in two days - activists

BBC News, 8 November 2012

They say large crowds of Tibetans later gathered at the scene in Qinghai province, amid heavy police presence.

On Wednesday, five people reportedly set themselves on fire, and at least two of them later died.

China accuses exiled Tibetan leaders of stirring up unrest.

The government in Beijing says Tibetans have religious freedom, blaming Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for the unrest - a claim he rejects.

More than 60 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since early 2011.

The latest incidents took place as China's Communist Party opened a congress in Beijing that will begin the process of transferring power to a new generation of leaders.

UN call

On Thursday, Tibetan nomad Jinpa Gyatso, 18, set himself on fire in the square outside a monastery in the western town of Rebkong, Tibetan activists in exile say.

He was reportedly heard shouting for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet before he died.

On Wednesday, Dicki Chhoyang, a spokesperson for the Tibetan government in exile in India, told Agence-France Presse news agency that their sources were able to confirm the four cases, calling them a "cry for help".

The London-based Free Tibet group said that the three boys set themselves on fire outside their local police station.

It said it was the first documented case of a triple self-immolation.

The youngest, aged 15, died at the scene. The whereabouts of his two 16-year-old companions are unknown, a group spokesman said.

The woman was identified by Voice of America as 23-year-old Tamding Tso. She had a five-year-old son, reports said.

Radio Free Asia also reported a fifth self-immolation inside Tibet, citing an exiled monk who had spoken to people in the region, however this could not be confirmed.

Foreign media are banned from the region, making verifying the self-immolation cases difficult. Chinese state media have confirmed some but not all.

More than half of those who set themselves on fire are believed to have died.

Last week UN rights chief Navi Pillay called on China to address issues behind the series of self-immolations and to allow monitors and the media access to the region

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32404&t=1>

Breaking: Another self-immolation today, Six Tibetans burn in two days

Phayul, 8 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 8: In more heartbreaking news coming out of Tibet, yet another Tibetan set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's occupation of Tibet.

18-year-old nomad, Kalsang Jinpa, set himself on fire at the Dolma Square in front of the Rongwo Monastery in Rebkong, eastern Tibet. The former monk of the Rongwo Monastery raised a white banner with slogans calling for the Dalai Lama's return and the rights of the Tibetan people before setting himself ablaze. He passed away in his fiery protest.

Sources tell Phayul that thousands of Tibetans have gathered at the Dolma Square to pay their last respects to Kalsang Jinpa. Situation there is being described as tense with the crowd raising slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

Further details are awaited at the filing of this report.

Yesterday, Tamding Tso, a 23-year-old mother of one, passed away in her self-immolation protest in the same region. In another instance yesterday, three teen-aged monks of the Ngoshul Monastery in Ngaba region set themselves on fire in a triple self-immolation protest. Dorjee, 15 passed away in his protest, while the condition of Samdup, 16, and Dorjee Kyab, 16, is not yet known.

Confirming today's self-immolation protest in Rebkong, the Dharamshala based Central Tibetan Administration also confirmed a fifth self-immolation protest that took place yesterday, November 7, in Driru region of Nagchu, central Tibet.

In two days, Tibet has witnessed an alarming escalation in the fiery protests with six confirmed self-immolations. These protests coincide with the Chinese Communist Party's week-long 18th National Congress, which began today in Beijing. China's heir apparent Xi Jinping will be taking over the mantle of leadership, along with a new team, by the end of the meeting.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 69 Tibetans set themselves on fire since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

In Beijing on Thursday, China's Communist Party opened a week-long congress that is expected to end with the transitioning of power to Vice President Xi Jinping, who will govern for the coming decade.

China blames what it calls the "Dalai clique" for fomenting unrest in Tibet and orchestrating the self-immolations.

Stephanie Brigden, director of the Free Tibet campaign group, said the spate of protests were "aimed at sending the next generation of China's unelected regime a clear signal that Tibetans will continue to fight for their freedom".

The man who set himself alight on Thursday, dying instantly, was named as Jinpa Gyatso by the government in exile. Over 6,000 Tibetans attended his funeral, a statement received by AFP said.

It is difficult for the media to verify reports of self-immolations because independent journalists are prevented from travelling to Tibetan areas.

The protests have divided exiled Tibetans with some seeing them as a legitimate protest while others worry they contravene Buddhist beliefs in the sanctity of life.

Many gathered for a candle-lit prayer vigil in Dharamshala, home to about 10,000 exiled Tibetans, on Thursday in front of a large poster bearing the faces of those who have self-immolated.

The government in exile, which is not recognised by any foreign state, is looking for cause for optimism from Xi's leadership, the 59-year-old son of a Communist revolutionary.

Xi's father, Xi Zhongxun, met and came to know the Dalai Lama in Beijing in the early 1950s, before the Tibetan spiritual leader fled after a failed uprising.

He later became a liberal vice premier seen as sympathetic towards minorities, and Tibetan exiles hope that such thinking may have passed down a generation.

Xi junior's true political leanings are largely unknown, though he has expressed the government's routine disdain for the Dalai Lama and also vowed to "smash" any attempt to destroy stability in Tibet.

The Dalai Lama and the government in exile call for greater autonomy for Tibet inside China, but Beijing views these demands as a separatist campaign liable to spark further demands for self-governance in other restive regions.

“We are ready at any time, any location to resume dialogue,” Dicki Chhoyang, information secretary for the exiled government, told AFP.

Last week, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay urged China to address Tibetans’ grievances saying she recognised their “intense sense of frustration and despair which has led them to resort to such extreme means”.

China rebuffed the criticism and expressed “strong dissatisfaction”.

China Communist Party Congress: teenage Tibetans set themselves on fire in protest

The Telegraph, 8 November 2012

An 18-year-old man self-immolated on Thursday outside a monastery in Huangnan prefecture in Qinghai province where a 23-year-old woman also died after setting herself alight on Wednesday, the India-based exile government announced.

A trio of monks aged 16 or under also set themselves alight on Wednesday in Aba County in Sichuan province, with one dying of his injuries, while another burning was confirmed in the Tibetan Autonomous Region on the same day.

Self-immolations to protest Chinese rule in Tibet have occurred regularly since March 2011, but Wednesday marked the first time such a large number have happened on the same day. Three are dead in the latest cases.

“We firmly believe that an end to repression will effectively end the cycle of self-immolations,” the exile government’s premier Lobsang Sangay said in a message to China’s incoming leadership.

A total of 69 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since February 2009, of which 54 have died, according to the government in exile, which has been based in India since Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959.

In Beijing on Thursday, China’s Communist Party opened a week-long congress that is expected to end with the transitioning of power to Vice President Xi Jinping, who will govern for the coming decade.

China blames what it calls the “Dalai clique” for fomenting unrest in Tibet and orchestrating the self-immolations.

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Xi’s father, Xi Zhongxun, met and came to know the Dalai Lama in Beijing in the early 1950s, before the Tibetan spiritual leader fled after a failed uprising.

He later became a liberal vice premier seen as sympathetic towards minorities, and Tibetan exiles hope that such thinking may have passed down a generation.

Xi junior’s true political leanings are largely unknown, though he has expressed the government’s routine disdain for the Dalai Lama and also vowed to “smash” any attempt to destroy stability in Tibet.

The Dalai Lama and the government in exile call for greater autonomy for Tibet inside China, but Beijing views these demands as a separatist campaign liable to spark further demands for self-governance in other restive regions.

“We are ready at any time, any location to resume dialogue,” Dicki Chhoyang, information secretary for the exiled government, told AFP.

Last week, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay urged China to address Tibetans’ grievances saying she recognised their “intense sense of frustration and despair which has led them to resort to such extreme means”.

China rebuffed the criticism and expressed “strong dissatisfaction”.

In China, self-immolations continue as party congress opens

By Barbara Demick, *Los Angeles Times*, 9 November 2012

BEIJING — As China launched its 18th Communist Party congress on Thursday, a record number of Tibetans immolated themselves in a stark illustration of the internal tensions facing the country's new leadership.

Over a 48-hour period, at least five Tibetans were reported to have set themselves on fire in western China. Most of them were teenagers.

As many as 6,000 people demonstrated against the government Thursday afternoon in Tongren, a monastery town in Qinghai province, after two self-immolations — a 23-year-old woman on Wednesday and a young former monk on Thursday, exile groups reported.

"The situation there is very tense as Chinese armed forces have placed severe restrictions on movement in the town and are now closing in on the protesters," a member of the Tibetan parliament in exile told the Tibetan news service Phayul.

"We have heard that 2,000 to 6,000 people demonstrated, which are plausible numbers given that there have been protests of that size before," said Harriet Beaumont, a spokeswoman for the London-based group Free Tibet.

She said the protests were carried out in response to the heavy troop presence and other stifling security measures, intimidating footage on television and harsh sentences for involvement in a protest or disclosure about demonstrations to outsiders.

"Tibetans were also aware of the approach of the congress and that might be a factor in the serious escalation in the last few days," Beaumont said.

In a speech opening the congress, outgoing President Hu Jintao acknowledged criticism that China's economic development had come at the expense of many of its people, and said authorities would crack down on high-level corruption. The government also faces widespread accusations of repression leveled by ethnic groups such as Tibetans and Uighurs in the country's far northwest.

In the run-up to the congress, Chinese authorities blanketed Tibetan neighborhoods with armed police in riot gear bearing fire extinguishers and erected barricades and checkpoints. Some Tibetans suspected of disseminating anti-government information via email or social networking sites were arrested.

Wednesday was the deadliest day since Tibetans began setting themselves on fire last year.

Three such protesters were monks ages 15 and 16 from a monastery on the outskirts of Aba, the Sichuan province county where the self-immolations began. They set themselves ablaze simultaneously outside the town's Public Security Bureau, chanting "freedom for Tibet" and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader.

The youngest, 15-year-old Dorje, died on the spot, but the other two were taken to a hospital by police. The teenagers were all said to be from nomadic families.

About three hours later, 200 miles to the north, the woman in Tongren immolated herself in a pasture near her village. She was identified as Tamdrin Tso, the mother of a 5-year-old boy.

Five Tibetans set themselves on fire in protest at Chinese rule

By Jonathan Kaiman in Beijing, *Guardian*, 8 November 2012

Five Tibetans including three teenage monks and a young mother have set themselves on fire to protest against Chinese rule over the Himalayan region, according to Tibetan rights groups. At least two of them have died.

The five self-immolations – the most ever recorded by Tibetans in one day – came a day before Thursday's start of a week-long Communist party congress in Beijing that will usher in China's new political leadership.

The three monks set themselves on fire at about 3pm outside a police station in Ngaba county, Sichuan province, while calling for freedom and the return of their exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, according to the non-profit broadcaster Radio Free Asia.

One of the monks, 15-year-old Dorje, died at the scene, while the other two – 16-year-olds Dorje Kyab and Samdrub – were taken to a county hospital by security officers. Their current condition is unknown. The London-based group Free Tibet called the incident "the first triple self-immolation protest to happen in Tibet".

About three hours later, a 23-year-old nomadic woman in Rebkong county, Qinghai province, burned herself to death, leaving behind a young son. "Tamdin Tso

siphoned petrol from a motorbike and set fire to herself in the family's winter pasture," Free Tibet reported on its website. "Her body was taken back to the family home where local people gathered to pray."

About 3,000 local Tibetans took to the streets to protest against Chinese rule after the woman died, according to Radio Free Asia. The broadcaster also wrote that a fifth Tibetan self-immolated in the Tibet autonomous region's Nagchu prefecture on Wednesday, but did not provide a name.

The reports could not be independently verified. Calls to the Ngaba town police station rang unanswered.

According to the New York-based International Campaign for Tibet, 68 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009, 55 of whom have died, and nine of whom were women. Two-thirds have been under 25; the oldest was in his 60s. They have come from urban and rural areas in the Tibetan autonomous region itself as well as nearby Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan provinces.

According to Tsering Tsomo, executive director for the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Dharamsala, India, Ngaba has faced tight restrictions since large-scale protests gripped the county in 2008. Tibetans are not allowed to freely enter or exit the area, she said. Authorities require locals to register with government-issued IDs before they can purchase flammable liquids.

"It's really surprising for us that these three immolations happened in Ngaba, given the internal surveillance in the area and the government lockdown there," she said. "We are clueless right now."

The government has introduced a barrage of new country-wide regulations for the 18th party congress, a once-in-a-decade leadership transition that began on Thursday morning. The internet in Beijing has slowed to a crawl, construction projects have been put on hold, and hotels have been instructed to inspect guests' luggage by hand.

Authorities have already embarked on a "patriotic education" campaign in Tibet, forcing monks to hang portraits of Communist party leaders on monastery walls. They have offered cash rewards as high as \$30,000 (£19,000) to locals for information on self-immolations and protests.

Despite the security measures, reports of self-immolations have escalated in the past few weeks. Last month, seven Tibetans killed themselves in seven days.

On Sunday, a 25-year-old artist in Tongren, Qinghai province, burned himself to death.

A 43-year-old blogger named Gudrup who self-immolated in early October left behind an article. “We are declaring the reality of Tibet by burning our own bodies to call for freedom of Tibet,” it said. “We will win the battle through truth, by shooting the arrows of our lives, by using the bow of our mind.”

Tibetan activists call the persistence of self-immolations a testament to Chinese authorities’ policy failures in the region. “They are the ones that can do something about this, but they are powerless right now,” said Tenzin Chokey, general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress in Dharamsala. “All their usual tactics have failed.”

6 Tibetans Immolate in Two Days

Tibet.net, 8 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration is deeply saddened and concerned to learn of the worsening situation in Tibet involving self-immolations by six Tibetans across Tibet since Wednesday (7 November). The total self-immolations in Tibet has reached 69, out of which 55 have died.

Three monks of Ngoshul monastery – Dorjee, 15, Samdub, 16 and Dorjee Kyab, 16 – set fire to themselves at the entrance of a local police in Gomang township in Ngaba county in Amdo. 15-year-old Dorjee died on the spot, while the other two monks were taken to Ngaba county hospital.

They shouted slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

The situation Ngaba has become ever more tense with the deployment of reinforcement of security forces across the county, especially at Ngoshul monastery.

Ngoshul monastery has currently about 130 monks and it is located 12 km west of Ngaba county.

In another incident, Tamdin Tso, a 23-year-old nomadic herder, died after setting herself on fire in Rebong in north-eastern Tibet. Eyewitnesses say she called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet before setting fire to herself. A photo shows her completely charred body in front of a photo of

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay and former Kalon Tripa Prof Samdhong Rinpoche.

In yet another incident, a Tibetan man has set himself on fire in Driru county in Nagchu Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Fresh reports coming out of Tibet say one more Tibetan has self-immolated in Rebgong in north-eastern Tibet on Thursday (8 November). Kalsang Jinpa, 18, set himself on fire at Rongwo monastery while calling for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. He died on the spot. A photo shows his body was completely burned. Over 6,000 Tibetans gathered for his funeral.

Fifth Tibetan self-immolation in two days as China clamps down on freedom protests

By Ann Edwards & Sara Malm, *Daily Mail*, 8 November 2012

Chinese military forces have been mobilised in Chinese occupied Tibet after the fifth self-immolation in less than 48 hours was reported today.

Rumours of a sixth incident have yet to be confirmed as security has been tightened in Rebkong County in central China to prevent local people from joining a protest following incident number five.

The latest tragedies came after the first documented case of a triple self-immolation yesterday, where three teenage Tibetan monks set themselves alight as they called for the freedom of Tibet.

Several thousand people gathered in a peaceful protest after an 18-year-old man named Jinpa set fire to himself at around 5pm local time.

Jinpa hailed from the same area as Tamdin Tso, a 23-year-old woman who self-immolated yesterday.

The earlier triple self-immolation took place at approximately 3pm local time yesterday outside the gates of the local Public Security Bureau office in Gomang Township, Ngaba County, Eastern Tibet, which the Chinese refer to as Sichuan province.

The boys called out for freedom in Tibet and for the return of the Dalai Lama as they set themselves on fire. Security forces arrived at the scene almost immediately.

The youngest monk, 15-year-old Dorjee, died at the scene.

His companions, 16-year-olds Samdup and Dorjee Kyab, were taken to hospital by security forces.

Their current whereabouts and wellbeing are unknown.

Tamdin Tso, who had a five year-old son, died at the scene after setting herself alight, near Rongwo in Rebkong County, Eastern Tibet.

Tamdin Tso took petrol from a motorbike and set fire to herself in the family's winter pasture.

Her body was taken back to her family's home and local people gathered there to pray.

Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said: 'These are the youngest Tibetans to set fire to themselves in protest at China's occupation.

'This is also the largest single incident, yet another indication of the escalation of protests in Tibet.'

The five self-immolations follows reports from Rebkong, known as Tongren in Chinese, that people have been threatened with two years' imprisonment for receiving or making international calls.

Chinese authorities are tightening their grip on the area in conjunction with the Communist party's congress in Beijing.

International campaign organisation Free Tibet reported that in the days before the congress began, footage of security forces on training exercises has been broadcast across the Tibetan region.

It warned local people that Chinese security forces will be 'ready to do whatever it takes to crush those who are destroying stability in the region to ensure that the 18th Party Congress is not disrupted'

Free Tibet Director Stephanie Brigden said there are grave concerns for the safety of the people of Rebkong County following the footage.

'As Congress opens, China must be held accountable for its actions in Tibet,' she said.

'These protests are aimed at sending the next generation of China's unelected regime a clear signal that Tibetans will continue to fight for their freedom despite China's efforts to suppress and intimidate them.

Gonpo Tsering

Age: 19

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 10 November 2012

Place: Lushoe village in Amchok, Sangchu Dzong
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Father of Three Dies After Self-Immolation

VOA News, 26 November 2012

Gonpo Tsering, 24, died after burning himself in front of Ala Deu-go monastery grounds today around 6pm in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) prefecture. He became the fourth Tibetan to self-immolate since yesterday. Gomporeportedly shouted slogans calling for freedom for Tibet, human rights in Tibet and return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Exile sources with contacts in the region say many local Tibetans gathered to pray for Gonpo and to show their solidarity. Chinese security personnel deployed in the region are known to have heightened restrictions in and around the area.

Gonpo is survived by his three children and wife Namgyal Dolma, 26.

More than 85 Tibetans have burned themselves in China protest and 23 Tibetans have self-immolated in November alone.

The Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Saturday in an interview with Indian national television channel Doordarshan said he is saddened by the increainsg number of self-immolation news from Tibet.

He said, "What's happening is very sad; it brings tears to my eyes...People are not doing this because they are drunk or have family problems, but because they live in constant fear."

Breaking: Father of three burns self to death, Third self-immolation in a day takes toll to 85

Phayul, November 26, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 26: In more alarming reports coming out of Tibet, a Tibetan man - the third in a single day - set himself on fire in Luchu region of Kanlho, eastern Tibet protesting China's rule over of Tibet.

A group of exile Tibetans from Luchu identified the Tibetan self-immolator as Gonpo Tsering, 24 years of age and father of three children, all below the age of six.

“Martyr Gonpo Tsering set himself on fire in front of the main prayer hall of the Ala Deu-go Monastery in Ala region of Luchu at around 6 pm (local time) today,” the group told Phayul citing sources in the region. “While engulfed in flames, he raised slogans calling for Tibet's freedom, human rights in Tibet, and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.”

Gonpo Tsering succumbed to his injuries at the site of his protest.

Local Tibetans carried his charred body inside the Monastery where monks and a large number of Tibetans from the surrounding regions assembled, against official orders, to offer prayers for the deceased and express their solidarity.

According to reports, Chinese security personnel and armed forces were immediately deployed in the region. Restrictions have been heightened as Chinese authorities are currently said to be investigating the protest.

Gonpo Tsering is survived by his wife, their three children, and his parents. This is the second self-immolation protest in Luchu region. On November 22, Tamding Kyab, 23, a nomad and former monk, passed away in his self-immolation protest. He was cremated in the morning of November 25.

Gonpo Tsering is the third Tibetan to self-immolate today. Earlier, a young Tibetan, Wangyal set himself on fire in the middle of Sertha town raising slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Wangyal's condition and whereabouts are not yet known after Chinese security forces took possession of his charred body.

In Amchok region of Labrang, Kunchok Tsering, 18, passed away after he set himself ablaze near a mining site in the region.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 85 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

November alone has reported 23 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans, including by school students in Chabcha today and in Rebkong earlier this month.

Chinese officials have reacted to the self-immolation protests with further restrictions and threats. According to the Dharamshala based rights group Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Chinese government officials in eastern Tibet have obtained signed statements from village officials and leaders to prevent any self-immolation under their jurisdiction.

“From now onwards, each household will be made to sign a statement not to do any self-immolation. Those who refuse to sign such statements will attract immediate detention,” TCHRD said in a release today.

Tibetan Dies After Self-immolation

United Press International, 28 November 2012

BEIJING, (UPI) -- A 24-year-old man became the latest to carry out a protest suicide to express frustration with China's policy regarding Tibet, an activist group said.

Advocacy group Free Tibet reports Gonpo Tsering, 24, was declared dead at the scene of his self-immolation outside a monastery in eastern Tibet. His protest is the latest in what the advocacy group said were 80 self-immolations reported since March 2011.

Free Tibet said Tibetans have gone into hiding following the protests.

“Some have even fled their homes, fearing a strong response from Chinese security forces after getting word of their approach,” the group said.

Radio Free Asia, a broadcaster funded by the U.S. government, said Chinese security forces fired on demonstrators in Qinghai province early this week. It reported that five of the 20 Tibetans wounded in the crackdown were in critical condition.

Students in the region had protested an official Chinese publication that RFA said “ridiculed the Tibetan language.”

Thousands of people took to the streets in early November in the center of the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture within China’s central Qinghai province calling for more basic rights for Tibetans.

Tibetans said they were frustrated with the marginalization of Tibetan culture in the area.

<http://www.niticentral.com/2012/11/four-tibetan-students-self-immolate-in-clash-with-chinese-police.html>

Anti-China protests rage: Tibetan nun, 3 men commit self-immolation

By KJ Varma, November 27, 2012

Situation in Tibet has turned grim with four more Tibetans, including a nun, committing self-immolation in the past two days, taking the toll in the restive Himalayan region to 23 this month and increasing pressure on China’s new leadership to resolve the vexed Tibet issue.

At least 20 students were hospitalised on Monday, after a protest turned violent in Qinghai province’s Hainan prefecture, Voice of America’s Tibetan Service reported.

While three men set themselves ablaze on Monday, a nun died of self-immolation a day earlier.

Wangyal, a Tibetan in his 20s, self-immolated in Sichuan province. He was reported to have shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people, the VOA report said.

Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the scene and removed Wangyal’s charred body, the report said.

Another Tibetan, 24-year old Gonpo Tsering, burned himself to death in front of a monastery in Gansu province. He also shouted slogans for a free Tibet, while setting himself on fire.

The third man, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering, also died after setting himself ablaze in Gansu.

Sangay Dolma, a nun affiliated with the Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling convent, died after burning herself the day before in front of a government office in Qinghai province, the report said.

Separately, Chinese security forces cracked down on a demonstration by thousands of Tibetan students in Qinghai on Monday, leaving some severely injured.

The protesters shouted slogans demanding equal language rights and greater freedoms, it said.

At least 85 Tibetans have set themselves in the recent months demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

So far this month alone, 23 Tibetans are reported to have burned themselves, it said.

The self-immolations protests escalated as the ruling Chinese Communist Party undertook a once-in-a-decade leadership change this month.

President Hu Jintao, who followed a stern policy towards Tibet focusing on development of the Himalayan region by pouring in large amount of money without any political initiatives, stepped down as the General Secretary of the Party.

Vice-President of Xi Jinping took over as the head of the party and the military. He is expected to formally take over as President in March when Hu stepped down and retire.

While Chinese officials, who blame the suicides on Dalai Lama group played down the impact of the self-immolations on the security situation in Tibet and a number of Tibetan prefectures.

But the ghastly scenes of self immolations now spread to all parts of the Himalayan plateau created a restive and uneasy situation for Beijing.

Analysts say no significant changes in policies were expected until March when the new administration under Xi's leadership formally takes over power formally.

China has accused the Dalai Lama of being a separatist to spilt Tibet from the country. Beijing alleges that the India based Tibetan leader is instigating the protests in the Himalayan region to discredit China's image.

http://www.tchrd.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=321:two-more-tibetans-die-of-protest-self-immolation&catid=70:2012-news&Itemid=162

Two more Tibetans die of protest self-immolation

TCHRD, 28 November 2012

Two more Tibetans died of burning protests in separate incidents, taking the total number of self-immolations in Tibet to 86 since 2009, according to confirmed information received by TCHRD.

Kalsang Kyap, 24, set himself on fire in front of the county government office in Kyangtsa Township in Zoege (Ch: Ruo'ergai) County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous, Sichuan Province.

According to confirmed information received by TCHRD, on 27 November, at around 6 pm (local time), Kyap set fire to himself and raised slogans for long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche, both living in exile.

On 26 November, a father of three, Gonpo Tsering, 24, died of protest self-immolation in Luchu (Ch: Luqu) Township of Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.

Gonpo Tsering set fire to himself at about 6 pm (local time) in front of the main prayer hall of Ala Monastery and died. While on flames, he called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and for 'freedom and human rights in Tibet', according to sources.

Monks and lay Tibetans took Tsering's body to his village and held prayers and cremation rituals. Many Tibetans had come from Ala as well as neighbouring villages of Samtsa and Gyitsang to offer their prayers and condolences to the family of the deceased.

Sources say following the protest, a large number of local police and security forces arrived Ala after the protest and are now conducting investigation into the incident.

Kyap was the third son of Tapotsang household's six children. Citing locals in the area, sources say Kyap was a man of few words but of friendly and gentle disposition. Some days before his protest, he had confided with a few friends about his decision to burn his body. But no one took him seriously.

After he died, Kyap's body was taken to his home in Dowa Megey Village in Kyangtsa Township. Monks from Denpa and Gyelge Monastery conducted prayers and cremation rituals for the deceased at his home.

On the morning of 26 November, Kyap had returned to his village home from his nomadic camp in the mountain and left the next morning for Kyangtsa township government office, which was 3 km from his village.

After the protest self-immolation, a number of People's Armed Police and security forces came to Kyangtsa from the neighbouring Shagdom Township. Sources say restriction in the area has increased after the arrival of security forces.

Kalsang Kyap is survived by his father, Thogyal and mother, Achoe.

Gonpo Tsering is son of Wangyal and Namlo. He also left behind his wife Namgyal Dolma, 26, and three children - son Tsering Samdup, 6, daughters Tsering Dolma, 3, and Tsering Lhamo, 2.

Nyangchag Bum

Age: 20

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 12 November 2012

Place: near a government office in Dowa township in Rebkong, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Nyangkar Tashi

Age: 24

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 12 November 2012

Place: near a school in Dorongpo in Rebkong, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



The last message of Nyingkar Tashi

We, the million Tibetans led by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, want independence for Tibet. Freedom to learn our language, freedom to speak our language. Free the imprisoned Panchen Lama. His Holiness the Dalai Lama must return home. I am setting myself on fire to protest against the Chinese government. My father Tashi Namgyal and other family members, there is no need to worry and feel sad. Instead engage in spiritual activities and accumulate merits. My request is that every Tibetan must learn and speak Tibetan, dress Tibetan and must remain united and rise up.

signed Nyingkar Tashi, 12 November 2012

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Breaking: Tibet continues to burn, Another Tibetan self-immolates

Phayul, November 12, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 12: In confirmed reports and photos coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan has set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

In one of the photos received by Phayul, a Tibetan man can be seen engulfed in

flames, lying down on the ground.

Sources have identified the Tibetan as Nyingkar Tashi, 24 years of age. The self-immolation is being reported from Rebkong region of eastern Tibet, the same region which witnessed two self-immolations and massive protests involving thousands of Tibetans and students last week alone.

"I am getting confirmed reports of a self-immolation protest by a Tibetan man Nyiga, 24 in Rebkong this afternoon at around 3.30 pm(local time)," Ajam Amchok, an exile Tibetan with close contacts in the region told Phayul. "There is too much of a chaos right now in the area making it difficult to get more information."

Details on Nyingkar Tashi's condition is still awaited at the time of filing this report.

In less than week, beginning from the eve of Chinese Communist Party's 18th National Congress in Beijing, eight Tibetans have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Chinese government officials from Tibet last week reiterated the government's view that the self-immolations were being instigated by external separatist groups.

"External Tibetan separatist forces and the Dalai clique are sacrificing the lives of others to achieve ulterior political motives," Lobsang Gyaltsen, the TAR Deputy Governor, was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Qiangba Puncog, the head of the TAR government's People's Congress, ruled out allowing foreign observers into Tibetan areas, as recommended recently by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

Speaking to reporters in Tokyo earlier today, the Dalai Lama said the Chinese government is not 'seriously' probing the cause of a spate of self-immolations.

"The Chinese government should investigate the cause (of the incidents). China does not look into it seriously and tries to end (the incidents) only by criticising me," Kyodo News reported in Japanese.

71 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since the wave of self-immolations began in 2009. A number of mass protests involving thousands of people have also erupted across the Tibetan plateau over the last several months.

More Tibetan Burning Protests

RFA, 2012-11-1

Two young Tibetan men set fire to themselves on Monday and died in separate anti-China protests in Qinghai province, where a Tibetan local official openly criticized Chinese authorities for discriminatory policies that he said have fueled the Tibetan self-immolations, according to sources.

The burnings in Dowa township, Rebgong (in Chinese, Tongren) county, in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture drew thousands of Tibetans to the streets and bring to 72 the total number of self-immolations challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan areas since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009.

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, meanwhile, told China's leaders not to blame him for the burning protests but to look "seriously" into the true causes of the self-immolations.

"The Chinese government should investigate the causes [of the incidents]," the Dalai Lama told reporters in Japan, according to a report carried by Kyodo News.

"China does not look into it seriously and tries to end [the incidents] only by criticizing me," he said as the ruling Chinese Communist Party's officials met in Beijing to endorse a once-in-a-decade leadership change.

A powerful signal?

Some Tibetan groups believe the Tibetan self-immolations, which have intensified in recent days, were aimed at sending a powerful signal to the ruling Chinese Communist Party which is holding its 18th Party Congress in Beijing to endorse a once-in-a-decade leadership change.

In Monday's first protest, Nyingkar Tashi, 24, set himself ablaze at about 3:30 p.m. local time, sources said. He died at the scene, a Tibetan living in Oregon said, citing contacts in the region.

"He shouted 'Long live the Dalai Lama' and 'Freedom for Tibetans,'" the source said. "Local Tibetans took his body to his home, and the situation is very tense."

Nyingkar Tashi is survived by his wife Drugmo Tso, 23, and father, Tashi Namgyal, 47, the source said.

Official speaks out

Nyingkar Tashi's self-immolation coincided with a public meeting called by Chinese officials sent to look into a recent spate of self-burnings in the area, a Tibetan resident of the area told RFA, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"On Nov. 11, Chinese officials came to Rebgong and inquired into the self-immolations, the reactions of local Tibetans, and the views and thoughts of local officials."

During the meeting, a local Tibetan official named Taklha blamed the protests on China's ban on photos of the Dalai Lama, detention of the Panchen Lama, and restrictions on Tibetans' freedoms, the source said.

"The local Tibetans were very surprised, and admired his audacity," the source said.

Thousands of Tibetans have taken to the streets in Rebgong county's capital Rongwo in recent days to protest Chinese rule, drawing large numbers of Chinese security forces to the area to contain the protests, sources said.

A second burning

In a second protest in Dowa township on Monday, 16-year-old Nyingchag Bum set himself ablaze and died in front of a Chinese government office building at around 7:00 p.m., according to local Tibetan sources.

"A large number of Tibetans were present," said India-based Tibetan exile Dorjee Wangchuk, citing his own contacts in the region.

"[Nyingchag Bum's] body was taken to a local monastery, and several thousand Tibetans gathered to mourn and pray for him," Wangchuk said.

Nyingchag Bum, the eldest of four siblings in his family, is survived by his father Sangchug, 44, and his mother Tsering Tso, 38, Wangchuk said.

"In villages and towns throughout Rebgong, Chinese officials have warned Tibetans against taking part in large gatherings, and security has been tightened."

"All Internet connections and telephone lines have been disconnected in the Dowa area, and local Tibetans fear a heavy security crackdown," Wangchuk said.

China's rule rejected

Recent self-immolation protests in Tibetan areas have coincided with the rul-

ing Chinese Communist Party's 18th Party Congress held in Beijing to endorse a once-in-a-decade national leadership change.

"Throughout the 18th Party Congress, the new unelected leaders have been reminded on an almost daily basis of Tibetans' rejection of Chinese rule, and of the terrible failure of policies to cement the occupation," Stephanie Brigden, director of the London-based Free Tibet advocacy group, said.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei attacked Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama for not openly "condemning" self-immolation protests by Tibetans.

"Not only did the Dalai [Lama] not condemn them, but he actually glorified these acts, which are against the national law and religious principles," Hong said.

Two More Tibetan Immolate, Toll Reaches 72

Tibet.net, November 12, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Two Tibetan youth have set themselves on fire in Rebgong (Ch: Tongren) in north-eastern Tibet's Amdo Province (incorporated to China's Qinghai Province), taking the total self-immolations to 10 in this month alone, fresh reports coming out of Tibet say.

Nyingkar Tashi, 24 and Nyingchak Bum, 18, set themselves on fire around 3:30 pm (local time) on Monday (12 November) at Dowa township in Rebgong.

Nyinkar raised slogans calling for the long life His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibetans. He died on the spot. A photo shows his body completely engulfed in flames in front of a row of local Tibetans.

Later around 7:00 pm, Nyinchak Bum, a father of two, died after setting fire to himself near the town office. Thousands of local Tibetans gathered at the town prevented the police from taking away his body, and took it to Dowa monastery for prayer service.

Meanwhile, a large number of military convoys have been dispatched towards Dowa township, located some 100 kms from Rebgong county.

Local Tibetans say Nyingkar self-immolated when a large number of authorities from the Central and local government are camping in the town since yesterday, who blamed "outside forces for instigating self-immolations by Tamdin Tso and

Kalsang Jinpa on 7 and 8 November respectively.

At a public meeting convened by county and local government officials in the town on Sunday, a local Tibetan official stunned the public when he said “the reasons for self-immolations are ban on keeping His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s photo and worshiping him, restriction on His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s return to his homeland, imprisonment of the Panchen Lama and lack of freedom in Tibet.”

With the latest incident today, 72 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans. 58 of them have died.

Tibetan Self-immolates: In Rebkong in Aftermath of Protest

Tibet Post International, 12 November 2012

Dharamshala: News has emerged from Tibet that a 24 year old man has self-immolated in Rebkong (Chinese: Gansu province), Amdo region of Eastern Tibet.

Reports state that the young man named Nyingkar Tashi took to the fiery form of protest just four days after Kalsang Jinpa (18) self-immolated in the same region.

Rebkong has since witnessed thousands of students taking to the streets in peaceful protest, calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and for freedom.

According to emerging reports from the ex-political prisoners association in India; Gu-Chu-Sum, Nyingkar Tashi self-immolated on the afternoon of November 12th at 3:15. It is reported that 24 year old Nyingkar called for a return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, before self-immolating.

Like so many other Tibetans who have self-immolated recently, Nyingkar reportedly has a family, including a 23 year old wife named DugmoTso; highlighting the sacrifices Tibetans are willing to take and the level of pressure and suppression imposed upon them.

No further information has emerged on the condition of Nyingkar Tashi, or his whereabouts.

The self-immolation of Nyankar comes amid a shifting handover in Beijing for

political power; as the start of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in Beijing gets underway.

In return, Tibetans have staged a staggering number of protests; at least 71 since 2009, against Chinese rule. Recent weeks have witnessed the number of self-immolations soar, as well as unprecedented numbers of Tibetans taking to the streets in Rebkong to express their discontent.

Two Tibetan Self-Immolators Left Letters Behind

VOA News, 20 November 2012

Two Tibetans who recently burned themselves in Rebkong in China protest have reportedly left letters behind.

According to sources with contacts in Rebkong, 26 years old Chagmo Kyi, had left letters written in Chinese and in Tibetan before her self-immolation at the Dolma grounds on Saturday. In her letters, Chagmo Kyi expressed her wish for equality of all nationalities and called on the new Chinese leader Xi Jinping to meet with the Dalai Lama. She had written the word peace on the letter sheet.

Nyingkar Tashi, 24, who died after setting himself ablaze on November 12 in Rebkong had also left a letter behind detailing his reasons for self-immolation. In his letter, Tashi urged unification of all Tibetans and urged Tibetans to learn and speak Tibetan, and called for freedom for Tibet.

“I am setting fire to myself to protest against the Chinese government....His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and six million people need freedom. Tibet needs independence,” said the letter.

Over 78 Tibetans have burned themselves since February 2009 across different regions in Tibet with 64 cases known to have resulted in death.

Six million Tibetans want freedom and independence: A self-immolator's last message

Phayul, November 14, 201

DHARAMSHALA, November 14: A Tibetan self-immolator, who passed away in his fiery protest, called for “freedom and independence for Tibet,” in a last message he wrote before setting himself on fire.

In his last testament, Nyingkar Tashi, 24, went on to call for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, while clearly stating that his self-immolation was in protest against the Chinese government.

“Six million Tibetans want freedom for Tibet, independence for Tibet, freedom to learn Tibetan language, freedom to speak our mother tongue,” Tashi’s last note written in Tibetan states. “(Tibetans) demand the release of Panchen Lama and that His Holiness the Dalai Lama must be allowed to come to Tibet.”

“I set myself on fire in protest against the Chinese government.”

He also urged family members, especially his father Tashi Namgyal, not be “saddened and concerned.”

“My hope is for all six million Tibetans to learn Tibetan language, to speak in Tibetan, to wear Tibetan, and to be united.”

On November 12, Nyingkar Tashi set himself on fire at Ghey-mar Thang in Dro Rongpo region of Rebkong, eastern Tibet, raising slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

His self-immolation was witnessed by a large crowd of Tibetans who were visiting the area to offer prayers and condolences to the family members of Tibetan self-immolators Tamding Tso and Kalsang Jinpa.

“The large gathering was able to rescue Nyingkar Tashi’s body from falling into the hands of the Chinese security forces,” Dorjee Wangchuk, an exiled Tibetan with close contacts in the region told Phayul. “They later carried his body to his home.”

Tamding Tso, a young mother of a seven-year-old son, set herself on fire on November 7 in Dro Rongpo, while Kalsang Jinpa self-immolated at the Dolma Square in front of the Rongwo Monastery, a day later. Massive anti-government protests erupted in the region, after the self-immolations, with thousands of school students and locals marching on the streets, raising slogans for freedom and the Dalai Lama’s return.

According to Wangchuk, a large number of Chinese government and communist party officials travelled to Dowa town following the protests, to speak to local Tibetans and community leaders.

“On November 11, the Chinese government officials, speaking to the public blamed outside forces for instigating the self-immolations and noted that such

acts went against the country's policies," Wangchuk said. "Again on November 12 local community leaders were summoned, which was around the same time when Nyingkar Tashi self-immolated."

Hours after his fiery protest, another Tibetan, Nyingchag Bum, passed away in his self-immolation protest in the same region.

According to the exile Tibetan administration, a large number of military convoys were dispatched towards Dowa town soon after Monday's twin protests.

Various sources have told Phayul that Chinese authorities have cut off electricity in Dowa, disabling the use of internet, in a ploy to prevent further spread of information on the protests and the current situation there.

No international calls could be made to the region, sparking fears of severe military repression and threat to the safety and security of local Tibetans.

Ten Tibetans have set themselves on fire in November alone, taking the self-immolation toll to 72 since the fiery protests began in 2009.

Khabum Gyal

Age: 18

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 15 November 2012

Place: near Gyalwo Luchuthang in Rebkong

Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current statu: deceased



Tenzin Dolma

Age: 23

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 15 November 2012

Place: Goge village in Tsenmo town,

Rebkong Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Two More Burn in Rebong

RFA, 2012-11-15

Two young Tibetans set themselves ablaze in protests against Chinese rule and died on Thursday in a restive Tibetan county where authorities have cut communications to prevent news of self-immolations from marring announcements of the ruling Chinese Communist Party's leadership change, sources said.

The burnings in Rebong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in Qinghai province's Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture bring to 74 the total number of self-immolations challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan areas since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009.

"Today, two persons self-immolated in Rebong, including a woman in Tsenmo," a local resident told RFA's Tibetan service, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Tibetan media sources identified the woman as Tenzin Dolma, aged 23 and a resident of Tsenmo Goge village in Rebong, the county in which most of the

recent self-immolations have taken place.

She set herself on fire at about noon local time in the courtyard of a community temple, sources said.

“She died at the scene, since local Tibetans didn’t know immediately about her protest. She left behind her cell phone and rings, and then prepared herself inside the prayer hall by performing certain religious rituals,” one source said.

Dolma is survived by her father Bhulo, 50, and her mother Tashi Dolma, 41.

Her remains will be cremated at around 10:00 p.m. by local Tibetans led by monks from nearby Rongwo monastery, sources said.

Man also dies

Separately, a young man named Khambum Gyal set himself on fire and died near the Rongwo monastery in Rebgong’s Dowa township, sources said.

Gyal, a native of Gyalpo Luchu in Rebgong, was identified by Chinese state media as a 14-year-old boy, though Tibetan sources place his age at 18 or 19.

“At around 11:00 a.m. today, 18-year-old Khambum Gyal self-immolated in the street at Rongwo and died,” a Tibetan living in Switzerland named Sonam said, citing contacts in the region.

“Hundreds of local people, including monks from Tsagya monastery, cremated his remains.”

Khambum Gyal is survived by his father, Tamdin Gyal, and his mother Dolkar Tso, and by six siblings, sources said.

Some Tibetan groups believe that recent Tibetan self-immolation protests have been timed to coincide with the Chinese Communist Party’s 18th Party Congress in Beijing, and to send a powerful message of Tibetan discontent with Chinese policies to the new leadership.

China’s political elite named former vice president Xi Jinping to the top Party post on Thursday, and surprisingly also put him in charge of China’s military after the week-long Party meeting.

Communications cut

In a statement on Thursday, Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said that Chinese authorities have blocked detailed news of protests in the Rebgong area.

“It may seem particularly important for China to banish any hint of instability during announcements of the new generation of leaders, hence the stringent efforts to block communications to and from Rebgong,” Brigden said.

“World leaders must speak out for the Tibetans who are protesting for freedom in the face of all China’s might.”

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), as the Tibetan exile government in India is called, has urged the United States to push the new Chinese leadership to restore various rights to the Tibetans.

“The Obama administration also could take up the issue of Tibet more seriously with the new Chinese leadership appointed at the 18th Party Congress,” said CTA head Lobsang Sangay in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal on Wednesday.

“Tibetans in Tibet are crying out for justice, including the autonomy and freedom to worship they have been promised by Beijing over the years,” Sangay said.

“Helping resolve the issue of Tibet is not only in synch with American values, but it is also a strategic imperative. America and the rest of the world have a vital stake in China’s rise from an economic giant to a potential superpower,” he said.

Two more self-immolation in Tibet

Examiner, 15 November 2012

The tragic situation in Tibet has continued to unfold into more shocking self-immolations. Phayul.com has reported on Nov. 15, 2012: Breaking: Tibetan woman self-immolates, Two fiery deaths in a day. The alarming escalation of self-immolations has continued in Tibet with with two self-immolations occurring in one day.

At around noon today in the Tsemo region of Rebkong, eastern Tibet, Tangzin Dolma, 23, set herself on fire. Exiled sources have said that Tibetans from around the region began gathering in Tsemo upon hearing news of the self-immolation protest. A large funeral for Tangzin Dolma has been planned for later tonight. There is a large gathering of Tibetans awaiting the arrival of monks from the Rongwo Monastery.

This was the second self-immolation which took place in Tibet today. Earlier today Kharbum Gyal, a teenaged Tibetan, set himself on fire in the same region

and passed away in his protest. In November alone as many as 12 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, taking the toll since the shocking wave of self-immolations began in 2009 to 74. The self-immolators have been demanding freedom for Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Breaking: Tibetan woman self-immolates, Two fiery deaths in a day

Phayul, November 15, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 15: Adding to the alarming escalation in self-immolation protests inside Tibet, a second Tibetan set herself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's occupation of Tibet.

Tenzin Dolma, 23, set herself ablaze at around 12 pm (local time) today in Tsemo region of Rebkong, eastern Tibet.

Exile sources are saying that Tibetans from around the region started gathering in Tsemo upon hearing news of the self-immolation protest.

As of now a grand funeral for Tenzin Dolma has been planned for later tonight and the large gathering of Tibetans are awaiting the arrival of monks from the Rongwo Monastery.

She is survived by her parents, Bhulo and Tashi Dolma.

Further details on the self-immolation protest are awaited at the time of filing this report.

This is the second self-immolation that took place in Tibet today. Kharbum Gyal, a teenaged Tibetan set himself on fire in the same region earlier today and passed away in his protest.

As many as 12 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the month of November alone, taking the toll since the fiery wave began in 2009 to 74.

Self-immolators have demanded freedom for Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Today's twin self-immolation protests comes on the day when China unveiled its new Politburo Standing Committee members, the group of politicians who rule the country.

Tibetans and supporters in exile have asserted that the seven men, led by Xi

Jinping, are facing “an immediate crisis,” with the alarming escalation in the wave of self-immolations and growing protests by Tibetans, including last week’s massive protests in Rebkong, against Beijing’s rule.

Vocal demands have been made for China’s 5th generation leaders to acknowledge policy failures and seek resolution to the crisis in Tibet.

Sangdag Tsering

Age: 24

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 17 November 2012

Place: Dokarmo town in Tsekhog, Rebkong,

Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Chagmo Kyi

Age: 26

Occupation: cab driver

Date of self-immolation: 17 November 2012

Place: Dolma Square, Rongwo Monastery in

Rebkong, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Last message of Chakmo Kyi:

Return of His Holiness to Tibet! Freedom of language!

Equality of nationalities. China’s new leader Xi Jinping must meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Peace.

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Another Tibetan Self-Immolates in Rebkong

VOA News, 17 November 2012

Exile Sources with contacts in area told VOA that Sangdhak Tsering set himself ablaze around 7 pm local time in front of a local Chinese government office in

Dokarmo Township in Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) in Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. His self-immolation occurred three hours after that of Chakmo Kyi, 26, a mother of two.

Monks from the nearby monasteries and thousands of local Tibetans reportedly gathered at the protest site where they carried Sandakha's body near the Gonshul Sang Ngag Mendrol Dhargyeling for cremation.

Sandhak Tsering is survived by his wife Tamdin Tso, 24, son Dankyab, 3, father Choeying, 54, and mother Manlha Tso, 49.

Sources say that Sangdhak Tsering had often confided to his wife of the lack of freedom in Tibet and questioned living in repression in the absence of the Dalai Lama and imprisonment of the Panchen Lama.

Following the recent escalation in the number of self-immolations by Tibetans, the United States has urged China to address the issue of human rights violations in Tibet.

"We want to see the human rights situation there and throughout China improve," the State Department spokesperson, Victoria Nuland, told reporters on Friday.

"We have been clear for decades about our commitment to human rights in Tibet, that we want to see China address the underlying problems there, the threats to the distinctive culture and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people, and our grave concern about the fact that people would feel so desperate as to resort to self-immolation," she said.

Nuland said the US has been regularly raising its concern about the Tibetan self-immolations with Chinese authorities.

"We encourage China to work with authorities in Tibet to address the grievances of the people and to protect the cultural diversity of their country," she said.

Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has recently demanded that China investigate the real causes for the self-immolations and to thoroughly probe its causes.

The Chinese foreign ministry and State media has described past self-immolations as having had personal motives behind them or has sought to discredit the actions as having been carried out by marginal people. The Chinese foreign ministry has also at times described the self-immolation protests as being acts of terrorism and separatism, and blamed the Dalai Lama for not doing enough to

stop them, while at the same time describing the Dalai Lama as not having any influence on Tibetans inside Tibet.

Tsering's self-immolation brings the total number of such protests in Tibet since February 2009 to 76 and of which 62 have died. In Rebkong, there have been nine self-immolations this month, mostly by young Tibetan men and women.

24-year-old Tibetan Dies after Immolation, Toll reaches 76

Tibet.net, November 18, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration reiterated its serious concern over the escalating crisis in Tibet, as more Tibetan self-immolated on Saturday taking the total self-immolation to 76, of which 62 died.

Sangdhak Tsering, 24, a father of three-year-old child, died after setting fire to himself in Rebgong on Saturday evening, where a Tibetan woman died of self-immolation some three hours ago. 9 Tibetans have burned themselves to death in Rebgong in this month alone.

Local Tibetans say Sangdhak Tsering had repeatedly told his wife that it is not worth living with no freedom in Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama being not allowed to return to Tibet, continued imprisonment of the Panchen Lama, and the unending self-immolations by fellow Tibetans. His wife consoled him not to think about these things, but he kept on and felt deeply anguished.

The Central Tibetan Administration organised a grand prayer service at the main temple in Dharamsala on Sunday to mourn the tragic self-immolations by Tibetans in Tibet and expressed solidarity with their aspirations for freedom for Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The US government on Friday reiterated its concern over the worsening human rights situation in Tibet, and urged the underlying causes of the self-immolations in Tibet.

“We regularly raise our concern about the Tibetan self-immolations with Chinese authorities. We encourage China to work with authorities in Tibet to address the grievances of the people and to protect the cultural diversity of their country. So this is obviously – and to address the worsening human rights situation in Tibet – we will continue to do that,” State Department spokesperson Victoria

Nuland said on Friday.

“We’ve been clear for decades about our commitment to human rights in Tibet, that we want to see China address the underlying problems there, the threats to the distinctive culture and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people, and our grave concern about the fact that people would feel so desperate as to resort to self-immolation,” she said.

“The Chinese leadership must heed the urgent call of the international community, especially the UN Human Rights Commissioner Navi Pillay’s strong appeal, to promptly address the longstanding grievances of Tibetans,” said Kalon Dicki Chhoyang of the Department of Information & International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Twenty-four-year-old dies after self-immolation

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 18 November 2012

A Tibetan man from Amdo Rebkong has died after a self-immolation protest against Chinese rule on Saturday, taking the self-immolation toll to 76, according to the website of the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamshala.

Sangdhak Tsering, 24, a father of three-year-old child, died after setting himself on fire in Rebkong on Saturday evening, where a Tibetan woman, Chakmo Kyi, died of self-immolation earlier on the same day. Nine Tibetans have died from fiery protests in Rebkong in this month alone.

Sources have said that Sangdhak Tsering had repeatedly told his wife that it is not worth living with no freedom in Tibet, the Dalai Lama not being allowed to return to Tibet, and the continued imprisonment of the Panchen Lama.

He had also expressed anguish over the spate of self-immolations to his wife.

The Central Tibetan Administration organised a grand prayer service at the Tsuglakhang temple in McLeod Ganj on Sunday to mourn and stand in solidarity with self-immolations. The delegates gathered for the Special International Tibet Support Groups Meeting also attended the prayer service.

Sikyong Lobsang Sangay of the exile administration appealed Tibetans and supporters around the world to observe 10 December as the ‘Global Tibet Support Day’. He appealed to all concerned to organise different events on that day to

support the aspirations of the Tibetans in Tibet and to press on China to address the longstanding grievances of Tibetans.

The 10th of December is the international human rights Day.

Tibetan town shaken by six self-immolations in one week

By Ananth Krishnan, *The Hindu*, 19 November 2012

In the past week alone, six Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest Chinese policies in the remote Tibetan monastery town of Rebkong in north-western Qinghai province, overseas groups said, marking an escalation in the protests which have seen at least 76 Tibetans set themselves on fire.

On Saturday, a 24-year old Tibetan, named Sangdhak Tsering, died after setting himself on fire, monks in India said on Monday. His death followed a protest by Chagmo Kyi, a mother of two, who set herself on fire outside the 14th century Rongwo monastery that sits at the centre of the town, which is called Tongren in Chinese. Hundreds of Tibetans gathered over the weekend to attend the cremation of Chagmo Kyi.

The Dolma Square, named after a golden statue of Jetsun Dolma, a Bodhisattva and female deity known for her compassion, has been a site of several protests by Rongwo monks and local Tibetans since March, when two Tibetans set themselves on fire in the town. The square sits at the entrance of the Rongwo monastery, which is a site of significance for Tibetans and particularly for the Yellow Hat sect, for whom the Dalai Lama is the most important figure.

During a visit to Rebkong in April, *The Hindu* found tight security outside Dolma Square, where a black SWAT van was permanently stationed. Monks at Rongwo Monastery told *The Hindu* in interviews that tensions had been high in the monastery after two self-immolation protests at Dolma Square in March, where a monk and a farmer, in separate incidents, set themselves on fire.

Rebkong is a quiet town, where small Tibetan shops displaying artwork and handicrafts line narrow, muddy streets that run outside the monastery's walls. Further down the road from the monastery, monks and school-students walk amidst groups of paramilitary security forces.

In recent weeks, the town has emerged at the centre of spreading self-immolation protests, with Tibetan monks in India, citing their sources in Rongwo, re-

cording at least eight protests since November 7, the day before the Communist Party of China began its leadership congress.

That day, Tamding Tso, a 23-year-old Tibetan mother of one, set herself on fire. Then, five days later, on November 12, Nyangkar Tashi (24), set himself on fire as dozens of monks and residents gathered at a prayer meeting for Tso. Nyangchang Bum (20), the oldest of three brothers, also set himself on fire that same day when the death of Tso was being mourned, overseas groups said.

Two more self-immolation protests followed on November 15, when Tenzin Dolma, a 23-year-old woman, and a teenager named Kharbum Gyal, set themselves on fire. In interviews in April, monks at Rongwo expressed sympathy with the protesters. In a grainy video, one monk showed dozens of monks gathered near the Dolma statue after the March immolations, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.

The immolations have, however, divided opinion. Some monks noted that they feared the protests would lead to a tighter security clampdown and prove to be counterproductive: Rongwo had seen easing of some restrictions that had been imposed following the 2008 protests across Tibetan areas.

In recent months, images of the Dalai Lama had been allowed for public display in some main halls. Some monks also expressed sadness that young Tibetans were giving up their lives by carrying out protests. Earlier this year, a group of Tibetan writers issued an appeal calling on Tibetans to cherish their lives regardless of the magnitude of oppression, and to carry on their struggle through different forms of protest.

Third Burning in Three Days

RF4, 2012-11-19

A Tibetan man burned himself to death on Monday in China's Qinghai province about a week after being overcome with emotion seeing Tibetan elders mourn the growing number of self-immolation deaths in protest against Chinese rule, according to sources.

It was the third self-immolation death in the last three days and the 77th Tibetan burning since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009.

Wangchen Norbu, 25, set himself ablaze at around 8:00 p.m. local time near the

Kangtsa Ganden Choeling monastery in Yadzi (in Chinese, Xunhua Salar) county in the Tsoshar (Haidong) Prefecture, a Tibetan resident of the area told RFA.

“As he burned, he called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, for the release of the Panchen Lama, and for freedom for Tibetans,” the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Norbu is survived by his father, Tenzin, and mother, Khandro Tso, the source said.

Prayers and grief

A second local source confirmed the burning, saying that Norbu had been present at a Nov. 8 prayer gathering at the monastery for other Tibetan self-immolations who have lost their lives in anti-China protests.

“He became emotional when he saw many elderly Tibetan mourners faint from grief,” he said.

In a highly charged scene at about 10:30 p.m., Norbu’s remains were cremated by a large gathering of monks and other Tibetans amid prayers and loud calls for the long life of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the source said.

“Several policemen also arrived at the scene,” he added.

Norbu’s protest followed by two days the burning deaths of two other Tibetans, a man and a woman, in Qinghai’s restive Rebgong county.

In the first incident, mother of two Chakmo Kyi set fire to herself and died at around 4 p.m. on Saturday at the doorstep of a tax office in Rongwo town, triggering a clash over her charred body by Tibetans and Chinese security forces.

Sangdag Tsering, 24, burned himself three hours later in front of local government offices in Rebgong’s Dokar Mo town, hours after local authorities issued an order forbidding area residents to pay respect to self-immolators or grieve with their relatives.

Protests intensifying

Self-immolations by Tibetans have intensified in recent weeks, and especially during the 18th Congress of the ruling Chinese Communist Party, which endorsed a once-in-a-decade national leadership transition on Thursday.

“The extent of [these] protests, which are now happening on a daily basis, is

clear evidence of Tibetans' absolute rejection of Chinese rule," Stephanie Brigden, director of the London-based Free Tibet advocacy group, said in a statement at the weekend .

"How many more protests will China try to crush before the Communist Party recognizes Tibet belongs to Tibetans?" Brigden asked.

"How many more Tibetans will the world watch die in this way before clear, strong steps are taken to resolve this crisis?"

Tibetan woman, the latest to self-immolate, dies

By Louise Watt, AP, BEIJING, China, 18 November 2012

A Tibetan woman has set herself on fire and died in the latest of dozens of protests against Chinese rule over the Himalayan region, overseas rights groups said.

Chakmo Kyi, a taxi driver with two children, self-immolated Saturday afternoon in a square in Rebkong county in western China's Qinghai province, the eighth self-immolation in the Rebkong area since 4 November, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet said in an email.

According to the group, 75 people have self-immolated in ethnically Tibetan areas since February 2009, and most of them have died.

Tibet support groups overseas say an increase in protests the past two weeks was meant to highlight Tibetans' unhappiness with Chinese rule as the country's leaders handed over power to younger successors at a Communist Party congress in Beijing.

Tibetan delegates attending the congress told reporters they believed much of the blame for the spate of self-immolations fell on the Dalai Lama, Tibetans' spiritual leader, and his associates, whom they said were instigating the protests.

The Dalai Lama and representatives of the self-declared Tibetan government-in-exile in India say they oppose all violence.

The International Campaign for Tibet reported that hundreds of Tibetans were surrounded by troops as they attended Chakmo Kyi's cremation at a site normally used for the cremation of monks and lamas.

The group said the woman had frequently driven between Rebkong and Siling

(Ch: Xining), the provincial capital, and was also a farmer.

London-based Free Tibet also reported the self-immolation, and said at least 20 trucks, each carrying 20 armed police officers, were stationed at intersections in Rebkong's capital, Rongwo, where people have previously self-immolated in protest. It also said there were reports of cars, each with about five government officials inside, positioned every 20 paces along most streets, monitoring the population.

Authorities in Rebkong and Huangnan prefecture, which oversees the county, either refused to comment or said they hadn't heard about the self-immolation. Calls to Rebkong police rang unanswered.

Independent verification of events and conditions in Tibet is nearly impossible because of restrictions on travel.

Wangchen Norbu

Age: 25

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 19 November 2012

Place: near Gaden Choepheling in Kangtsa,

Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Self-Immolations Continue, 25-Year-Old Dies in Protest

VOA News, 19 November 2012

Wangchen Norbu, 25, died after burning himself on November 19, 2012 around 8 pm in Kangtsa (Chinese: Gangca), an area adjacent to the hometown of the late Panchen Lama in Tsoshar (Chinese: Haidong) region in Yazi (Chinese: Xunhua) county, Amdo (Chinese: Qinghai).

Sources in the region say that Norbu set himself ablaze near Kangtsa Gaden Choephelling Monastery and shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, release of the Panchen Lama and freedom for Tibet.

The deceased's body was taken to the monastery where a large number monks

and lay people gathered to offer white scarves and pray.

Around 10:30 pm local time, the crowds are reported to have shouted slogans calling for the return of the exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet. As of receiving the report, the gathering of monks and local people are reported to be reciting long life prayers for the Dalai Lama.

The situation in the area is tense with paramilitary forces surrounding the area. Norbu is the son of the late Tenzin and Khando Tso.

Earlier this month on November 8th, hundreds of Gaden Chophelling monks and lay people gathered to offer mass prayers for all the self-immolators and had lit thousands of butter lamps in solidarity.

Norbu's self-immolation is the 15th such protest by Tibetans in Tibet in November. So far, at least 77 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since February 2009 to protest Chinese rule of Tibet.

Breaking: Tibet continues to burn, 15th self-immolation in November

Phayul, November 20, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 20: In continuing escalation in self-immolation protests in Tibet, another Tibetan set himself on fire in the Kangtsa region of eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Wangchen Norbu, 25, set himself ablaze at around 8pm (local time) Monday near the Kangtsa Gaden Choephel Ling Monastery. He passed away at the site of his protest.

According to sources in exile, Wangchen Norbu raised slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile, release of the Panchen Lama and freedom for Tibet.

His charred body was later carried inside the Monastery where a large number of monks and local people gathered to offer their prayers and last respects.

The large crowd raised slogan calling for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and recited prayers for his long life late into the night. Wangchen Norbu was laid to rest at around 10:30 pm (local time).

The situation in a region is being described as "tense" with a large number of

Chinese armed forces deployed in the region.

Wangchen Norbu is the son of late Tenzin and Khando Tso.

On November 8, a mass prayer service in honour of Tibetan self-immolators was offered at the Kangtsa Gaden Choephel Ling Monastery. Monks and local Tibetans offered thousands of butter lamps and also said prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

With Wangchen Norbu's fiery protest, this month alone has witnessed 15 self-immolations.

A total of 77 Tibetans inside Tibet have set themselves on fire since 2009 calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibetan Dies in Self-Immolation in China's Qinghai Province

Nepal Abroad News, 19 November 2012

Tibetan sources told VOA that a Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire near a monastery to protest Chinese rule in the western province of Qinghai.

The sources with contacts in the region said 25-year old Wangchen Norbu self-immolated late Monday in Xunhua county in Qinghai's Haidong prefecture. They said he shouted slogans calling for the return of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and demanding freedom for the Tibetan people.

The sources said bystanders took Norbu's body to the nearby monastery and gathered to recite prayers. They said the situation was tense with Chinese paramilitary forces surrounding the area.

Monday's incident is the 15th self-immolation protest in Qinghai this month, which coincided with the ruling Chinese Communist Party's once-in-a-decade leadership transition. Some activists say the protests may be an attempt to send a message to the new Chinese leadership.

The latest incident also raises number of Tibetans who have self-immolated in similar protests to 77 since 2009, with 63 cases known to have resulted in death.

Many Tibetans accuse the Chinese government of repressing their religion and culture. China says Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and benefit from better living standards linked to Chinese investment in underdeveloped Tibetan regions.

Beijing has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations to promote Tibetan separatism. He has said China must conduct a “serious investigation” into the self-immolations rather than placing the blame on him. (VOA 11/19)

Two more Tibetans in China self-immolate: reports

AFP, November 21, 2012

BEIJING (AFP) - Two more Tibetans in China have burned themselves to death, state media and a rights group reported Tuesday, part of a wave of protests against Chinese rule.

China's official Xinhua news agency said that two herdsmen self-immolated in northwestern Chinese provinces.

Tsering Dongdri, 35, set himself on fire close to a remote gold mine in Gansu province on Tuesday, the report said, adding an investigation was underway.

Another herdsman, 25, died after setting himself on fire late Monday inside the home of his brother, a Buddhist monk, in Qinghai province, Xinhua said.

US-based Tibetan rights group International Campaign for Tibet, meanwhile, also reported two self-immolations for the same days and provinces.

It said that a farmer and nomad named Tsering Dundrup, who it described as being in his 30s, self-immolated Tuesday in Gansu, while Wangchen Norbu, 25, died after setting himself on fire late Monday.

Though some details differed, the times, dates and locations strongly suggest they were the same incidents reported by Xinhua.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

China rejects this, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom. Beijing points to huge ongoing investment it says has brought modernisation and a better standard of living to Tibet.

The Tibetan government-in-exile says 76 people have set themselves on fire since 2009, of whom 62 have died. Those figures were released before the latest reported self-immolations.

Tsering Dhondrup

Age: 35

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 20 November 2012

Place: at a local mining field in Amchok,
Labrang, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Man Dies in Self-Immolation in China's West

VOA News, 20 November 2012

A Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese rule of Tibet.

Tibetan sources tell VOA's Tibetan Service that 35-year-old Tsering Dhondup self-immolated near a mining site in northwestern China's Gansu province.

More than 300 monks are reported to have assembled to pray for him.

Sources say Dhondup often called for the return of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans-in-exile to Tibet, and for the release of political prisoners. He is the second Tibetan man in two days to die after setting himself on fire. On Monday, the 25-year old man self-immolated in Xunhua county in Qinghai's Haidong prefecture.

The latest incident raises the number of Tibetans who have self-immolated in protests to 78 since 2009, with 64 cases known to have resulted in death.

Many Tibetans accuse China's government of repressing their religion and culture. China says Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and benefit from better living standards linked to Chinese investment in underdeveloped Tibetan regions.

Beijing has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations to promote Tibetan separatism. He has said China must conduct a "serious investigation" into the self-immolations rather than placing the blame on him.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32477&t=1>

Breaking: Another Tibetan burns self to death, Toll reaches 78

Phayul, 20 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 20: In more alarming reports coming out of Tibet another Tibetan set himself on fire today in Amchok region of eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Tsering Dhondup, 35, set himself ablaze on a ground near the entrance of a mining site in Amchok region of Labrang Sangchu at around 8:30 am (local time). He succumbed to his injuries at the site of his protest.

Speaking to Phayul, Ajam Amchok, an exile Tibetan with close contacts in the region said Tsering Dhondup is survived by his wife Tamding Tso, their three children, and his parents Lubhum Gyal and Drukmo Tso.

"Martyr Tsering Dhondup set himself ablaze at the Gyagar Thang near the entrance of a mine in Amchok this morning," Ajam said. "He passed away in his self-immolation protest."

"Local Tibetans say Tsering Dhondup was a good natured and a lovable person," the same source added. "He felt strongly for Tibet and always showed concern for the welfare of the Tibetan people."

According to latest reports, monks of the Amchok Monastery and local Tibetans have started to gather to offer their last respects.

Tsering Dhondup's fiery protest adds to the alarming escalation in self-immolations being witnessed in Tibet. Already, 16 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the month of November.

78 known Tibetans inside Tibet, including monks and nuns, young mothers and students, artists and writers, farmers and nomads, have self-immolated since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

The Dalai Lama recently told reporters that China's repressive policies and the unbearable situation in Tibet are forcing Tibetans to set themselves on fire in Tibet.

"The unbearable situation in Tibet is the cause for these unfortunate events.

I am very sad about the turn of events. These are symptoms of fear, hard line suppressive policy practiced by China in Tibet. The time has come for China to think more realistically,” reporters quoted the Tibetan spiritual leader as saying.

The exile Tibetan administration has maintained that the reasons for the self-immolations are self-evident: political repression, economic marginalisation, environmental destruction, and cultural assimilation. .

“The blame and solution for the present tragedy in Tibet lies entirely with Beijing,” Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people, said earlier this month. “We firmly believe that an end to repression will effectively end the cycle self-immolation.”

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/9705122/Four-Tibetans-self-immolate-as-protest-breaks-out-at-school.html>

Four Tibetans self-immolate as protest breaks out at school

By Malcolm Moore, *The Telegraph*, Beijing and agencies, 27 Nov 2012

Free Tibet said at least three of the four Tibetans who set themselves on fire on Sunday and Monday had died from their injuries.

Meanwhile, the circulation of a ten-point questionnaire to students at the Sorig Lobling high school in Chabcha provoked a 1,000-strong protest on Monday morning.

The questions put before the students included: “Who is agitating for separatism and causing unrest?” and “What is the reason behind the self-immolation protests?”

“The protest was peaceful until around 9am, at which point security forces arrived,” said a statement from Free Tibet. “It is unclear what happened next. However, an eyewitness confirms that many students were injured and taken to hospital”.

The campaign group said 20 people had been admitted to hospital with four needing emergency treatment. It added that school is now under “complete lock-down”.

One Tibetan in Chabcha confirmed to AFP by phone that there was a protest

on Monday, but she was unaware of any clashes with police. Phones at government and police offices in Chabcha were not answered on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Sunday and Monday saw yet more self-immolations, a trend that has accelerated alarmingly in the last month.

“We are now receiving reports of self-immolation protests on an almost daily basis,” said Stephanie Brigden, the director of Free Tibet.

According to the US-based Radio Free Tibet, the latest incidents, two in Gansu province, one in Qinghai and one in Sichuan, brought the number to 21 this month and 85 since 2009.

Kunchok Tsering, a married 18-year-old nomad, self-immolated in Amchog township, Sangchu county. Last Tuesday, a 34-year-old father of three, Tsering Dhondup, also set himself on fire in the same town. In Serthar County, Kandze prefecture, a middle school student named Wangyal also set himself on fire.

Last week, meanwhile, Tamdrin Kyab, a former monk in his early 20s, set himself on fire and died in Luqu in Gansu province and there were two more self-immolations in Tongren in Qinghai province, which has seen several protests and deaths.

Officials in Tongren have warned locals they are forbidden from going to pay their respects at the homes of self-immolators, according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Because of strict Chinese restrictions, it has been impossible to independently verify the deaths.

The Dalai Lama said this weekend on Indian television that the self-immolations had brought tears to his eyes. However he has so far failed to call for an end to the protests.

Lubum Tsering

Age: 19

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 22 November 2012

Place: Dowa town in Rebkong, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Threat to Cut Aid Over Burnings

RFA, 2012-11-22

Chinese authorities have threatened to block aid to families and villages of Tibetans who burn themselves to death in protest against Chinese rule, a rights group said Thursday, as another self-immolation occurred in a restive Tibetan county in Qinghai province.

Lhubum, 18, burned himself to death on a street in Dowa township in Rebong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a source told RFA's Tibetan service.

Local residents surrounded Lhubum's body to prevent the police from taking it away, the source said. Later, they brought the body to his residence for funeral prayers.

Lhubum's death brings to 79 the total number of self-immolations since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009.

Concern

Chinese authorities seem to be increasingly concerned over the rising number of burnings, particularly in Rebong where there had been eight self-immolations so far this month.

In a reflection of their concern, they have cut Internet links to the area to prevent more protests and have issued circulars aimed at punishing self-immolators' families and villages by withholding aid.

In an official notification issued on Nov. 14 by the Malho authorities, local officials from the ruling Chinese Communist Party and government have been given orders to punish self-immolators and their families—even those who had offered condolences and prayers to the bereaved family members and relatives, a Tibetan rights group said.

The India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) quoted a source as saying that the notification, issued both in Tibetan and Chinese, was shown on the Malho Prefectural TV channel.

It said government aid to family members of self-immolators will be cut for three years while development funds for villages where self-immolations took place—even if projects had been approved earlier—will be cancelled for a similar period, TCHRD said in a statement.

Officials, monks and monasteries sympathetic to the self-immolators will also face action, according to the circular.

Netizens

News of the Tibetan self-immolations have been spreading rapidly among China's massive netizen community in recent weeks, a New York-based rights group said.

“Chinese netizens have helped spread reports of Tibetan self-immolations online and expressed their concerns by posting comments on Twitter,” Human Rights in China said in a statement.

“They have done so despite intensified government crackdowns and Internet censorship in the lead-up to and during the 18th [ruling Chinese Communist] Party Congress,” it said.

18-year-old Tibetan Immolates in Rebong

Tibet.net, 23 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Lubum Tsering, an 18-year-old Tibetan, burnt himself to death at Dowa town, Rebong in north-eastern Tibet on Thursday (22 November), taking the self-immolation toll to 79.

Eyewitnesses said Lubum Tsering's last rites were performed by the monks of Dowa monastery at a nearby crematorium.

Lubum Tsering is survived by his father Tsego.

The Chinese authorities in eastern Tibet have announced stern measures to stop government aids to the families and well-wishers of the self-immolators.

The Central Tibetan Administration urged the Chinese government to address the underlying grievances of the Tibetan people, instead of imposing counter-productive measures targeting the families and relatives of the self-immolators.

The self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

<http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32491&t=1>

Breaking: Tibetan teen burns self to death, Toll climbs to 79

Phayul, November 23, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 23: In no respite to the spate of self-immolations inside Tibet, another Tibetan teenager passed away in his fiery protest Thursday, November 22.

In confirmed reports received by Phayul, Lubum Gyal, 18, set himself ablaze in Dowa town of Rebkong, eastern Tibet at around 4:20 pm (local time) in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency also reported on the incident, confirming that the self-immolator (Libong Tsering) succumbed to his injuries.

"Lubum Gyal set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese government in Dowa town," Sonam, an exile Tibetan with close contacts in the region told Phayul. "Soon, a large number of Tibetans gathered and rescued his body from falling into the hands of Chinese authorities."

"Monks from the Dowa Monastery later carried out the last rites of Lubum Gyal at a nearby crematorium," Sonam added.

According to the same source, the recent deployment of large numbers of Chinese armed forces and the severe restrictions placed on local Tibetans triggered Lubum Gyal's fiery protest.

"Following the recent escalation in self-immolations and protests in Dowa and the adjoining regions, Chinese security personnel armed with automatic

guns have forced strict restrictions on the movement of Tibetans,” Sonam cited sources as saying. “Moreover, higher ranked Chinese government and Communist Party officials have been paying frequent trips to Dowa to investigate the reasons behind the protests and to assure that no more protests take place in the region.”

The Chinese officials were reportedly implementing the five-point notification issued by the Malho Prefectural office and Malho People’s government on November 14 giving stern orders to local officials “to punish self-immolators and their families; even those who had offered condolences and prayers to the bereaved family members and relatives.”

The notice, issued in Tibetan and Chinese languages, announces the cancellation of government aid to families of self-immolators as well as development projects in villages where similar protests have taken place.

Lubum Gyal is survived by his father Tsego.

The Rebkong region of Malho has now witnessed ten self-immolation protests in this month alone. Also, thousands of Tibetans, including school children, carried out massive protests calling for freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama earlier this month.

79 Tibetans have now set themselves on fire in Tibet since 2009.

Two self-immolations in a day take reported Tibet total to 80

TibetanReview.net, 24 November 2012

Two self-immolations were reported to have taken place in Chinese ruled Tibet on Nov 22, with the suicide protest actions having been carried out by an 18-year-old youth in Rebong (Chinese: Tongren) County of Malho Prefecture, Qinghai Province, and by a 23-year-old former monk in Luchu (Chinese: Luqu) County of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Prefecture, Gansu Province.

The day’s first self-immolation was carried out by a youth named Lubum Gyal in Dowa Town at around 4:20 PM, said the exile Tibetan administration at Dharamsala on its Tibet.net website Nov 23 and other reports. The youth burned to death. The incident was also reported by China’s official Xinhua news agency which named the protester as Libong Tsering.

Monks of the nearby Dow Monastery carried out the last rites and the cremation. Lubum Gyal is survived by his father, Tsego.

Malho prefecture had recently announced punishments for families, villages and monasteries connected with self-immolators or for those who pray for or show sympathy for such suicide protesters.

The day's second fiery suicide protest was carried out by Tamdin Kyab, a nomad who was a former monk of Shitsang Monastery in the Luchu County town around 10:00 PM. He too burned to death. He survived by his mother and two brothers.

Tamdin's friends have been cited as saying the deceased used to express wishes to do the same thing himself whenever he heard about self-immolations by other Tibetans, bemoaning that life was not worth living if His Holiness the Dalai Lama was not allowed to return home.

Monks of Shitsang Monastery performed the last rites for the deceased at his home. Tamdin's Kyab's younger brother is still a monk at the monastery.

The two incidents bring to 80 the number of Tibetans in Tibet who are acknowledged to have carried out self-immolation protests against Chinese rule since Feb 2009. Rebong alone has witnessed 10 self-immolations in this month's total of 18.

Tamdrin Kyab

Age: 23

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 22 November 2012

Place: Luchu town in Kanlho, Amdo,
Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Self-Immolation Toll Hits 80

RFA, 23 November 2012

The number of Tibetan self-immolation protests against Chinese rule has hit the 80 mark with another burning reported in Gansu province, according to sources Friday.

Former monk Tamdrin Kyab, 23, burned himself to death in Luchu (in Chinese, Luqu) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture late Thursday, the sources said.

“He set himself on fire at a site close to the Luchu River in Luchu county in protest against Chinese rule and succumbed to his injuries,” a source in Tibet told RFA’s Tibetan service.

“The local Tibetans managed to take possession of his body and safely brought it to his own house,” the source said, obviously referring to previous moves by Chinese authorities to immediately take away the bodies of self-immolators from the burning sites.

Tamdrin Kyab had often expressed his desire to follow in the footsteps of his compatriots who had self-immolated in opposition to Chinese rule and demanded the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader who is living in exile in India, sources said.

A source from the region said that whenever someone self-immolated, Tamdrin Kyab used to wonder “if he can do the same thing” and say that “there is no worth to life if His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not allowed to return to his homeland,” according to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the official name of the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamsala, India.

His death brings the self-immolation tally to 80 so far, with 16 reported this month. Five burnings were reported in one day alone—Nov 7.

‘Global Solidarity Day’

The CTA organized a prayer service in Dharamsala Friday “to mourn the tragic self-immolations in Tibet and express solidarity with all those Tibetans who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet.”

It is also organizing a “Global Solidarity Day” on Dec. 10 in conjunction with Human Rights Day to highlight the “dire” situation in Tibet against the backdrop of the burnings.

CTA head Lobsang Sangay, in a statement, called for a coalition of human rights groups to organize and participate in the Global Solidarity Day events.

“Despite our repeated appeals not to take drastic actions, self-immolations continue in Tibet. Therefore, I appeal to the international community and governments to stand for justice by answering the universal aspirations of Tibetans in Tibet: the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans,” he said.

Tamdrin Dorjee

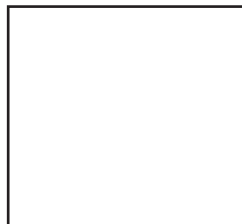
Age: 29

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 23 November 2012

Place: In front of a government building in Dokarmo in the Tsekhog, Rebkong, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current statu: deceased



Another Tibetan dies after setting self on fire in anti-China protest

26 November 2012

A Tibetan man was killed on late Friday when he set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, the Tibetan government-in-exile said on Sunday, raising the number of people who have set themselves on fire in similar protests since March 2011 to more than 80.

The incident happened at around 6:30 p.m. local time on Friday when Tadin Dorjee, 29, set himself on fire at the entrance to the Dokarmo town office in Tsekhog township, which is located in western China's Qinghai province. He was said to have chanted slogans in support of the Dalai Lama.

"He died on the spot," the Central Tibetan Administration said in a statement in which it reiterated its "deep concern" over the "alarming escalation" in self-immolations of Tibetans inside Tibet in recent weeks. "Thousands of local Tibetans offered prayers and attended his funeral that night."

Chinese authorities reportedly cut off Internet access and phone lines following the incident.

The self-immolation came less than 24 hours after former monk Tadin Kyab, 23, set himself on fire in Luqu County in China's Gansu province. That incident came just several hours after 18-year-old Lubum Tsering set himself on fire in the monastery town of Tongren. Both protesters died at the scene.

Central Tibetan Administration leader Lobsang Sangay, whose position is similar to that of a prime minister, on Saturday called on the international community to support Tibetans. "I appeal to the international community and governments to stand for justice by answering the universal aspirations of Tibetans in Tibet: the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans," he said.

Since March 2011, a total of now 81 Tibetans have set themselves on fire as part of protests taking place in Tibet, leading to the arrests of hundreds of Tibetans by Chinese security forces. As a result of the unrest, Chinese authorities have stepped up security in the region, but the self-immolations have continued.

The first incident happened on March 16, 2011, when 21-year-old Phuntsog from Kirti Monastery set himself on fire. It happened on the third anniversary of protests in Ngaba during which at least 13 people were shot dead by Chinese security forces. Phuntsog later died of his injuries.

In October 2011, Sangay also expressed his concern about the incidents. "The incidents are a clear indication of the genuine grievances of the Tibetans and their sense of deep resentment and despair over the prevailing conditions in Tibet," he said at the time. "It is therefore of the utmost urgency that every possible effort be made to address the underlying root causes of Tibetan grievances and resentment."

The Dalai Lama has resided in the Indian city of Dharamsala, which is now the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-exile, since 1960 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule of Tibet. Dharamsala is also referred to as 'Little Lhasa', referring to the capital of Tibet.

One more Tibetan dies after setting self on fire, total self-immolations rises to 81

Tibet.net, 24 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The Central Tibetan Administration today reiterated its deep concern over the alarming escalation in self-immolations by Tibetans inside Tibet, as fresh reports coming out of Tibet say one more Tibetan has died after setting himself on fire in Tsekhog (Ch: Zeku) in Malho in north-eastern Tibet.

Tadin Dorjee, 29, set fire to himself at the entrance of Dokarmo town office in Tsekhog around 6:30 pm (local time) on Friday. He then chanted prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with folded hands. He died on the spot.

Thousands of local Tibetans offered prayers and attended his funeral that night.

The Chinese authorities have cut off Internet and phone lines following the incident.

The latest incident has pushed the total self-immolations by Tibetans inside Tibet to 81, including 5 in last 6 days and 19 within this month alone.

The self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, earlier this month strongly urged the Chinese government to "promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas, and said she was disturbed by "continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights."

Sangye Dolma

Age: 17

Occupation: nun

Date of self-immolation: 25 November 2012

Place: In front of the Chinese government office
in Dokarmo town, Malho, Eastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



The last message of Sangye Dolma:

*look into the deep blue sky above/my lama has returned back/into the tent with
white rock steps/ look, my Tibetan brothers and sisters/ look at the peak of that snow
mountain/the white snow lion has returned back/look, my Tibetan brothers and
sisters/look at the fortress in the forest/look at the beauty of the turquoise plain/
my tigress has come back/look, my Tibetan brothers and sisters/look at the land of
snow/our destiny is on the rise/Tibet is an independent country./While His Holiness
the Dalai Lama/Has been away for too long/Travelling all over the world/Tibetans
suffer under oppression/let's pray for this darkness to be over./the Panchen Lama is in
prison/let's pray for his release and happiness for the land of snow.*

*Children of the snow lion/Do not forget that you are Tibetan./Tibet is an indepen-
dent country. Signed Sangye Dolma*

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

Kunchok Tsering

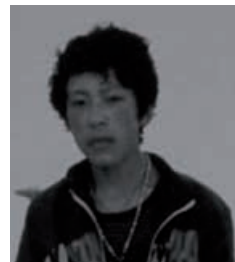
Age: 18

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 26 November 2012

Place: Amchok in Labrang, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Wangyal

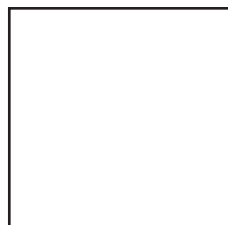
Age: 18

Occupation: student

Date of self-immolation: 26 November 2012

Place: Serta, north-eastern Tibet

Current status: unknown



Breaking: 18-year-old sets self on fire, Third self-immolation in two days

Phayul, 26 November 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In unrelenting reports of self-immolations coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's occupation of Tibet.

Kunchok Tsering, 18, passed away in his self-immolation protest today in Amchok region of Labrang, eastern Tibet. He carried out his protest near a mining site in the region, the same place where Tsering Dhondup, 35, father of three, passed away in his fiery protest on November 20.

According to reports, monks of the Amchok Monastery and a large number of local Tibetans are currently gathered at the deceased's home to offer prayers.

Kunchok Tsering is survived by his wife, Sangay Tso, 19 and parents Phagkyab, 40 and Gonpo Tso, 37, and an elder brother.

Earlier today, a young Tibetan Wangyal set himself on fire in the middle of Sertha town raising slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

According to eyewitnesses, Wangyal's hands were clasped in prayers as he ran raising slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people.

Wangyal's condition and whereabouts are not yet known after Chinese security forces took possession of his charred body.

Also today, over a thousand school students in Chabcha, eastern Tibet carried out amassive protest after local Chinese officials distributed papers denouncing Tibetan self-immolators and disrespecting Tibetan language. Chinese security personnel used violent force to break up the peaceful demonstrations, causing

severe injuries to many students.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 84 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

November alone has reported 22 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans. Yesterday, Sangay Dolma, a nun, passed away in her self-immolation protest in front of the Chinese government office in Dokarmo town of Tsek-hog, Malho, eastern Tibet.

Chinese authorities in the region have reacted by announcing a series of strict measures targeting the ongoing wave of self-immolations with further restrictions, punishments, and threats.

Chinese government authorities in Malho region issued a five-point notice on November 14 giving stern orders to local officials “to punish self-immolators and their families; even those who had offered condolences and prayers to the bereaved family members and relatives.” The notice further announced the cancellation of government aid to families of self-immolators as well as development projects in villages where similar protests have taken place.

The exile Tibetan administration has maintained that the reasons for the self-immolations are self-evident: political repression, economic marginalisation, environmental destruction, and cultural assimilation.

“The blame and solution for the present tragedy in Tibet lies entirely with Beijing,” Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people, said earlier this month. “We firmly believe that an end to repression will effectively end the cycle self-immolation.”

Four more Tibetans, including a nun, have self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule, sources said Monday as armed police violently broke up a mass Tibetan student demonstration over an official booklet which ridiculed the wave of burning protests as acts of “stupidity.”

Two of the self-immolations occurred in Gansu province and one in Sichuan province on Monday while the fourth — involving a 17-year-old nun who died — was reported on Sunday in Qinghai province, sources inside Tibet said.

Three Self-immolations in Two days, Total Reaches 84

VOA News, 26 November 2012

Three Tibetans have set themselves on fire across different Tibetan regions since yesterday, bringing the total number of self-immolations to 84.

Self-Immolation in Dokarmo

Sangay Dolma, a nun of Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling nunnery, died after burning herself on Sunday in front of the Chinese government office in Dokarmo town of Tsekhog, Malho Tibetan autonomous prefecture, Qinghai Province. Sangay is known to have left a note behind. Local sources say Tibetans gathered in large numbers to pray for Sangay.

Self-Immolation in Serthar

Wangyal, a Tibetan man in his 20s, set himself on fire today around noon in front of the golden-horse statue at the local ground in Serthar town, Karze Prefecture in Eastern Tibet in Sichuan Province. He is reported to have shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibetan people. Sources say Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the scene of the protest and took Wangyal's charred body. His whereabouts and condition is unknown.

Self-Immolation in Amchok

Kunchok Tsering, 18, died after setting himself ablaze today in Amchok region in Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) county, Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province (the Tibetan area of Amdo). He burned himself at the same mining site where Tsering Dhondup died after his self-immolation last week on November 20. Amchok monastery monks and a large number of local Tibetans are known to have gathered at the deceased's home to offer prayers. Kunchok Tsering is survived by his wife, Sangay Tso, 19 and parents Phagkyab, 40 and Gonpo Tso, 37, and an elder brother.

Mass Student Protest in Chabcha

Earlier today, thousands of students in Chabcha county Tsoelho (Chinese: Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, protested Chinese official's denouncement of self-immolators. Sources tell VOA that Chinese security personnel used violence in breaking the peaceful demonstrations, causing severe injuries to many students.

More than 84 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. In November, 22 Tibetans are reported to have burned themselves.

Four Tibetans Self-Immolate

RFA, 26 November 2012

The four incidents in Tibetan-populated areas bring the total number of burnings to 85 so far as Tibetans step up the self-immolation protests to highlight opposition to Chinese rule and demand the return of Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who is living in exile in India.

The student protests occurred at a medical school in Chabcha (in Chinese, Gonghe) county in the Tsolho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai in response to the release of an official booklet which ridiculed the Tibetan language as irrelevant, and condemned the self-immolations, local residents said.

At least 20 students from the Tsolho Medical Institute were admitted to hospital after being beaten by armed Chinese police who had surrounded and taken control of the school, the local residents told Tibetan exile sources.

"The students of Tsolho Medical Institute protested against the distribution of a book condemning the study of Tibetan language as devoid of relevance and the self-immolations as acts of stupidity," one exile source told *RFA's* Tibetan service.

Tsolho views

The book, entitled 10 Real Views of Tsolho Area, reflected the Tsolho local government's perception of the Tibetan language and the burning protests, according to the sources.

"The books were distributed in the area's schools. So the medical students of Tsolho Medical Institute burned all the books and called for equality among nationalities and freedom to study the Tibetan language," the source said. "They called for an investigation into this issue and respect for justice."

"The armed police and paramilitary cracked down on the students and several student protesters were seriously injured," the source added.

Earlier this month, several thousand Tibetan students took to the streets in

Qinghai province demanding greater rights.

The students shouted slogans calling for “equality of nationalities and freedom of languages” and demanding the return of the Dalai Lama.

The demonstrators were from the Malho Teacher Training College and the Malho Vocational Institute in Rongwo township, the capital of Rebgong county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, where self-immolations have intensified in recent weeks, as well as the Qinghai Nationalities University in Qinghai’s provincial capital Xining.

New burnings

The student protests on Monday came as four new self-immolations brought to 21 the total number of burnings this month alone.

Teenage nun Sangay Dolmas, from the Mindrol Thagyal Ling monastery, set herself ablaze and died Sunday in the Dokarmo subdivision in Rebgong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in Malho prefecture, sources said.

On Monday, Kunchok Tsering, 18, self-immolated and died in Achok in Gansu province’s Sangchu (Xiahe) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture while ex-monk Wang Gyal, 20, torched himself in Serthar (Seda) county in Sichuan province’s Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, sources from inside Tibet said.

Chinese police bundled Wang Gyal away from the scene soon after he set himself on fire, the sources said.

“No details are available about his condition since the Chinese imposed stringent restrictions in the area and the lines of communication are cut off,” one source told RFA.

Also on Monday, a 24-year-old Tibetan man, Gonpo Tsering, burned himself and died in Gansu province’s Luchu (Luqu) county in Kanlho prefecture, the sources said. ‘Discriminatory’ policies

Tibetan groups say self-immolation protests have intensified recently despite tighter security measures because of Beijing’s “discriminatory” policies and a clampdown on monasteries.

“The Tibetans who are self-immolating—now in more rapid succession—have clearly not been dissuaded by the security buildup or other means of official

intimidation,” Mary Beth Markey, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, said at the weekend.

“Nonetheless, the authorities seem to be betting that further oppression will cower or exhaust the will of future self-immolators,” she said. “But unless and until there is some initiative that can break through the cycle of repression and protest, I think we all acknowledge that more Tibetans will be prepared to take the agonizing action of self-immolation.”

“And that is a terrible and unacceptable calculation,” she said.

Four more Tibetans self-immolate in clash with Chinese police

The Associated Press, 27 November 2012

Four more self-immolations were reported on Sunday and Monday in Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai provinces.

At least 20 students were hospitalized on Monday after a protest turned violent in Qinghai province’s Hainan prefecture, US broadcaster Radio Free Asia said in an emailed statement that cited Tibetan exile sources who were in touch with Hainan residents. London-based exile group Free Tibet said up to 1,000 students took part in the demonstration.

Radio Free Asia said students were angry over a booklet distributed at Tsoelho Medical Institute in Hainan that called Tibetan irrelevant and condemned immolation protests by Tibetans as “acts of stupidity.” It said students burned the books in their protest.

Hainan government and police officials referred calls to other departments where the phone rang unanswered on Tuesday.

The broadcaster also quoted anonymous sources inside China’s Tibetan areas as saying teenaged nun Sangay Dolmas died from self-immolation on Sunday in Qinghai’s Tongren county. On Monday, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering died after burning himself in Gansu province’s Xiahe county while in Sichuan’s Seda county a 20-year-old former monk, Wang Gyal, self-immolated though his condition was not immediately known, it said.

Also Monday, in Gansu province’s Luqu county, 24-year-old Gonpo Tsering died after setting himself ablaze, the report said.

The Washington, DC-based International Campaign for Tibet said that as of Monday the toll in China's Tibetan areas from self-immolations had reached 84, though the organization's count did not include Gonpo Tsering.

Most of the protesters have doused themselves with gasoline and set themselves alight after shouting slogans calling for Tibetan independence and blessings for the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader. China blames him for encouraging the wave of self-immolations that Beijing has apparently been powerless to stop despite stepped-up security and an extensive spying network.

Independent verification of events and conditions in Tibet is nearly impossible because of restrictions on travel.

Tibetan protest in China ends in violence, immolations

AFP, Beijing, 27 November 2012

Four more Tibetans have set themselves alight in protest at China's rule and at least 20 students were hospitalized on Monday after a protest turned violent in Qinghai Province's Hainan Prefecture, US broadcaster Radio Free Asia said in an e-mailed statement, citing Tibetan exile sources.

The spate of burnings in recent weeks began in the run-up to the Chinese Communist Party's 18th Party Congress and have brought the total for this month to 21, and to 85 since 2009, Radio Free Asia said.

London-based exile group Free Tibet said up to 1,000 students took part in the demonstration.

Radio Free Asia said students were angry over a booklet distributed at Tsolho Medical Institute in Hainan's Chabcha County calling Tibetans irrelevant and saying immolation protests by Tibetans were "acts of stupidity." It said students burned the books in their protest.

The broadcaster quoted anonymous sources inside China's Tibetan areas as saying teenaged nun Sangay Dolmas died from self-immolation on Sunday in Qinghai Province's Tongren County.

On Monday, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering died after burning himself in Gansu Province's Xiahe County while a 20-year-old former monk, Wang Gyal, self-immolated in Sichuan Province's Seda Country, though his condition was not im-

mediately known, it said. In Gansu's Luqu County, 24-year-old Gonpo Tsering died after setting himself ablaze, the report said.

"We are now receiving reports of self-immolation protests on an almost daily basis," Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden said. "Allied to the many other forms of protests which Tibetans are undertaking — marching, leafleting, displaying banned images and exerting Tibetan culture — it forms an unimpeachable argument for an end to Chinese occupation."

"Although we cannot confirm whether security forces beat students or not, it would appear that the change in Chinese leadership has not led to a change in the brutality which passes for government in Tibet," Brigden added.

Beijing has accused exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations.

He has preferred to remain neutral on the acts in public statements, but has urged the Chinese government to investigate, saying: "China does not look into it seriously and tries to end [the incidents] only by criticizing me."

Four Tibetans self-immolate as protest breaks out at school

By Macolm Moore, *The Telegraph*, Beijing and agencies, 27 Nov 2012

Free Tibet said at least three of the four Tibetans who set themselves on fire on Sunday and Monday had died from their injuries.

Meanwhile, the circulation of a ten-point questionnaire to students at the Sorig Lobling high school in Chabcha provoked a 1,000-strong protest on Monday morning.

The questions put before the students included: "Who is agitating for separatism and causing unrest?" and "What is the reason behind the self-immolation protests?"

"The protest was peaceful until around 9am, at which point security forces arrived," said a statement from Free Tibet. "It is unclear what happened next. However, an eyewitness confirms that many students were injured and taken to hospital".

The rights group said 20 people had been admitted to hospital with four needing emergency treatment. It added that school is now under "complete lockdown".

One Tibetan in Chabcha confirmed to AFP by phone that there was a protest on Monday, but she was unaware of any clashes with police. Phones at government and police offices in Chabcha were not answered on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Sunday and Monday saw yet more self-immolations, a trend that has accelerated alarmingly in the last month.

“We are now receiving reports of self-immolation protests on an almost daily basis,” said Stephanie Brigden, the director of Free Tibet.

According to the US-based Radio Free Tibet, the latest incidents, two in Gansu province, one in Qinghai and one in Sichuan, brought the number to 21 this month and 85 since 2009.

Kunchok Tsering, a married 18-year-old nomad, self-immolated in Amchog township, Sangchu county. Last Tuesday, a 34-year-old father of three, Tsering Dhondup, also set himself on fire in the same town. In Serthar County, Kandze prefecture, a middle school student named Wangyal also set himself on fire.

Last week, meanwhile, Tamdrin Kyab, a former monk in his early 20s, set himself on fire and died in Luqu in Gansu province and there were two more self-immolations in Tongren in Qinghai province, which has seen several protests and deaths.

Officials in Tongren have warned locals they are forbidden from going to pay their respects at the homes of self-immolators, according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Because of strict Chinese restrictions, it has been impossible to independently verify the deaths.

The Dalai Lama said this weekend on Indian television that the self-immolations had brought tears to his eyes. However he has so far failed to call for an end to the protests.

Anti-China Protests: Four More Tibetans Self Immolate

By K J M Varma, Beijing, *OUTLOOK INDIA*, 27 November 2012

Situation in Tibet has turned grim with four more Tibetans, including a nun committed self-immolation in the last two days, taking the toll in the restive Himalayan region to 23 this month, increasing pressure on China's new leadership

to resolve the vexed Tibet issue.

At least 20 students were hospitalised yesterday after a protest turned violent in Qinghai province's Hainan prefecture, Voice of America's Tibetan Service reported.

While three men set themselves ablaze yesterday, a nun died of self immolation a day earlier.

Wangyal, a Tibetan in his 20s, self-immolated in Sichuan province. He was reported to have shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people, the VOA report said.

Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the scene and removed Wangyal's charred body, the report said.

Another Tibetan, 24-year old Gonpo Tsering, burned himself to death in front of a monastery in Gansu province.

He also shouted slogans for a free Tibet, while setting himself on fire.

The third man, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering, also died after setting himself ablaze in Gansu.

Sangay Dolma, a nun affiliated with the Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling convent, died after burning herself the day before in front of a government office in Qinghai province, the report said.

Separately, Chinese security forces cracked down on a demonstration by thousands of Tibetan students in Qinghai, yesterday leaving some severely injured.

The protesters shouted slogans demanding equal language rights and greater freedoms, it said.

At least 85 Tibetans have set themselves in the recent months demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

So far this month alone, 23 Tibetans are reported to have burned themselves, it said.

The self immolations protests escalated as the ruling Chinese Communist Party undertook a once-in-a-decade leadership change this month.

President Hu Jintao, who followed a stern policy towards Tibet focusing on development of the Himalayan region by pouring in large amount of money with-

out any political initiatives, stepped down as the General Secretary of the Party.

Vice President, Xi Jinping took over as the head of the party and the military. He is expected to formally take over as President in March when Hu stepped down and retire.

While Chinese officials, who blame the suicides on Dalai Lama group played down the impact of the self immolations on the security situation in Tibet and a number of Tibetan prefectures.

But the ghastly scenes of self immolations now spread to all parts of the Himalayan plateau created a restive and uneasy situation for Beijing.

Analysts say no significant changes in policies were expected until March when the new administration under Xi's leadership formally takes over power formally.

China has accused the Dalai Lama of being a separatist to spilt Tibet from the country. Beijing alleges that the India based Tibetan leader is instigating the protests in the Himalayan region to discredit China's image.

China: Tibetan students protest, four more self-immolate

By Sutirtho Patranobis, *Hindustan Times*, Beijing, November 27, 2012

More than 20 Tibetan students were injured during a protest in the Qinghai province of China over a controversial book as four more self-immolations were reported taking the toll to over 20 in November. The four self-immolations, according to overseas rights groups, occurred in Gansu,

Sichuan and Qinghai provinces on Sunday and Monday.

At least three among them two teenagers who self-immolated have died, rights groups said.

Teenage nun Sangay Dolmas died in Qinghai on Sunday. Kunchok Tsering, 18, and Gonpo Tearing, 24, died in Gansu on Monday.

More than 80 Tibetans have set themselves alight since 2011 in what activists say are protests against Beijing's hardline and repressive rule. Most of the cases have occurred in Tibetan areas outside Tibet.

The spate of protests suicides began in to the run-up to the 18th National Con-

gress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) which named Xi Jinping as the Party's new general secretary earlier in November.

London-based Free Tibet said more than 1000 students took part in a demonstration against a newly published book that purportedly criticises self-immolations and suggests that learning Tibetan language has no use.

"It is believed that the protest was in response to a book published earlier in the year by the Chinese government that may have been recently given to the students. The book is critical of self-immolation protests and also belittles the use of the Tibetan language," the group said in an emailed statement.

The statement added that the protest was peaceful until the arrival of armed security forces arrived.

"It is unclear what happened next and Free Tibet has been unable to confirm the exact sequence of events. However, an eyewitness confirms that many students were injured and taken to hospital. Around 20 were hospitalised and it is believed that four required emergency treatment.

The Chabcha Sorig Lobling School is currently under complete lockdown and Chinese security forces have sealed the area," the statement said.

Travel restrictions imposed on journalists in the Tibetan Autonomous Region makes it difficult to independently verify information.

The Chinese government occasionally confirms the deaths caused by self-immolations but says the cases are usually caused by the individual's own problems. The government's ire is also directed to Dharamshala-based Dalai Lama, who Beijing says, is inciting Tibetans in China.

17-year-old self-immolator's last note calls for the Dalai Lama's return and Tibet's independence

Phayul, November 28, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: Tibetan nun, Sangay Dolma, who passed away in her self-immolation protest on November 25, has left a note professing her belief in the swift return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibet's independence.

Sangay Dolma also left a photograph of herself with the words, "Tibet independent nation" inscribed on it.

The 17-year-old nun set herself on fire in front of a Chinese government office in Tsekhog, near Rebkong (Ch: Tongren) in Malho region of eastern Tibet at around 7 pm (local time).

On a folded piece of paper, containing her last will and picture, Sangay Dolma has written: “Beloved children of the snowlion, Sons and daughters of the Land of Snows, Warriors of the snow mountain, Don’t forget your are Tibetans.”

Her last will, written in the form of a poem is titled “He has returned.”

The first stanza reads: “Look up, fellow Tibetans, look at the blue twilight above, Like a heavenly tent of white mountain, My lama has returned.”

In the fourth stanza, Sangay Dolma sends a strong political message of the revival of an independent nation of Tibet.

“Look up, Tibetans, look at the snow mountains. The snowland’s era has begun. And Tibet is free and independent.”

In the two closing stanzas, the 17-year-old nun pays further tribute to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, who has been missing since 1995, after he was recognised as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama at six.

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama, when he lived far away, he travelled around the world, praying for the end of suffering of the red faced Tibetans, and released us from darkness, At a time when Panchen Lama is in prison, He looks out from his prison cell, prays for “the dawn of peace and happiness in my land of snow.”

Sangay Dolma was a nun at the Gonshul Nunnery near the Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling Monastery.

Since 2009, 87 Tibetans have set themselves on fire protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet and demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Chinese authorities have retaliated with further restrictions and threats.

Recently, a five-point notice was issued in eastern Tibet, giving stern orders to local officials to punish self-immolators and their families; even those who had offered condolences and prayers to the bereaved family members and relatives. The notice further announced the cancellation of government aid to families of self-immolators as well as development projects in villages where similar protests have taken place.

Government authorities in the region are also collecting signed statements from each household conforming that they will not self-immolate. Refusal to sign such statements attracts immediate detention.

Exiled Tibetans in Dharamsala express dismay, anger over fresh self-immolations

ANI, 28 November 2012

Dharamsala: Exiled Tibetans have expressed shock and dismay on receiving reports of three more Tibetans setting themselves on fire in Tibet to protest against repressive Chinese rule in their homeland.

The current death toll from self-immolation has now reached 85, with 22 alone in the month of November this year.

Sangay Dolma, a 17-year-old nun, set herself on fire at Bharkor village, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering died after setting fire to himself at the entrance of mining field in Achok town in Labrang in north-eastern Tibet and Gonpo Tsering, a 24-year-old set fire to himself in front of the prayer hall of Ala Dheu Monastery at Luchu in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet.

“The situation in Tibet continues to be grim and in view of the increasing self-immolations in Tibet and we have three self-immolation in one day, yesterday and in total 85 Tibetans have self-immolated and 22 in this month, November alone. The situation is very grim,” said Spokesperson of Central Tibetan Administration(CTA) in-exile, Lobsang Choedak at Dharamsala.

According to certain sources, the Tibetans raised slogans calling for freedom and human rights in their homeland and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

They also sought withdrawal of security forces in the region following the incident.

China maintains that Tibet is an integral part of China and that other countries hosting the Dalai Lama amount to interference in domestic Chinese affairs.

“How long can we keep on counting the bodies of dead Tibetans? This is a challenge to the conscience of everybody in this world who believes in principles like freedom, justice, peace. These Tibetans, they burn themselves because they are calling for freedom, basic freedom and fundamental rights. So, of course, there should be more engagement from the international community as well as

from international governments to press on the Chinese government to resolve this issue, as soon as possible so that Tibetan lives can be saved,” said Director of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), Tsering Tsomo.

China has branded the self-immolators ‘terrorists’ and criminals, and has blamed the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Dalai Lama, for inciting them.

Beijing has termed the Dalai Lama a dangerous separatist, but he denies supporting violence and says he merely seeks greater autonomy for his homeland, which he claims is a victim of Chinese ‘cultural genocide’.

China has ruled Tibet since 1950, when Communist troops marched in and announced its ‘peaceful liberation’.

The Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 following a failed uprising, has accused China of ‘cultural genocide’.

China rejects such criticism, saying its rule ended serfdom and brought development to a backward area. (ANI)

Gonpo Tsering

Age: 24

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 26 November 2012

Place: in front of Ala Dheu Monastery in Luchu,

Kanlho, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Currentstatus: deceased



Father of Three Dies After Self-Immolation

VOA News, 26 November 2012

Gonpo Tsering, 24, died after burning himself in front of Ala Deu-go monastery grounds today around 6pm in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) prefecture. He became the fourth Tibetan to self-immolate since yesterday. Gompo reportedly shouted

slogans calling for freedom for Tibet, human rights in Tibet and return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Exile sources with contacts in the region say many local Tibetans gathered to pray for Gonpo and to show their solidarity. Chinese security personnel deployed in the region are known to have heightened restrictions in and around the area.

Gonpo is survived by his three children and wife Namgyal Dolma, 26.

More than 85 Tibetans have burned themselves in China protest and 23 Tibetans have self-immolated in November alone.

The Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Saturday in an interview with Indian national television channel Doordarshan said he is saddened by the increasing number of self-immolation news from Tibet.

He said, "What's happening is very sad; it brings tears to my eyes...People are not doing this because they are drunk or have family problems, but because they live in constant fear."

Breaking: Father of three burns self to death, Third self-immolation in a day takes toll to 85

Phayul, November 26, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In more alarming reports coming out of Tibet, a Tibetan man - the third in a single day - set himself on fire in Luchu region of Kanlho, eastern Tibet protesting China's rule over of Tibet.

A group of exile Tibetans from Luchu identified the Tibetan self-immolator as Gonpo Tsering, 24 years of age and father of three children, all below the age of six.

"Martyr Gonpo Tsering set himself on fire in front of the main prayer hall of the Ala Deu-go Monastery in Ala region of Luchu at around 6 pm (local time) today," the group told Phayul citing sources in the region. "While engulfed in flames, he raised slogans calling for Tibet's freedom, human rights in Tibet, and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile."

Gonpo Tsering succumbed to his injuries at the site of his protest.

Local Tibetans carried his charred body inside the Monastery where monks and

a large number of Tibetans from the surrounding regions assembled, against official orders, to offer prayers for the deceased and express their solidarity.

According to reports, Chinese security personnel and armed forces were immediately deployed in the region. Restrictions have been heightened as Chinese authorities are currently said to be investigating the protest.

Gonpo Tsering is survived by his wife, their three children, and his parents.

This is the second self-immolation protest in Luchu region. On November 22, Tamding Kyab, 23, a nomad and former monk, passed away in his self-immolation protest. He was cremated in the morning of November 25.

Gonpo Tsering is the third Tibetan to self-immolate today. Earlier, a young Tibetan, Wangyal set himself on fire in the middle of Sertha town raising slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Wangyal's condition and whereabouts are not yet known after Chinese security forces took possession of his charred body.

In Amchok region of Labrang, Kunchok Tsering, 18, passed away after he set himself ablaze near a mining site in the region.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 85 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

November alone has reported 23 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans, including by school students in Chabcha today and in Rebkong earlier this month.

Chinese officials have reacted to the self-immolation protests with further restrictions and threats. According to the Dharamshala based rights group Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Chinese government officials in eastern Tibet have obtained signed statements from village officials and leaders to prevent any self-immolation under their jurisdiction.

"From now onwards, each household will be made to sign a statement not to do any self-immolation. Those who refuse to sign such statements will attract immediate detention," TCHRD said in a release today.

Tibetan Dies After Self-immolation

United Press International, 28 November 2012

BEIJING (UPI) -- A 24-year-old man became the latest to carry out a protest suicide to express frustration with China's policy regarding Tibet, an activist group said.

Advocacy group Free Tibet reports Gonpo Tsering, 24, was declared dead at the scene of his self-immolation outside a monastery in eastern Tibet. His protest is the latest in what the advocacy group said were 80 self-immolations reported since March 2011.

Free Tibet said Tibetans have gone into hiding following the protests.

"Some have even fled their homes, fearing a strong response from Chinese security forces after getting word of their approach," the group said.

Radio Free Asia, a broadcaster funded by the U.S. government, said Chinese security forces fired on demonstrators in Qinghai province early this week. It reported that five of the 20 Tibetans wounded in the crackdown were in critical condition.

Students in the region had protested an official Chinese publication that RFA said "ridiculed the Tibetan language."

Thousands of people took to the streets in early November in the center of the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture within China's central Qinghai province calling for more basic rights for Tibetans.

Tibetans said they were frustrated with the marginalization of Tibetan culture in the area.

Anti-China protests rage: Tibetan nun, 3 men commit self-immolation

By K J M Varma, *NITI Central*, November 27, 2012

Situation in Tibet has turned grim with four more Tibetans, including a nun, committing self-immolation in the past two days, taking the toll in the restive Himalayan region to 23 this month and increasing pressure on China's new leadership to resolve the vexed Tibet issue.

At least 20 students were hospitalised on Monday, after a protest turned violent

in Qinghai province's Hainan prefecture, Voice of America's Tibetan Service reported.

While three men set themselves ablaze on Monday, a nun died of self-immolation a day earlier.

Wangyal, a Tibetan in his 20s, self-immolated in Sichuan province. He was reported to have shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people, the VOA report said.

Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the scene and removed Wangyal's charred body, the report said.

Another Tibetan, 24-year old Gonpo Tsering, burned himself to death in front of a monastery in Gansu province. He also shouted slogans for a free Tibet, while setting himself on fire.

The third man, 18-year-old Kunchok Tsering, also died after setting himself ablaze in Gansu.

Sangay Dolma, a nun affiliated with the Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling convent, died after burning herself the day before in front of a government office in Qinghai province, the report said.

Separately, Chinese security forces cracked down on a demonstration by thousands of Tibetan students in Qinghai on Monday, leaving some severely injured.

The protesters shouted slogans demanding equal language rights and greater freedoms, it said.

At least 85 Tibetans have set themselves in the recent months demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

So far this month alone, 23 Tibetans are reported to have burned themselves, it said.

The self-immolations protests escalated as the ruling Chinese Communist Party undertook a once-in-a-decade leadership change this month.

President Hu Jintao, who followed a stern policy towards Tibet focusing on development of the Himalayan region by pouring in large amount of money without any political initiatives, stepped down as the General Secretary of the Party.

Vice-President of Xi Jinping took over as the head of the party and the military.

He is expected to formally take over as President in March when Hu stepped down and retire.

While Chinese officials, who blame the suicides on Dalai Lama group played down the impact of the self-immolations on the security situation in Tibet and a number of Tibetan prefectures.

But the ghastly scenes of self immolations now spread to all parts of the Himalayan plateau created a restive and uneasy situation for Beijing.

Analysts say no significant changes in policies were expected until March when the new administration under Xi's leadership formally takes over power formally.

China has accused the Dalai Lama of being a separatist to spilt Tibet from the country. Beijing alleges that the India based Tibetan leader is instigating the protests in the Himalayan region to discredit China's image.

Two more Tibetans die of protest self-immolation

TCHRD, 28 November 2012

Two more Tibetans died of burning protests in separate incidents, taking the total number of self-immolations in Tibet to 86 since 2009, according to confirmed information received by TCHRD.

Kalsang Kyap, 24, set himself on fire in front of the county government office in Kyangtsa Township in Zoege (Ch: Ruo'ergai) County in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous, Sichuan Province.

Tibetans holding prayers in front of Kalsang Kyap's body

According to confirmed information received by TCHRD, on 27 November, at around 6 pm (local time), Kyap set fire to himself and raised slogans for long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche, both living in exile.

On 26 November, a father of three, Gonpo Tsering, 24, died of protest self-immolation in Luchu (Ch: Luqu) Township of Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.

Gonpo Tsering set fire to himself at about 6 pm (local time) in front of the main prayer hall of Ala Monastery and died. While on flames, he called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and for 'freedom and human

rights in Tibet', according to sources.

Monks and lay Tibetans took Tsering's body to his village and held prayers and cremation rituals. Many Tibetans had come from Ala as well as neighbouring villages of Samtsa and Gyitsang to offer their prayers and condolences to the family of the deceased.

Sources say following the protest, a large number of local police and security forces arrived Ala after the protest and are now conducting investigation into the incident.

Kyap was the third son of Tapotsang household's six children. Citing locals in the area, sources say Kyap was a man of few words but of friendly and gentle disposition. Some days before his protest, he had confided with a few friends about his decision to burn his body. But no one took him seriously.

After he died, Kyap's body was taken to his home in Dowa Megey Village in Kyangtsa Township. Monks from Denpa and Gyelge Monastery conducted prayers and cremation rituals for the deceased at his home.

On the morning of 26 November, Kyap had returned to his village home from his nomadic camp in the mountain and left the next morning for Kyangtsa township government office, which was 3 km from his village.

After the protest self-immolation, a number of People's Armed Police and security forces came to Kyangtsa from the neighbouring Shagdom Township. Sources say restriction in the area has increased after the arrival of security forces.

Kalsang Kyap is survived by his father, Thogyal and mother, Achoe.

Gonpo Tsering is son of Wangyal and Namlo. He also left behind his wife Namgyal Dolma, 26, and three children - son Tsering Samdup, 6, daughters Tsering Dolma, 3, and Tsering Lhamo, 2.

Kelsang Kyab

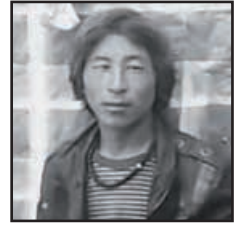
Age: 24

Occupation: semi-nomad

Date of self-immolation: 27 November 2012

Place: Outside the Peoples Government building in Changtsa town, Dzorge, Ngaba, Amdo, Eastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



The last message of Kelsang Kyab:

My dear parents, my sister, relatives and everyone else, please take care. i setting myself on fire for the welfare of Tibet, the land of snows. May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live long! I earnestly hope that the sun of happiness will shine for Tibet.

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D. Sonam)

24-Year-Old Tibetan Self-Immolates in Ngaba

VOA News, 27 November 2012

Kalsang Kyab, aged 24, burned himself to death Tuesday around 6:30 pm in Kangtsa township government building in Dzoge county, Sichuan province. Sources say local Tibetans took his body to Dowa Mege village where monks gathered to pray for the deceased.

Citing witnesses, Kanyag Tsering, spokesperson for the Dharmasala-based Kirti Monastery, said Kalsang Kyab poured kerosene as he walked towards the government building and shouted slogans calling for long life of the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche.

Kalsang Kyab is from a nomadic family with five other siblings. He is known to be a good natured and a quiet person. The London-based Free Tibet reports that the “terrified Tibetans in Ngaba Prefecture are going into hiding” as military personnel arrive in Kangsa Township after the self-immolation protest today.

Yesterday, three tibetans set themselves on fire. Today’s protest is the 86th self-immolation by Tibetans since February 2009. In November, 24 Tibetans have self-immolated themselves to protest Chinese policies.

Beijing has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations to promote Tibetan separatism, a charge he denies. The Tibetan spiritual leader in an inter-

view with Indian national television channel Doordarshan on Saturday said that he is saddened by the increasing number of self-immolation news from Tibet. He said, "What's happening is very sad; it brings tears to my eyes...People are not doing this because they are drunk or have family problems, but because they live in constant fear."

Breaking: Tibet continues to burn, Tibetan man set self on fire

Phayul, November 27, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 27: The alarming escalation in self-immolation protests in Tibet shows no signs of abating as yet another Tibetan set himself on fire today in Ngaba region of eastern Tibet.

Kalsang Kyab, 24, set himself ablaze in front of a Chinese government office in Kangtsa town, raising slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche, the exiled head of Kirti Monastery. He passed away at the site of his protest.

The Dharamshala based Kirti Monastery in a late night release said Kalsang Kyab carried out his protest at around 6:30 pm (local time).

"Kalsang Kyab doused his body with kerosene as he walked towards the local government office building, raising slogans," Kirti Monastery said citing sources in the region. "Upon reaching the office building, he then set himself ablaze and continued to raise slogans."

Shortly afterwards, local Tibetans carried his charred body to his native village, Dowa Mege. At the time of filing this report, monks from two nearby monasteries are reportedly leading a prayer service for the deceased.

Kalsang Kyab left his nomadic pastures yesterday and arrived at his native village. Early this morning he came to Kangtsa town, some 3kms away, to carry out his self-immolation protest.

"Soon after the protest, Chinese security personnel arrived in large numbers in Kangtsa town and have thrown a tight security cordon in the region," Kirti Monastery said.

Monks and local Tibetans offering prayers for Kalsang Kyab, who passed away in his self-immolation protest in Kangtsa region of Ngaba, eastern Tibet on

November 27, 2012.

Kalsang Kyab is survived by his parents and six siblings. Described as gentle natured and a man of few words, he never attended school.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 86 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama.

November alone has reported 24 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans, including by school students in Chabcha and in Rebkong.

The exile Tibetan administration, earlier this month appealed to the United Nations Human Rights Council to convene a Special Session on Tibet in view of the “desperate and unprecedented spate of self-immolations by Tibetans due to China’s repressive policies and the continued intransigence of the Chinese leadership to the relentless efforts of UNHRC.”

The appeal came a day after the UN rights chief Navi Pillay urged China to “promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas.”

Tibetans set selves on fire to protest government

The Associated Press, 28 November 2012

BEIJING (AP) — Two dozen Tibetans have set themselves on fire in western China this month in a dramatic acceleration of the protests against authoritarian Chinese rule, activist groups say.

The surge in self-immolations, along with an increase in large demonstrations, mark a new phase in the Tibetan protests.

At least 86 people have set themselves on fire since the immolations began in 2009. In a change in recent months, most self-immolators now are lay people — some of them acting together — rather than Buddhist monks and nuns who can be more closely watched by the authorities because they live in tightly monitored monasteries.

The protests have also sought to avoid direct attacks on authorities and government property, acts used in past to label them as riots or terrorism, providing an

excuse for greater oppression. Despite the altered approach, observers see little short-term possibility of Beijing changing its repressive policies.

“I think the problem will just escalate over time. The government shows no inclination to respond positively to recommendations for reform from the outside or Tibetans,” said Michael Davis, a law professor and expert on Tibet at the University of Hong Kong.

In the latest immolation, 24-year-old Kalsang Kyab doused himself with kerosene and set himself alight Tuesday in front of local government offices in Kyangtsa in Aba prefecture, a hotbed of unrest, according to London-based Free Tibet and other groups.

An Aba official said Wednesday he was aware of the immolations but refused to give any details before hanging up.

On Monday, about 1,000 students at a Tsolho Medical Institute staged a bold protest about 900 kilometers (550 miles) to the north in Hainan prefecture in Qinghai province. Riot police fired shots into the air and released tear gas and beat the students with rifle butts, sending 20 students to the hospital, some with serious injuries, Free Tibet reported. Four students were detained as of Tuesday, according to U.S.-funded broadcaster Radio Free Asia.

Tibetan and surrounding ethnically Tibetan regions have been closed off to most outsiders, and firsthand information from the area is extremely difficult to obtain. Authorities have not commented on the protest. Calls to the medical school rang unanswered Wednesday.

Driving the students to protest was a booklet distributed by authorities that derided the Tibetan language as irrelevant, attacked the exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, and condemned the immolation protests by Tibetans as “acts of stupidity.”

The booklet is the latest in a series of perceived slights and intrusive measures by Chinese authorities that have left Tibetans feeling that the culture, language and Buddhist religion that are at the core of their identity are under threat. The feelings have also driven the immolations.

The combination of immolations and large-scale protests is posing a new challenge for security forces, which have been stationed in large numbers in Tibetan areas in recent years.

The surge in self-immolations represents an awareness of the impact they are having among the Tibetan community and internationally, said Robbie Barnett, a Tibet expert at New York's Columbia University. That would likely inspire further protests, increasing the numbers of Tibetans willing to take their lives for the sake of their community, he said.

Most self-immolators have doused themselves with gasoline and set themselves alight after shouting slogans calling for Tibetan independence and blessings for the Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 as Chinese troops — a decade after they occupied the region — were crushing an anti-government uprising.

Though protests have flared periodically over the decades, tensions boiled over in 2008, when deadly rioting broke out in the capital, Lhasa, and sparked an uprising across large swaths of ethnically Tibetan areas. Since then, security — already extremely tight — has been smothering.

The immolations have galvanized many Tibetans, who see them as selfless acts of sacrifice, making it hard for authorities to denounce the immolators. Similarly, protests by students are hard to demonize since they are typically non-violent and centered on issues such as language rights that are guaranteed under the Chinese Constitution.

While local authorities have cracked down hard following the self-immolations and other protests, authorities in Beijing have said relatively little other than to issue routine denunciations of the Dalai Lama and his followers. That indicates they are uncertain how to respond in a way that would bolster their authority and prevent the acts of defiance snow-balling into a full-blown protest movement, Barnett said.

“This suggests that the Tibetans have found a way of at least getting under the skin of the authorities,” he said.

Tibetan youth dies after self-immolation in Ngaba

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 28 November 2012

A Tibetan youth in Ngaba in Tibet's Amdo province has set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese rule on Tuesday, according to a source in exile who has contacts in the area.

Twenty-four-year-old Kelsang Kyab set himself on fire outside the “People's

Government Building” in Kyangtsa township, Dzoerge county (Ngaba, Amdo), shouting the slogans: “May the Dalai Lama live for 100 aeons! May Kirti Rinpoche live for 100 aeons!”

He died there and then, said Losang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering from Kirti monastery in exile in McLeod Ganj who have been in touch with activists in Ngaba.

Kelsang poured petrol on himself as he approached the government office and started shouting the slogans, and then set fire to himself as he reached the entrance. He continued repeating them many times over before he died.

People from the nearby areas took his body back to his home, and monks from Drenpa and Gyalgey monastery performed prayers for him.

More monks from Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery joined to offer prayer later in the night.

Kelsang was the third of six children, and had spent his time herding cattle since childhood. He did not go to school. He had announced his intention to commit a self-immolation protest to a few people in the previous days, but no-one paid much attention.

On Monday he came to the village from the pastures, and early this morning he travelled the three km or more from Dowa Mergey village to Kyangtsa county, before carrying out his protest on Tuesday evening.

Following the incident, armed security forces arrived in Kyangtsa from Shakdom township and Dzoerge county and cordoned off the area.

On Wednesday, over 1000 local people, mainly from the Goe Shoka area where he lived, came there to offer *khata* scarves to his remains, present offerings for the lighting of butter lamps in his honour and in solidarity with his bereaved family members, and say prayers.

Since Wednesday morning, more than 200 armed police and public security officers have been deployed in Goe Shoka, and an armed police truck has been stationed on the mountaintop overlooking the village, with two more trucks in neighbouring village areas. Internet service in the area has been suspended.

Losang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering received the following testament by Kelsang Kyab by telephone:

‘Greetings to my dear brothers and sisters, and especially my parents, the kindest of all in this world. I am setting myself on fire for the sake of Tibet. The long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama must be assured. It is my wish that the sun of happiness may shine on the land of Tibet.’

Meanwhile, it is reported that since 10 pm on Monday til 8 am on Wednesday, some 60 or more Tibetans in Lhasa, Kham Drakgo, Kandze, Jomda, Dzachuka, Trindu, Serthar, Siling, Rebkong, and Chengdu are undertaking fasting and prayer in solidarity with the ongoing self-immolation protests. Those involved are members of universities, government officials, writers, monks, businesspeople, and so on, in each of those areas, and the intention is to express solidarity and draw attention to the self-immolation protests, which have now reached a total of 87, and to the sufferings of the larger number of Tibetans enduring abuse in detention.

Exiled Tibetans pay homage to self-immolated martyrs in Dharamsala

ANI, 28 November 2012

Tibetans participated in a special prayer session here on Wednesday to pay homage to compatriots who recently self-immolated, even as there is change in the regime in China.

The surge in self-immolations in China in protest over its rule in Tibet has heightened tension in recent months.

The current reported death toll from self-immolation among protesting Tibetans has now reached 86, with 23 alone in the month of November this year.

At around 6.30 pm on November 27, 24 year- old Kelsang Kyab set himself on fire outside the People’s Government building in Kyangtsa township in Tibet.

General Secretary Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, Tashi Lamsang, said the prayer session was organised keeping in view the possibility of a natural disaster as well as for martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Tibet.

Referring to the change of guard in China, Lamsang said that it was time for them to support Tibetans and help them to maintain peace and freedom.

“We want to say that if they really care about peace and freedom and also non-violent struggle for freedom, it is time for them to support Tibet and stand for

justice and freedom in Tibet,” he said.

China has branded the self-immolators ‘terrorists’ and criminals, and has blamed the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Dalai Lama, for inciting them.

Beijing has termed the Dalai Lama a dangerous separatist, but he denies supporting violence and says he merely seeks greater autonomy for his homeland.

China has ruled Tibet since 1950, when Communist troops marched in and announced its ‘peaceful liberation’.

The Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 following a failed uprising, has accused China of ‘cultural genocide’.

China rejects such criticism, saying its rule ended serfdom and brought development to a backward area.

Sangye Tashi

Age: 18

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 27 November 2012

Place: Sangkhog in Sangchu Dzong, Labrang,
Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Teen Burn Himself to Death

VOA News, 28 November 2012

Sangye Tashi, 18, died after setting himself on fire Tuesday around 11 pm in Sangchu county in Gansu Province in eastern Tibet. Sangay reportedly shouted slogans calling for return of the Dalai Lama and release of the Panchen Lama and all Tibetan political prisoners.

Sources say local Tibetans then carried the deceased’s body a nearby house. Sangay Tashi is survived by his parents and four siblings.

Another Tibetan, 23 years old Thubwang Kyab, died at the same site of self-im-

molation on October 26. Today's protest is the 87th self-immolation by Tibetans from Tibet since February 2009. In November, 25 Tibetans have self-immolated themselves to protest Chinese policies.

Analysts say the Tibetan struggle against Chinese rule may have entered a new phase judging by the recent increase in self-immolation protests.

Robert Barnett of New York's Columbia University told VOA that the self-immolations seem to have become more deliberate in recent weeks.

He says the first phase of self-immolations began last year with monks and nuns trying to protect their monasteries from security crackdowns.

But he notes that the second wave, which occurred for most of the past year, involved individuals in small towns sharing sympathy with those monks and nuns.

"But now in this phase we have laypeople staging these immolations in ways that are much more determined in an attempt to get a response from Chinese authorities, by having immolations in clusters, very close together, many on the same day or within a few days and many in the same place," said Barnett.

James Leibold, a Tibet analyst for Australia's Latrobe University in Beijing, tells VOA that a broader segment of the Tibetan community is also involved in the latest protests.

"We've got the provinces that sort of surround the Tibetan autonomous region all having self-immolations in the last couple months, as well as the diversity of the people involved, in terms of age ranges, in terms of occupations. Both laypeople and monks and nuns [are] involved in these self-immolations. Without a doubt, it's really reaching a crisis point," said Leibold.

Many activists, including Tenzin Dolkar of the advocacy group Students for a Free Tibet, say the increase in self-immolations is aimed at sending a message to China's new leaders that Tibetans will continue their non-violent struggle for freedom.

"It seems Tibetans are really trying to put the Tibet issue on the map for the new Chinese leadership and to make sure Tibet truly becomes the top priority as Xi Jinping and his team take over," said Dolkar.

Some hold out hope that Xi Jinping, who is taking over China's top leadership spot, will be more sympathetic toward the plight of Tibetans, since his late father had a close relationship with the Dalai Lama in the 1950s.

But Leibold says so far there is no indication that the government has changed its position on Tibet.

“Sadly, we hear the same rhetoric coming out of Beijing, and Chinese officials continually blaming a few black hands for collaborating with the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan community to stir up trouble and to damage China’s ethnic unity and harmony. There’s just absolutely no will, it seems, to admit a failure of policy,” he said.

China says Tibetans enjoy full religious freedom and benefit from better living standards linked to Chinese investment in underdeveloped Tibetan regions. Beijing has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations to promote Tibetan separatism, a charge he denies.

<http://www.thetibetpost.com/en/news/tibet/3053-teenage-tibetan-dies-in-self-immolation-protest-in-tibet>

Teenage Tibetan Dies in Self-immolation Protest in Tibet

Tibet Post International, 28 November 2012

Dharamshala: - Jangyang Jinpa, a student at Sarah College near Dharamshala, northern India has reported that on November 27 at around 11pm, Sangye Tashi, an 18-year-old man from Ngura village, Sangkhok township, Sanchu county, in the Ladrang area of the Amdho region of north-eastern Tibet, self-immolated and died soon thereafter.

Earlier in the day, Sangye and several friends had driven motorbikes to Sangok and, just before self-immolating, Sangye phoned his cousin, Tsebhe, explaining his plans to self-immolate in the name of the Tibetan cause.

Tsebhe reportedly urged Sangye not to set himself on fire, but Sangye turned off his phone and, despite numerous attempts, Tshebe was unable to contact his cousin again.

Sangye’s family then went to Sangok, but Sangye had already self-immolated by the time they arrived. Observers reported that, after setting himself on fire, he shouted for His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet and for China to release all Tibetan political prisoners, in particular the Panchen Lama. Sangye’s

body was taken to one of his family's homes in Sangok.

Sangye Tashi's father, Nam Kho, has four other children. Sangye studied for four years at the primary school in Sangok township. He then returned home to become a yak herder.

A few weeks earlier, on October 26, 23-year-old Thupwang Kyab self-immolated near a local bus stand in nearby Sertri village.

Wande Khar

Age: 21

Occupation: semi-nomad

Date of self-immolation: 28 November 2012

Place: Dzorge in Tsoe, Kanlho, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Another Tibetan self-immolates in Tsoe

By Indrani Basu, *Times News Network*, Nov 29, 2012

TSEO: In yet another case of self-immolation, a 21-year-old Tibetan reportedly set himself on fire at around 7 pm (Tibet time) on Wednesday in Tsoe (Chinese: Hezuo) city of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Prefecture in Gansu Province.

“According to information being received from a reliable source, Wande Khar, a 21 year old Tibetan set himself on fire. He self-immolated calling for ‘the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet’, ‘release of the Panchen Lama’, ‘Freedom for Tibet’, ‘Culture and language Rights’ and the ‘protection of Tibet’s environment’ after which he succumbed to his injuries,” said a press statement released by Students for a Free Tibet (SFT).

He is reportedly survived by his father Tsering Thar, mother Kunsang Dolma and his elder brother Jampa and younger brother Sangay Dhondup.

“On Thursday, monks from the nearby monastery are paying homage and prayer at his residence in Yarki Sokdhi village which is 20 kilometer away from the Tsoe city,” said the statement.

“Due to heavy Chinese police patrol and restrictions, we are unable to get further details,” the statement quoted Kangtsa Jampa in India who has received this information.

Series of self-immolations in Tibet have now raised the number of self-immolations in Tibet to a staggering 88.

Young Tibetan burns self to death, Mass prayer service for self-immolators in eastern Tibet

Phayul, November 29, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 29: In more alarming reports coming out of Tibet, another Tibetan set himself on fire calling for the Dalai Lama's return in Tsoe region of eastern Tibet on Wednesday, November 28.

Sources have identified the Tibetan man as Wangdhen Khar, 21 years of age.

“Martyr Wande Khar set himself on fire on Wednesday, November 28 at around 7 pm (local time) in Tsoe region of Kanlho eastern Tibet,” Zoegey Kangtsa Jampa, an exiled Tibetan told Phayul citing sources in the region. “He later succumbed to his injuries,”

According to eyewitnesses, Wande Khar raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the release of Panchen Lama, freedom for Tibet, and the protection of Tibet's environment. He is survived by his father Tsering Thar, mother Kunsang Dolma and his elder brother Jampa and younger brother Sangay Dhondup.

Following his self-immolation protest, monks and local Tibetans reportedly gathered at his residence to offer prayers.

“Monks from nearby monastery are currently gathered at his residence in Yarki Sokdhi village some 20kms away from the Tsoe,

to offer prayers and pay their last respects,” the same source said while adding

that heavy restrictions in the region has affected the flow of information out of the region.

Also yesterday, around 500 Tibetans in Tsolho, eastern Tibet, publicly displayed a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and carried out a mass prayer service for the Tibetan spiritual leader's long life and for all the Tibetans who have self-immolated.

According to exile sources, a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was placed on a throne at the Atsok Monastery in Tsolho, following which local Tibetans offered khataks (white Tibetan scarf).

Defying strict government orders, the gathering then offered long life prayers for the Dalai Lama and for the Tibetan self immolators who have set themselves on fire protesting China's continued occupation and demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 88 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

November alone has reported 26 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans, including by school students in Chabcha and in Rebkong.

Defying official notice, three Tibetans die of self-immolation in Kanlho TCHRD, 01 December 2012

Three Tibetans have died of burning protests in the last four days ignoring a 21 October notice issued by the prefectural government that offers rewards of 50,000 yuan (U.S. \$7,913) for tipping off the Chinese government on "planning and abetment" of self-immolation protests in Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Gansu Province.

In the past four days, Kanlho TAP witnessed three protest self-immolations at Luchu (Ch: Luqu), Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) and Tsoe (Ch: Hezuo) city.

On 29 November, at around 2.30 pm (local time), a father of two, Tsering Namgyal, 31, died after setting himself on fire near local government office in Samtsa Township in Luchu (Ch: Luqu) County. He burned himself near the Lu-

chu County government office and shouted slogans against repressive policies of the Chinese government, sources said.

Namgyal's body was taken to his home where a large number of lay Tibetans and monks from Rabgyeling Monastery and Mogru Monastery gathered to conduct prayers and cremation rituals.

Tsering Namgyal was born in Lotso nomadic camp in Samtsa Village in Sangkhog Township in Sangchu County. He is survived by his parents, wife, Choekyong Tso, and two daughters - Dorjee Kyi, 7, and Kalsang Dolma, 3.

In Tsoe city, Bhendey Khar, 21, died after setting himself on fire, at about 7 pm (local time) on 28 November. According to sources in Tibet, Bhendey Khar shouted for “the return of the Dalai Lama, release of Panchen Lama, freedom for religion and language, and for freedom in Tibet” before succumbing to his injuries. Local Tibetans and monks gathered at Khar's home to offer prayers and condolences. Khar is survived by his father Tsering Thar, his mother Kunsang Dolma and two siblings.

On 27 November, at about 11 pm (local time), Sangay Tashi, 18, died after setting his body on fire in Sangkhog Township in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County.

Prior to his protest, Sangay called one of his brothers and told him he was going to burn his body for the cause of Tibet. He then switched off his phone even as his brother tried to tell him not to do it and to wait for him. Sangay's family members arrived at the scene only to find him dead from burns.

Citing eyewitnesses, sources told TCHRD that Sangay shouted for “the return of the Dalai Lama, release of the Panchen Lama and other political prisoners.”

Sangay died at the spot close to where Tsewang Kyap aka Thupwang Kyap, had earlier self-immolated on 26 October. Namgyal left behind his parents and four siblings.

Two Die in Self-immolation Protest in Amdo

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 29 November 2012

Two deaths from self-immolation in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet are reported from Tibet's northeastern Amdo province.

Bendey Khar, 21, and Tsering Tashi, 31, set themselves on fire in two separate

incidents. Both died in their fiery protest.

Khar set himself ablaze at Tsoe in Kanlho on Wednesday, and Tashi near the local government office at Luchu town in Kanlho on Thursday.

They both had called for greater freedom in Tibet, the return of the Dalai Lama, and the release of all Tibetan political prisoners.

Tsering Tashi comes from Zamtse Lotso village of Luchu. He is survived by his wife and two daughters aged seven and three.

They became the 88th and 89th self-immolators.

Tsering Namgyal

Age: 31

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 29 November 2012

Place: near the local government office in Luchu,
Eastern Tibet

Current statu: deceased



<http://news.in.msn.com/national/two-more-tibetans-kill-themselves-toll-89>

Two more Tibetans kill themselves, toll 89

MSN News, 29 November 2012

Dharamsala: Two more people were killed in Tibet after they set themselves on fire in the last two days, the Tibetan government-in-exile said here on Thursday.

The Tibetan administration also demanded the return of their spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet and the release of political prisoners. The toll in such self-immolation cases in Tibet rose to 89 since 2009.

While Tsering Namgyal, a 31-year-old father of two, set himself on fire at Luchu town in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet Thursday, Bendey Khar, 21, died at

Tsoe in Kanlho on Wednesday.

“The US is very concerned about the situation, the heightened tensions in the Tibetan areas, the deplorable self-immolations and of course just the policies of the Chinese government at all levels,” the US ambassador to China Gary Locke said Tuesday, according to the Tibetan administration.

“And we’re publicly and privately constantly urging the Chinese to re-examine some of their policies that threaten the linguistic identity, the cultural identity, and religious identity of the Tibetan people,” he said.

The Dalai Lama has lived in India since fleeing his homeland in 1959. The Tibetan administration in exile is based in this northern Indian hill town.

Tibetan man burns self to death, Toll climbs to 89

Phayul, November 29, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, November 29: In fresh reports coming out of Tibet, a Tibetan man set himself on fire today in Luchu region of eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Sources have identified the Tibetan as Tsering Namgyal, 31, a father of two, from Zamtse Lotso Dewa region of Luchu.

“Tsering Namgyal set himself on fire near the local Chinese government office in Luchu earlier today for the cause of Tibet,” Sonam, a Tibetan monk living in south India told *Phayul*, citing sources in the region. “Tsering Namgyal passed in his fiery protest.

Further details on the self-immolation protest are not available at the time of filing this report.

Tsering Namgyal is survived by his wife Choekyong Tso, their two children, Dorjee Kyi, 7, and Kalsang Dolma, 3, and his parents

This is the third self-immolation protest in Luchu region in the last ten days. On November 26, Gonpo Tsering, 24, father of three children, all below the age of six, passed away in his fiery protest while raising slogans for Tibet’s freedom, human rights in Tibet, and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile. Earlier on November 22, Tamding Kyab, 23, a nomad and former monk, passed

away in his self-immolation protest in the same region.

Following the self-immolations, Luchu has been placed under heightened restrictions with the deployment of a large number of Chinese security personnel and armed forces.

89 Tibetans inside Tibet have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009. The recent alarming escalation in the self-immolation protests has now witnessed 27 Tibetans set themselves on fire in the month of November alone. Speaking to CNN, US Ambassador to China, Gary Locke in an interview broadcast on November 27, said the United States is “very concerned about the situation, the heightened tensions in the Tibetan areas, the deplorable self-immolations and of course just the Chinese policies of the Chinese government at all levels.” “Preserving the ethnic, religious, linguistic identity of the Tibetan people is a top priority for the U.S. government just as we are very concerned about all human rights issues and we believe that human rights has to be a fundamental part of U.S. foreign policy and we, very much urge the Chinese government publicly and privately to adhere to the universal principles, universal declaration of human rights, which are also part of the Chinese constitution,” Locke said.

In September, Locke had visited two Tibetan monasteries in the Zungchu region of Ngaba in eastern Tibet as part of a broader business trip to the region.

Two More Tibetans Immolate, Toll Reaches 89

Tibet.net, November 29, 2012 5:20 pm

DHARAMSHALA: Two more Tibetans have died after setting themselves on fire in separate incidents, taking the total self-immolations to 89, including 27 in November alone.

Bendey Khar, 21, died after setting himself on fire at Tsoe in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet yesterday (28 November). He called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the release of all Tibetan political prisoners, freedom of religion and language as well as the protection of Tibet's fragile environment.

Tsering Namgyal, a 31-year-old father of two, died setting himself on fire near the local government office at Luchu town in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet today (29 November). He hails from Zamtsa Lotso village of Luchu. He is survived

by his parents, his young wife and two infant daughters aged 7 and 3.

Tibetan self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

The US ambassador to China, Gary Locke, on 27 November, reiterated his strong concerns about the unprecedented wave of self-immolations in Tibet. He said, “the United States is very concerned about the situation, the heightened tensions in the Tibetan areas, the deplorable self-immolations and of course just the policies of the Chinese government at all levels. And we’re publicly and privately constantly urging the Chinese to re-examine some of their policies that threaten the linguistic identity, the cultural identity, and religious identity of the Tibetan people”.

<http://www.voatibetanenglish.com/content/article/1555206.html>

Two Tibetans Self-Immolate, Total Reaches 89

VOA News, 29 November 2012

The total number of self-immolation from Tibet has reached 89, after reports of two latest protests. In November alone, an alarming number of 27 Tibetans have burned themselves.

Tsering Namgyal, a 31-year-old father of two, died setting himself on fire near the local government office at Luchu town in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet Thursday. He is survived by his parents, his wife and two daughters aged 3 and 7.

Luchu region had witnessed two other self-immolations in the last ten days. On Monday (November 26), Gonpo Tsering, 24, died calling shouting slogans for freedom and human rights in Tibet, and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. A week earlier (November 22), Tamding Kyab, 23, set himself on fire and died in the same region.

Yesterday, 21 years old Bendey Khar died after setting himself on fire at Tsoe in Kanlho in north-eastern Tibet Wednesday calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the release of all Tibetan political prisoners, freedom of religion and language and protection of Tibet’s fragile environment.

In an interview with CNN’s Christiane Amanpour, the US ambassador to Chi-

na, Gary Locke expressed concerns about the waves of Tibetan self-immolations. He stated that there were “high expectations” for change on Tibet policy within the new Chinese leadership under Xi Jinping, and said “preserving the ethnic, religious, linguistic identity of the Tibetan people is a top priority for the U.S. government”

In September, Ambassador Locke is visited Ngaba area, the site of more than 36 self-immolations and urged the Chinese government to meet with Tibetan representatives to examine policies that have led to the self-immolations.

Kunchok Kyab

Age: 29

Occupation: nomad

Date of self-immolation: 30 November 2012

Place: Dzorge in Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Self-Immolation and Missing Townspeople in Ngaba

VOA News, 30 November, 2012

Kunchok Kyab, a 29 year old man, carried out a self-immolation protest on Friday night (November 30, 2012) in Ngaba. Kyab was taken away by security forces and his condition is unknown at present. A number of Tibetans who approached the security forces to demand the return of Kunchok Kyab are missing and presumed to be detained. Ngaba town is extremely tense with people deeply concerned about the fate of Kunchok Kyab and detention of some of their townspeople.

Tibet self-immolation toll reaches 90, Fears over major protests in Barkham

Phayul, November 30, 2012

DHARAMSHALA,: In reports just in, a Tibetan man today set himself on fire in Shagdom region on Ngaba, eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's occupation of Tibet.

The Tibetan man has been identified as Kunchok Kyab, 29, from Akyi region of Zoegey in Ngaba.

According to the exile base of Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, the situation in the region, at the time of filing this report, is being described as 'very tense' with fears over eruption of major protests in the region.

"At around 9 am (local time) Kunchok Kyab set himself on fire near a gas station in the Shagdom region of Ngaba," Kirti Monastery said in a release. "Shortly afterwards, Chinese security personnel arrived at the site and bundled him away after dousing the fire."

"He was taken straight to regional headquarters of Barkham and it is not yet known whether he is dead or alive."

According to the release, a group of young Tibetans, after seeing Kunchok Kyab being taken away, immediately followed the Chinese police vehicles. The wellbeing and whereabouts of those young Tibetans are also not yet known.

"According to latest reports coming in at 7 pm IST, a large number of local Tibetans have gathered to demand for the return of Kunchok Kyab and the young Tibetans," Kirti Monastery said. "The crowd is planning to carry out a major protest and the situation has become very tense."

Kunchok Kyab has two children, a nine-year-old and a six-year-old.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 90 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

November alone has reported 28 self-immolations and protests by thousands of Tibetans, including by school students in Chabcha and Rebkong

Two Tibet self-immolations in two days, total toll 92

TibetanReview.net, Dec. 04, 2012

Two self-immolations in two days have taken the total number of Tibetans who have carried out such last resort protest against Chinese rule to 92 since Feb 2009. They occurred in Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) County of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Prefecture, Gansu Provincen on Dec 2 and in Pema (Chinese: Banma) County of Golog (Chinese: Guoluo) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on Dec 3.

Sungdue Kyab, a youth in his late teens and a father of a yet-to-be-one child, carried out his fiery attempted suicide protest in the main street (Highway No. 213) in Bora Town, near Bora Monastery, in Sangchu County at around 3:30 PM on Dec 2. He struggled to keep the flames going as it was very windy. When Chinese police and paramilitary police stationed at the monastery rushed towards him, he banged his head against a wall to try to escape being caught alive.

The Chinese quickly arrived on the scene and put out the flames. They then took him to the prefectural Hospital in Tsoe City, kept him there for about two hours for emergency treatment, and brought him back, reported Radio Free Asia (Washington) Dec 2.

His current conditions remain unknown.

Lobsang Gendun, a 29-year-old monk, staged a self-immolation protest near a busy road intersection in Selethang Town of Pema County town at around 7:45 PM on Dec 3. He burned to death.

Local Tibetans wrested the monk's charred remains from the Chinese police to give it a decent cremation service. It was first taken to his monastery of Penag Kadak Toedeling.

Tibetan self-immolation protests hit a new peak in the run up to and during the Nov 8-14, 18th five-yearly Congress of the Communist Party of China in Beijing and it continues unabated. The congress endorsed a new seven-member politburo Standing Committee, China's fifth generation, top decision-making body, shortlisted by party elders anxious to secure their family interests and personal legacies in behind the scene bargains. The number of known Tibetan self-immolations in November was 28.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that Konchog Kyap, 29, who self-immolated in at a gas station located some 10 km from Shagdom Township in Zoege (Ch: Ruo'ergai) County of Ngaba Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on Nov 30 had apparently died in the evening of the next day at a hospital in Barkham County where Chinese police took him.

The Chinese delivered to the youth's family only his ashes, denying them the opportunity to give him a proper religious service. A group of youths from the deceased's village who went after the police to get him back from their clutch still remain disappeared, raising concerns about their conditions and whereabouts.

Konchog Kyap's death brought to 76 the number of self-immolators who died.

Kunchok Kyab passes away, Self-immolation death toll reaches 76

Phayul, December 03, 201

DHARAMSHALA, December 3: Adding to the growing death toll in Tibet's self-immolation protests, another Tibetan self-immolator passed away in a Chinese hospital, days after he set himself on fire protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Kunchok Kyab, 29, set himself on fire near a gas station in the Shagdom region of Dzoegge, eastern Tibet on November 30. He was forcibly taken away by Chinese security personnel, reportedly to a hospital in Barkham, where he passed away on December 1.

Speaking to Phayul, Kanyag Tsering, an exiled monk who has been closely monitoring the situation inside Tibet said Kunchok Kyab succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Barkham region of Ngaba in the evening of December 1.

"Only a portion of his ashes were handed over to the family members," Tsering said.

Following the news of Kunchok Kyab's death, a large number of local Tibetans and monks started visiting the deceased's family, against strict orders, to offer their last respects and condolences.

The same source added that the wellbeing and whereabouts of a group of young Tibetans who followed the Chinese police vehicles after seeing Kunchok Kyab being taken away, remains unknown.

“We are not able to contact our sources in the region and thus have very little information on the present situation in the region,” Tsering told Phayul.

Many of the Tibetan self-immolators have died under unknown circumstances in Chinese custody after being taken away alive by security personnel.

Last month, Tsegyal, a 27-year-old old father of two passed away in a Chinese prison after he was denied any medical attention for 12 days.

Tsegyal set himself ablaze on November 7, in Tingser village of Bekar town in Driru (Ch: Biru) region of Nagchu, Tibet on the eve of the Chinese Communist Party’s 18th National Congress.

From November 7 to 18, Tsegyal received no treatment for his burns while being held at a local police station in Nagchu town where he succumbed to his injuries.

Tsegyu is survived by his two children, a six-year-old and an eight-month-old infant.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 91 Tibetans set themselves on fire, since 2009, demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

Sungdue Kyab

Age: 17

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 2 December 2012

Place: Bora in Labrang, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: unknown



Tibet continues to burn, Tibetan man self-immolates

Phayul, 2 December 2012

DHARAMSHALA, December 2: The wave of fiery protests inside Tibet continues unabated with reports of another self-immolation protest today in Bora region of Sangchu region in eastern Tibet.

According to exile sources, a young Tibetan man, identified as Sungdue Kyab, set himself ablaze in Bora town of Sangchu, Labrang Tashikhyil region of eastern Tibet.

Sungdue Kyab reportedly carried out his self-immolation protest in the afternoon today on the main street in Bora town near the Bora Monastery. Soon after he set himself on fire, Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of his protest, doused the flames and bundled him away. He is believed to have survived his protest.

According to eyewitnesses, Sungdue Kyab was alive when Chinese security personnel took him away, reportedly to a hospital in Tsoe.

Following the self-immolation protest, monks from the Bora Monastery and local Tibetans reportedly began to make preparations to go to Tsoe but were denied permission by the Chinese authorities. The situation in Bora is being described as tense and communication lines have been heavily hampered.

Further details are awaited at the time of filing this report.

On October 20, Lhamo Kyab, a 27-year-old father of two, passed away in his self-immolation protest near the Bora Monastery. He raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The recent escalation in self-immolation protests in Tibet has accounted for 28 self-immolations in the month of November alone. 91 Tibetans have self-immolated inside Tibet since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Last month, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, in a strong statement, urged Chinese authorities to “promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas.”

Pillay said she was disturbed by “continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights,” and called on the Chinese authorities to release detainees, allow independent human rights monitors to visit Tibet, and to lift restrictions on media access to Tibet.

Speaking to reporters, Pillay’s spokesman, Rupert Colville, told a news briefing in Geneva on Friday that the self-immolations “are an illustration of how serious the situation is.”

“We don’t see any progress in dealing with the underlying problems facing Tibetans both in Tibet and in other areas,” Colville said.

Tibetan Immolates in Bora, Toll Reaches 91

Tibet.net, December 3, 2012 10:32 am

DHARAMSHALA: A Tibetan man set himself on fire yesterday (2 December) in Bora, Labrang in Tibet’s north-eastern region around 3:40 pm (local time).

Sungdue Kyab, father of one, self-immolated on the main road near Bora monastery protesting against the Chinese government.

Chinese police arrived at the site within minutes and took him to Kanlho People’s hospital, eyewitnesses said.

Family and friends were barred from visiting him at the hospital. His well-being is currently unknown.

Since 2009, 91 Tibetans have set themselves on fire calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Young Father Becomes 91st Tibetan to Self-immolate

The Tibet Post International, 03 December 2012

Dharamshala: -A young father is reported to have been bundled away by Chinese police after setting himself alight on Sunday, December 2.

According to exile sources, Sungdue Kyab self-immolated in the main street of Bora town, in the Sangchu region of Amdo, eastern Tibet, at around 3.30pm, bringing the official number of Tibetans setting themselves alight protesting Chinese rule in their country since March 2011, to 91.

Eye witnesses reported that the father of one was still alive when Chinese security personnel doused the flames and bundled him away – reportedly to a hospital in Tsoe.

Local residents, including monks from the nearby Bora monastery, are believed to have attempted to visit the injured protester in Tsoe, but were denied permission by the Chinese authorities.

On October 20, another young father, 27-year-old Lhamo Kyab, died after setting himself alight near Bora monastery, after shouting slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, making this the second incident the town has witnessed in less than seven weeks.

In November alone there were 28 self-immolations in Tibet – almost one a day. The spate peaked when five Tibetans set themselves alight in one day on November 7th - the eve of the Chinese Communist Party's week-long 18th National Congress, during which Xi Jinping was selected as the country's next president.

It has also been reported that Konchok Kyap, who self-immolated in Zaru, in Ngaba county, on November 30, has died. It is believed that local people are doing all they can to greet and support his family, who have only been granted a small amount of his ashes.

Meanwhile the situation in Bora, where many communication lines have been 'hampered', remains tense.

One more immolates self in Tibet, toll rises to 91

Hindustan Times, 3 December 2012

The wave of fiery protests inside Tibet continues unabated with the report of another self-immolation protest in Bora region of Sangchu region in eastern Tibet on Monday, taking the toll to 91.

According to Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), a young Tibetan, Sungdue Kyab, set himself on fire protesting against China's repressive policies in Bora town of Sangchu, Labrang Tashikhyil region of eastern Tibet, on Sunday.

"Sungdue Kyab, father of one, immolated self on the main road near Bora monastery protesting against the Chinese government," said a CTA official, adding that soon after he set himself on fire, Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of his protest.

"Chinese security personnel doused the flames and bundled him away. According to eyewitnesses, Kyab was alive when Chinese security personnel took him away, reportedly to a hospital in Tsoe," said the official.

The official told that following the self-immolation protest, monks from the Bora Monastery and local Tibetans reportedly began to make preparations to go to Tsoe but were denied permission by the Chinese authorities.

"Family and friends were barred from visiting him at the hospital. His well-being is currently unknown," said the official, adding that the situation in Bora is very tense and communication lines have been heavily hampered.

Since March 2009, 91 Tibetans have set themselves on fire calling for the return of spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans, of which 28 self-immolations have taken place in November alone.

Tibetan self-immolator Sungdue Kyab kept in a fortified hospital

Phayul, Tuesday, December 04, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: The condition of Tibetan self-immolator Sungdue Kyab remains unknown two days after he set himself on fire near a monastery in Bora, eastern Tibet protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Although details were scanty following his self-immolation protest on Decem-

ber 2, now it is known that he was whisked away by Chinese security personnel from the site of his protest and being kept in a heavily fortified hospital.

Sonam, an exiled Tibetan monk told Phayul that local Tibetans who were circumambulating the Bora Monastery in Bora town of Sangchu, Labrang Tashikhyil region of eastern Tibet, saw Sungdue Kyab's body on fire and his head bleeding profusely.

"Sungdue Kyab had set himself on fire and when he saw Chinese security personnel, stationed at the monastery, approaching, he began to smash his head against the walls," Sonam said citing sources in the region. "By the time the police took him away, Sungdue Kyab was badly burned and bleeding profusely from his head."

He was later admitted to a Chinese hospital in Kanlho and has been denied any visits by his family members.

"The hospital where Sungdue Kyab is being kept is heavily guarded by Chinese armed forces and none of his family members have been allowed to meet him," the same source added. "There is at present no information on the Sungdue Kyab's physical condition."

Sungdue Kyab and his wife Dugkar Kyi have a son who is nearly two years old. His parents are Tsebha and Bendhe Tso.

An alarming total of 92 Tibetans have self-immolated inside Tibet since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

The Dharamshala based exile Tibetan administration last month called for a 'Global Solidarity Day' to be observed on December 10, World Human Rights Day, in light of the escalating self-immolation protests in Tibet.

The Central Tibetan Administration urged Tibetans and supporters to "light a candle or lamp, observe a minute's silence, and say a prayer for all those who have died for the cause of Tibet, and locally organise vigils and rallies" on December 10.

"The international community must not remain an idle bystander," CTA said yesterday in a release. "Governments, international bodies, human rights organisations and individuals can make a difference by intensifying their efforts to convince the Chinese government to resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue."

Lobsang Gendun

Age: 29

Occupation: monk

Date of self-immolation: 3 December 2012

Place: at a crossroad in Pema Dzong, Golog,
Eastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Self-immolations continue: Monk burns self to death in latest protest

Phayul, December 03, 2012

DHARAMSHALA, December 3: In confirmed reports coming out of Tibet, yet another Tibetan set himself on fire today in Golog region of eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Lobsang Gendun, a 29-year-old Tibetan monk self-immolated in Golog Pema Dzong at around 7:45 pm (local time). He succumbed to his injuries at the site of his protest.

Tsangyang Gyatso, an exiled Tibetan told Phayul that Lobsang Gendun was a monk at the Penag Kadak Troedreling Monastery in Seley Thang region of Golog Pema Dzong.

"According to eyewitnesses, Lobsang Gendun had his hands clasped in prayers as he raised slogans while engulfed in flames," Tsangyang said. "He walked a few steps towards a busy road intersection and then fell to the ground."

Following the self-immolation protest, a minor scuffle broke out between local Tibetans and Chinese security personnel, who tried to confiscate Lobsang Gendun's body.

"Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of the protest and began to forcibly remove Lobsang Gyatso's body," the same source said. "But local Tibetans rushed in and rescued his charred body from falling into the hands of the Chinese authorities."

They later carried Lobsang Gyatso's body to his monastery, where it is believed

to be currently kept.

Security has been heightened in the region following today's fiery protest.

Lobsang Gendun is survived by his parents, Golog Lokho and Sago Dewang, and his 11 siblings.

The global rights group, Human Rights Watch last week said the unprecedented increase in the number of self-immolation cases in Tibet highlights the "failure of Chinese authorities to address Tibetan grievances" and blamed China's "increasingly pervasive and punitive security measures" for having "exacerbated the situation" in Tibet.

HRW renewed its calls for the formation of a contact group on Tibet while noting that "coordinated, international expressions of concern are essential to get Beijing to substantively address the issues being raised by Tibetans."

An alarming total of 92 Tibetans have self-immolated inside Tibet since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibetan Monk Dies From Self-Immolation

VOA News, December 03, 2012

Tibetan sources tell VOA that another person has set himself on fire in western China as part of a protest against Chinese rule in ethnic Tibetan areas. Sources say a 29-year-old monk, Lobsang Gendun, had his hands clasped in prayer as flames engulfed him Monday evening. Witnesses in Qinghai province say the monk shouted slogans as he died, but they say they could not clearly hear what he was saying.

Local Tibetans are reported to have taken the late monk's body to his monastery Penag Kadak Troedreling Monastery in Seley Thang after a minor scuffle with Chinese security forces. The security personnel had tried to confiscate the monk's body.

At least 92 Tibetans have self-immolated in western China since 2009, with 28 cases reported in November alone. The acceleration in self-immolations has coincided with Tibetans staging several anti-China rallies, despite a heavy Chinese security presence. Beijing accuses the India-based Dalai Lama of inciting the self-immolations to

promote Tibetan separatism - a charge he denies. Speaking last week in India, the Dalai Lama said totalitarian forms of government are on the decline globally, and he urged China's Communist rulers to act according to what he called the "new reality."

Burning Monk Walks 300 Steps

RFA, 2012-12-03

A Tibetan monk set himself ablaze in protest against Beijing's rule and walked an incredible 300 steps with hands folded in prayer before he collapsed and died, according to sources.

Chinese security forces and Tibetan residents tussled over custody of the body of Lobsang Gendun, 29, after he self-immolated at around 7 p.m. local time in Qinghai province's Pema (in Chinese, Banma) county, said the sources, speaking from inside Tibet.

"He set himself on fire at a tri-road crossing in Pema county near the eight petal lotus monument made of mud," one source told RFA's Tibetan service. "With his body on fire, he walked about 300 steps with hands folded in prayer posture, and raised slogans before he collapsed dead on the ground," the source said.

"At that moment, the Chinese police and PSB [Public Security Bureau officers] arrived at the scene and attempted to take his body away. However, the local Tibetans managed to wrest his body away from the Chinese and brought it to a monastery," explained the source. Lobsang Gendun was attached to Penak monastery in Pema county, which sources said has been put under strict surveillance following the latest self-immolation.

"Several hundred Chinese police and armed PSB have encircled Pema county center and imposed stringent restrictions on the locals," a Tibetan living in exile in India's Dharamsala hill town said, quoting local contacts.

Burning toll up to 92

The latest burning brings to 92 the total number of Tibetan self-immolations since February 2009, when the fiery protests began.

Meanwhile, a 29-year-old Tibetan man who self-immolated on Friday in the

Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province and was whisked away immediately by Chinese security forces is presumed dead, sources said Monday.

Kunchok Kyap “is now presumed dead as the Chinese authorities on December 1 [Saturday] returned his ashes to his family, following which monks and laymen of all ages gathered to pray for his departed soul,” one source said. Most of the self-immolation protests have been aimed at highlighting opposition to Chinese rule and seeking the return of the Dalai Lama, who fled to India from Tibet after a failed national revolt against Chinese occupation in 1959.

The Central Tibetan Administration, as the Tibetan government-in-exile in India is called, said the self-immolations underscore “political repression, economic marginalization, environmental destruction, and cultural assimilation” in Tibet. Chinese authorities have beefed up security and clamped down on the Internet and other communications in most of the areas where self-immolations have occurred, sources said.

Tibetan Monk Dies after Setting Self on Fire, Total Self-Immolation Rises to 92

Tibet.net, Press Release, December 4, 2012

The Central Tibetan Administration reiterated its grave concern over the alarming escalation of self-immolations by Tibetans inside Tibet, with fresh reports coming out of the region say a Tibetan monk has died after setting himself on fire at Pema (Chinese: Banma) Golog prefecture in eastern Tibet’s Amdo Province (incorporated into Qinghai Province) on Monday (3 December).

Lobsang Gendun, 29, a monk of Penag Kadak Troedreling Monastery in Seley Thang region of Golog, with folded hands raised slogans after setting fire to himself, eyewitnesses said. Local Tibetans rushed to the spot, prevented the Chinese security forces from taking away the body and took it to the local monastery.

Despite repeated appeals by the Central Tibetan Administration to refrain from taking drastic actions, over 92 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009, including 79 in 2012 and 28 this November alone. The self-immolators have

called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

The international community, including the UN, EU and US, had strongly urged the Chinese leadership to address the long-standing grievances of the Tibetan people through dialogue.

<http://www.examiner.com/article/another-tragic-self-immolation-occurred-tibet>

Another tragic self-immolation occurred in Tibet

By Harold Mandel, *Examiner*, December 3, 2012

The intensity of the distress of the Tibetans living in Tibet has again become apparent with another self-immolation. Phayul.com has reported today, Dec. 3, 2012, Breaking: Self-immolations continue in Tibet, Monk burns self to death in latest protest. Reports from Tibet have confirmed another Tibetan set himself on fire today in the Golog region of eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's repressive rule over Tibet.

Early this evening in Tibet Lobsang Gendun, a 29-year-old Tibetan monk, self-immolated in Golog Pema Dzung. He died from his injuries at the site of his protest. Tsangyang Gyatso, an exiled Tibetan, has told Phayul, "According to eyewitnesses, Lobsang Gendun had his hands clasped in prayers as he raised slogans while engulfed in flames. He walked a few steps towards a busy road intersection and then fell to the ground."

After this self-immolation there was a minor scuffle between local Tibetans and Chinese security personnel, who are reported to have tried to confiscate Lobsang Gendun's body. When Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of the protest and began to forcibly remove Lobsang Gyatso's body, local Tibetans rushed in and rescued his burned body from falling into the hands of the Chinese authorities. Lobsang Gyatso's body was carried to his monastery, where it is believed to be currently held.

Kunchok Pelgye

Age: 24

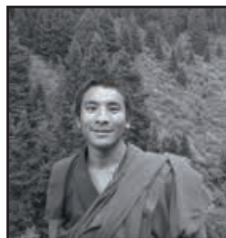
Occupation: monk

Date of self-immolation: 8 December 2012

Place: Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery in Dzoegé,

Ngaba, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Two Tibetans burn themselves to death in protest against Chinese rule

AFP, BEIJING, 12 December 2012

Two more Tibetans burned themselves to death in protest at China's rule of the Himalayan region, a rights group said yesterday, as state media accused the Dalai Lama of turning Tibetan Buddhism into "an evil cult."

Both immolations happened on Saturday in restive Tibetan-inhabited regions of China, bringing the number of Tibetans who have set themselves ablaze since 2009 to 95, the International Campaign for Tibet said in a statement from London.

Kunchok Pelgye, 24, set himself alight in Sichuan Province's Aba Prefecture — where most of the 95 incidents have taken place — while Pema Dorjee, 23, self-immolated in Gansu Province, the group said.

As they set themselves on fire, both men called out for the Dalai Lama to be allowed to return to Tibet, the group said, citing witnesses at the scenes.

The two immolations occurred on the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Dalai Lama's Yellow Hat school of Buddhism, an important date in its calendar.

On the anniversary Lhasa's Jokhang temple, Tibetan Buddhism's holiest shrine, was surrounded by police, soldiers and firemen, the campaign said, in an apparent effort to quell any further self-immolation attempts.

China accuses the Dalai Lama of inciting the spate of burnings and has ordered judicial departments to charge anyone caught aiding or abetting self-immolators to be tried for murder.

According to Xinhua news agency a monk and his nephew have been detained for inciting eight Tibetans to set themselves alight.

The men acted on the instructions of the Dalai Lama, Xinhua said, citing police “confessions and investigations.”

In an editorial yesterday, the People’s Daily, the official mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, said the goal of the burnings was to seek independence.

“The Dalai clique is using religion to exert spiritual control over people and to sacrifice these people in order to realize their political goals,” it said. “This not only completely violates Tibetan Buddhism and its traditions, but clearly embodies the special characteristics of ‘an evil cult.’”

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country’s majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically minority areas. Beijing denies the allegations, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom.

Monk Dies After Self-immolation in Ngaba

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, 8 December 2012

A monk in Ngaba on Saturday set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, according to exile Tibetan sources.

Kunchok Phelgye, 24, carried out his fiery protest outside the main assembly hall of the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery at 5.20 pm local time, according to Losang Yeshe and Kanyag Tsering of Kirti monastery in exile in McLeod Ganj who have contacts with activists in Ngaba.

He had his hands clasped together in prayer, and as his body was consumed by flames, he shouted: “May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for 10,000 years! May His Holiness the Dalai Lama be allowed to return to Tibet! May Kirti Rinpoche be allowed to return to Tibet! May Tibetans in Tibet and in exile be reunited.”

He died at the site of his protest.

As Kunchok was on fire, the monks present there gathered around him in shock, shouted out his name, and recited the prayer starting “Lobsang Gyalwa Kungi Nyingje Ter.” This prayer is usually recited in honour of Kirti Rinpoche, who lives in exile in McLeod Ganj.

Kunchok's remains were carried back to his room at the monastery where hundreds of monks chanted prayers dedicated to him.

Konchok Pelgye was from Gonda Dewa village in Dringwa township, Dzoegge county.

Chinese authorities have now placed Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery and surrounding villages under security blockade.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-12-11/an-tibet-immolation-arrests/4420858>

Two more self-immolations in Tibet

Australia News Network, 11 Dec, 2012

The International Campaign for Tibet group said Kunchok Pelgye, 24, set himself alight in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, while Pema Dorjee, 23, self-immolated in neighbouring Gansu province, on Saturday.

The deaths bring the total number of Tibetans who have self-immolated since 2009 to 95, the group said in a statement from London.

The two immolations occurred on the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Dalai Lama's Yellow Hat school of Buddhism, an important date in its calendar.

On the anniversary Lhasa's Jokhang temple, Tibetan Buddhism's holiest shrine, was surrounded by police, soldiers and firemen, the campaign said, in an apparent effort to quell any further self-immolation attempts.

"Evil cult"

Chinese state media has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the spate of burnings.

"The Dalai clique is using religion to exert spiritual control over people and to sacrifice these people in order to realised their political goals," The People's Daily said.

"This not only completely violates Tibetan Buddhism and its traditions, but clearly embodies the special characteristics of 'an evil cult'."

However, the Dalai Lama has long denied China's accusations that he is seeking

an independent Tibet, saying he wants greater autonomy for the region instead.

Arrests

Meanwhile, the official Xinhua news agency says a monk and his nephew have been detained for inciting the self-immolations of eight Tibetans.

The men acted on the instructions of the Dalai Lama, Xinhua said, citing police “confessions and investigations”.

China’s Ministry of Public Security says inciting self-immolation is now treated as intentional homicide, a charge that carries the death penalty.

The Tibetans’ detention has been the subject of a media blitz in China.

Two Young Tibetans Burn

Radio Free Asia, 8 December 2012

Two Tibetan men self-immolated Saturday in separate protests against Chinese rule in Tibet, one of whom was a monk who called for the return of exiled spiritual leaders to the region, Tibetan sources said.

Konchok Phelgyal, 24, a monk from Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in China’s Sichuan province, and Pema Dorje, a 23-year-old layman from Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province perished in the acts.

The new burnings were the 93rd and 94th Tibetan self-immolations since February 2009, when the fiery protests began.

“Today [Saturday], Konchok Phelgyal, a monk of Sumdo Monastery in Dzoegge (Ruo’ergai) county in Ngaba self-immolated around 5:20 p.m. against Chinese policy [in Tibet] and died,” two sources based in India’s Dharamsala hill town told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

They said the young monk had shouted out slogans while he sat with his hands folded in prayer after setting himself alight.

“He called for the long life of the [Tibetan spiritual leader in exile] Dalai Lama, and his return to Tibet,” said Kanyak Tsering and Lobsang Yeshi of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamsala, citing a source inside Tibet.

“He also called for the return of Kirti Kyabgon Rinpoche [the exiled Head

Lama of the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba],” they said.

The sources said Konchok Phelgyal had also voiced hope for a “reunion of Tibetans both inside and outside of Tibet.”

“As he was being burnt in protest, the monks of the [Sumdo] Monastery gathered around his burning body and prayed,” they said.

“Thereafter, his body was moved to his room inside the monastery and several hundred monks conducted prayers for him.”

The young Konchok Phelgyal had been studying Buddhist dialectics at the Taksang Lhamo Kirti Monastery since 2010 as a visiting monk from the Sumdo Monastery.

“He is the son of Konchok Kyab (father) and Dolma Tso (mother) of the Gonda Dewa nomadic village under Dringwa township, Dzoerge county in Ngaba,” Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshi said.

“He has nine family members including his parents.”

Pema Dorjee

Age: 23

Occupation: farmer

Date of self-immolation: 8 December 2012

Place: near the main assembly hall of Shitsang Monastery in Luchu, Eastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Burning Tibetan calls for independence, Two self-immolations in a day

Phayul, December 08, 2012

DHARAMSHALA: In no respite to the wave of fiery protests inside Tibet, a second Tibetan today set himself on fire protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Pema Dorjee, 23, set himself on fire in the Luchu region of eastern Tibet at around 4:30 pm (local time). A group of exiled Tibetans from the region told

Phayul that he succumbed to his injuries at the protest site.

“Martyr Pema Dorjee set himself on fire in front of the main assembly hall of the Shitsang Monastery in Luchu,” the group said. “A large number of Tibetans who were at the Monastery to offer prayers witnessed the self-immolation protest.”

Today, the 25th day of the 10th month of the Tibetan Lunar calendar is observed as Gaden Ngamchoe, the day of Je Tsongkhapa’s Parinirvana. Tibetans all over, observe this day by offering lamps in monasteries, temples, stupas, and at homes to venerate the mortal departure of Lama Tsongkhapa, a great 14th century Tibetan Buddhist master.

According to Sonam, an exiled Tibetan, Pema Dorjee raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibet’s independence.

“Pema Dorjee raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, independence of Tibet, unity of Tibetans and for the land of Tibet to be ruled by Tibetans,” Sonam said citing a contact in the region.

“There are heavy restrictions placed around the monastery as of now,” the same source added.

Pema Dorjee is a native of Chokhor village in Shitsang region of Luchu. His village is located at around a distance of 30kms from the Shitsang Monastery.

With two self-immolations today, the ongoing wave of fiery protests in Tibet, which began in 2009, has witnessed 94 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama.

The exile Tibetan administration maintains that the current situation in Tibet has stemmed from “several decades of Chinese misrule in Tibet” and discontent of the Tibetan people arising from “political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation, and environmental destruction.”

Urging people not to remain “idle bystanders,” the elected head of the Tibetan people Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay recently called for a Global Solidarity Day to be observed on December 10, Human Rights Day.

Sikyong Dr Sangay urged Tibetans and supporters to “light a candle or lamp, observe a minute’s silence, and say a prayer for all those who have died for the cause of Tibet, and locally organise vigils and rallies.”

Two Tibetans Die after Self-immolation Protest

Voice of America, 09.12.2012

Two Tibetans died from setting themselves on fire on Saturday in separate protests against China's rule in Tibet. 24 years old Kunchok Phelgye set himself on fire around 5:20 pm in front of the main assembly hall of the Taktasang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Dzoge County, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. He was a monk of Dringwa Sumdo Monastery in Dzoegé.

Sources with contacts in the area say Kunchok Phelgye called for long life of the Dalai Lama with his hands clasped together in prayers while on fire.

"Kunchok Phelgye raised slogans for the long life and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche and reunification of Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet," said Kanyak Tsering, Dharamsala-based Kirti Monastery's spokesman citing sources in the region.

The deceased's body was carried to his room in the monastery where several hundreds of monks gathered to recite prayers.

Kunchok Phelgye is survived by his father Kunchok Kyab, mother Dolma Tso and nine other family members.

Another Tibetan, 23 years old Pema Dorjee self-immolated around 4:30 pm in front of the Shitsang Monastery in Kanlho's Luchu County in eastern Tibet.

Pema set himself on fire as several Tibetans were gathering at the local monastery for Gaden Ngachoe, a special lamp offering prayer sessions.

Sources say Pema shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, independence for Tibet and unity of Tibetans while he ablaze.

Layman burning

RFA, 8 December 2012

On Saturday, layman Pema Dorje self-immolated in front of the Shitsang Monastery in Kanlho's Luchu (Luqu) county, a source inside of Tibet told RFA's Tibetan Service, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Pema Dorje, who is just 23, set himself on fire and protested against the Chinese occupation of Tibet," said the source.

“This happened around 4:35 p.m. [Saturday], right in front of the door to Shitsang Monastery in Luchu county in Gansu. He was reported dead following his act of self-immolation.”

The source said that Pema Dorje had torched himself as several Tibetans were gathering at the monastery for Gaden Ngacho, a special lamp offering prayer session.

The layman was from Chokor village, located around 30 kilometers (19 miles) from Shitsang Monastery.

China policy

The two new burnings drew immediate comment from the London-based Free Tibet, with director Stephanie Brigden saying she had “grave concerns” for the welfare of Tibetans living in the townships where Saturday’s protests occurred.

“China has announced collective punishments it intends to mete out on communities where protests take place, and Free Tibet has documented, time and again, China’s flagrant violations of human rights, including the use of lethal force, during the uprising in Tibet,” she said in a statement.

“Tibetans continue to call for freedom, despite the cost. It is beyond time for the world to take decisive action for Tibet.”

The protests follow a statement earlier this week by Maria Otero, the U.S. State Department’s Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, who said Washington was “deeply concerned and saddened” by the increasing frequency of Tibetan self-immolations.

“Chinese authorities have responded to these tragic incidents with measures that tighten already strict controls on freedoms of religion, expression, assembly and association of Tibetans,” she said.

“Official rhetoric that denigrates the Tibetan language, the Dalai Lama, and those who have self-immolated has further exacerbated tensions.”

Otero said that Beijing must address policies causing discontent in Tibetan areas, including controls on Tibetan Buddhist religious practice, education practices that undermine the Tibetan language, and the surveillance, arbitrary detention, and disappearances of Tibetans.

Since late October, officials have responded to the burning protests by punish-

ing the families and communities of protestors, characterizing immolations as criminal offenses, arresting those associated with the self-immolators, and deploying paramilitary forces and restricting communications and travel in areas where the protests have occurred.

<http://dailypostindia.com/news/40038-tibet-burns-self-immolation-toll-reaches-94.html>

Tibet burns, self-immolation toll reaches 94

Daily Post India, 9 December 2012

McLeodganj, the home of exiled Tibetans witnessed a series of protests after the number of self-immolations has reached 94. The Central Tibetan Administration at Dharamsala on Sunday reiterated its deep concern and sadness over the worsening situation in Tibet, as two more Tibetans self-immolated in protest against the Chinese government's rule on Saturday.

Kunchok Phelgye, 24, a monk of Dringwa Sumdo monastery at Dzoegye, set himself on fire at Taksang Lhamo Kirti monastery in Ngaba on Saturday evening. With folded hands, he called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche to Tibet, and the reunion of Tibetans in Tibet. He died on the spot. Monks took his body to the monastery where a special prayer service was being held.

In another incident, Pema Dorjee, 23, died after setting fire to himself outside Shitsang monastery in Luchu in Kanlho in eastern Tibet. He raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, independence of Tibet and unity of Tibetans.

The Chinese authorities have reinforced clamp-down on the monasteries and surrounding villages following the incident. "We call on the international community to stand in solidarity with Tibet campaign on Human Rights Day on 10 December to press the Chinese government to address the long-standing grievances of Tibetans in Tibet," said Dicki Chhoyang, Kalon for the Department of Information & International Relations.

Despite repeated appeals by the Central Tibetan Administration to refrain from taking drastic actions, over 94 Tibetans have self-immolated inside Tibet since 2009. Self-immolation as a political act against Chinese rule has emerged as the

most drastic form of protest in Tibet. Staggering 81 self-immolations have taken place in the past 12 months including 29 this November alone.

Tibetan religious festival marked by two self-immolation death

TCHRD, 09 December 2012

According to information received by TCHRD, two Tibetan men, a monk and a layman, have died after they burned themselves alive in separate incidents in the Tibetan province of Amdo in Tibet.

The day of the burning protests coincided with Ganden Ngamchoe (Festival of Lights), which commemorates the birth and death of the great Tibetan Buddhist master, Je Tsongkhapa.

Pema Dorjee, 23, died after setting himself on fire in Luchu (Ch: Luqu) County of Kanlho (Ch: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province.

Quoting eyewitnesses, sources told TCHRD that the burning protest took place at around 4.30 pm (local time) in front of the main prayer hall of Choede Shitsang Monastery today.

Pema Dorjee called for “Tibetan land to be governed by Tibetans”, and “return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama”. Sources also said he called for Tibetan independence” and “unity among Tibetans”.

Many local Tibetans who had come to observe Ganden Ngamchoe at Shitsang Monastery witnessed the self-immolation.

Pema Dorjee was born and brought up in Shitsang nomadic camp 12 in Choekor Village (Luchu County).

In another self-immolation, Tibetan monk Kunchok Phegye, 24, died of self-immolation in Zoege (Ch: Ruo’ergai) in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province.

Reliable sources told TCHRD that Kunchok Phegye set himself on fire at about 5.20 pm in front of the main prayer hall of Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Ngaba. With folded hands in praying gesture, Phegye shouted slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. He also called for the return of Kirti Rinpoche to Tibet and the

reunion of Tibetans in and outside of Tibet. He died at the scene.

As Phegye died, monks at the monastery reacted with shock as some called out his name. The monks then recited prayers which were normally recited in honour of Kirti Rinpoche. Hundreds of monks attended the prayer session.

Kunchok Phegye was born and brought up in Ghoeda Village of Dingwa Township in Zoege County. As a child, Phegye joined Sumdo Monastery in Dingwa Township and later, in 2010, he joined Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery, one of the largest monasteries in Ngaba County. He was a senior student of Buddhist Philosophy at the monastery. He left behind a family of nine including his parents, Kunchok Kyap and Dolma Tso.

Sources say security forces have beefed up surveillance and control at Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery and neighbouring villages.

Panchen Kyi

Age: 17

Occupation: student/nomad

Date of self-immolation: 9 December 2012

Place: Dokarmo nomadic area of Tsekhog Dzong
in Malho, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet

Current status: deceased



Activists: 8th Tibetan child self-immolates

The Associated Press, Tuesday, December 11, 2012, 1:52 Pm

BEIJING — A teenage girl set herself on fire on the grasslands of an ethnic Tibetan region in western China, becoming the eighth child to self-immolate to protest Chinese rule over the region, rights groups said.

Wangchen Kyi, 17, self-immolated and died in China's western Qinghai province Sunday evening after calling for the long life of the Tibetan people and their exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, according to the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet. The group cited reports from exiled Tibetans

in contact with people in the area.

Activists say more than 90 people have set themselves on fire in Tibetan areas since February 2009, with an upsurge in recent weeks. The vast majority have been in their late teens and 20s. Activists say the self-immolations show growing desperation over what the protesters see as the marginalization of Tibetan culture and religion under heavy-handed Chinese rule.

China maintains it protects Tibetans' rights and that the region has enjoyed "leap-frog" economic development in recent decades. Beijing has increasingly sought to crack down on the protests, which it says are inhumane acts instigated from abroad by the Dalai Lama and his supporters to put pressure on the Chinese government.

The Tibetan government-in-exile on Monday reiterated denials of involvement and publicly invited Chinese authorities to send a team to their headquarters in Dharamsala, India, to investigate the allegations.

China accuses the Dalai Lama of wanting to split Tibet off from the rest of China, but he says he seeks real autonomy for Tibetans, not independence.

The Communist Party newspaper People's Daily said in a commentary Tuesday that the Dalai Lama could have prevented self-immolations simply by calling for them to stop, but that he won't do it.

In an interview in October posted on the Dalai Lama's website, he said it was difficult to judge whether the method of self-immolation was right or wrong.

"I am quite certain those cases who sacrificed their own life for sincere motivation, for Buddha dharma for wellbeing of the people, from the Buddhist view point, from the religious view point, it is positive," he told NBC. "But if these activities are carried out with full anger, hatred, then wrong. So it is difficult to judge. But anyway it is really very sad, very very sad."

Tibet and surrounding ethnically Tibetan regions have been closed off to most outsiders, and firsthand information from the areas is extremely difficult to obtain.

London-based Free Tibet also reported Sunday's immolation, which took place in Dokar Mo township in Zeku county, but said the student was 16 and gave a slightly different spelling for her name. Free Tibet said an estimated 3,000 locals attended her cremation service and that she leaves behind her parents and two

sisters.

The Zeku county propaganda department on Tuesday confirmed the self-immolation, but gave no details. Calls to Dokar Mo township's government and to the county police department rang unanswered.

The International Campaign for Tibet said Wangchen Kyi was a conscientious student and chose to set herself on fire on nomadic grasslands because she feared her body would not be returned to her family if she self-immolated outside a government building in the town.

According to tallies by both rights groups, she is the eighth person under 18 to self-immolate. Four are known to have died, including the youngest, a 15-year-old monk called Dorjee. He set himself on fire last month along with two 16-year-old monks in Aba prefecture in southwestern Sichuan province.

Police in that province announced the arrest over the weekend of a monk and his nephew on accusations of inciting at least eight Tibetans to conduct self-immolation protests, allegedly recruiting them with assurances they would be "heroes" and that they and their families would be "honored" afterward.

Recent Chinese media reports have said that such instigators could be charged with murder, but it was not immediately clear if the monk and his nephew would face those charges. Police in Sichuan declined to comment on the case.

A U.S. statement last week accused Beijing of responding to Tibetan immolations with tightened controls over their freedom of religion, expression and assembly. China's Foreign Ministry said it had complained to Washington about the comments and said China protects the rights of Tibetan people to maintain their traditional culture and religious freedom.

A 17-Year-old Tibetan Girl Dies after Self-Immolation in Amdo Tsekock *Voice of America*, 09.12.2012

A 17-year-old girl set herself on fire Sunday evening to protest Chinese rule in Tibetan areas.

Witnesses say Wanchen Kyi shouted slogans in support of the Dalai Lama and a free Tibet as she was engulfed in flames. She set herself on fire in Dokarmo nomadic area of Tsekock County, Rebkong Prefecture in Qinghai Province.

Wangchen died at the scene of the protest.

More than 3,000 Tibetans and monks later gathered at the site of the self-immolation protest and recited prayers.

Sources say two trucks of Chinese armed police arrived and forcibly dispersed the gathered crowd and asked them to return to their homes. Wanchen Kyi's body was cremated around midnight. She is survived by her father Sonam Tsering and mother Sermo, and two other siblings

A day earlier, two young monks also died after setting themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule.

Ninety-five Tibetans have now self-immolated since 2009, with 28 cases reported in November alone.

More than 16 Tibetans have self-immolated from Amdo Rebkong, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet.

Following the recent incidents of alarming number of self-immolations by Tibetans in protest of the Chinese rule, the United States has urged China to address the issue of human rights violations in Tibet.

Maria Otero, the U.S. State Department's Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, issued statement last Wednesday, saying Washington was "deeply concerned and saddened" by the increasing frequency of Tibetan self-immolations.

"Chinese authorities have responded to these tragic incidents with measures that tighten already strict controls on freedoms of religion, expression, assembly and association of Tibetans," she said.

"We call on the Chinese Government to permit Tibetans to express their grievances freely, publicly, peacefully, and without fear of retribution.... We call on the Chinese Government to Chinese government to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions," Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issue Otero said.

'Long live the Tibetan people': Final words of girl, 16, who set herself on fire in protest against Chinese rule

By Sam Webb, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2012

A teenage girl has become the eighth Tibetan child to set herself alight to pro-

test against Chinese rule over ethnic Tibetan areas, rights groups said today.

Wangchen Kyi, 16, self-immolated and died in western Qinghai province on Sunday evening.

Campaign group Free Tibet reported that her final words were: 'Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama, long live the Tibetan People'. The London-based organisation said the girl was 16 and leaves behind her parents and two sisters.

The International Campaign for Tibet, another Tibet awareness organisation, said Wangchen set herself on fire on the nomadic grasslands of Zeku county, where she was later cremated.

She was on holiday from Tsekog County Second National Middle School in eastern Tibet at the time of her protest. Authorities confirmed the self-immolation today.

The local community claimed her body and an estimated three thousand local people attended her cremation service at around midnight.

Voice of America, a broadcasting service funded by the U.S. government, quoted sources who said two trucks of Chinese armed police arrived and forcibly dispersed the gathered crowd and asked them to return to their homes.

The broadcaster also reported that she is survived by her father Sonam Tsering and mother Sermo, and two other siblings.

Ninety-five Tibetans have now self-immolated since 2009, with 28 cases reported in November alone, to protest over what activists say are threats to their religion and culture under Chinese rule.

This wave of self-immolations reveal the desperation among Tibet's youth after 60 years under Beijing's thumb and underlie a harsh crackdown in recent years by the Chinese government any who dare question its sovereignty over the mountain nation.

Last week Sangay Dolma, a 17-year-old nun at the Gonshul Nunnery near the Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling Monastery, set fire to herself using petrol outside a Chinese government office in eastern Tibet.

She had earlier taken a picture of herself in which the message 'Tibet is an independent nation' can be seen written on her hand.

The Chinese government has sought to crack down on Tibetan dissidents issuing a stern warning to the authorities of eastern Tibet to punish all self-immolators and their relatives - and even those who send condolences to bereaved families.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/338792>

17-year old Wangchen Kyi, latest self-immolation victim in Tibet

By Can Tran, *Digital Journal*, 11 December 2012

The body count for self-immolations in Tibet in protest of oppression by the Chinese government. The self-immolation of a 17-year-old girl is the latest report.

In the case of the ethnic Tibetan region, located in western China, the latest reports of self-immolations can be concerning to the Free Tibet movement, human rights organizations, and the international community. The issue of Tibet has been a shaky international issue. Any attempt to reaching out in favor of Tibetan freedom endangers the relationship anybody or any country has with China. Native Tibetans, who feel oppressed by the Chinese government, have taken to self-immolation. For those that don't know what it means, they set themselves on fire. This is a means of protest. Self-immolation has been a most used form of protest.

An event of self-immolation in Tunisia a few years ago became the catalyst of the domino effect known as the Arab Spring. The current situation that's taking place in Syria at the moment is a result of the Arab Spring's effect. The same thing can apply to what's going on in Egypt as well.

According to activists, 90+ have immolated themselves in protest against Chinese occupation. As a result, it has made tensions between the Tibetan government-in-exile and the Chinese government more volatile. The latest case of self-immolation is 17-year-old Wangchen Kyi. On Sunday evening, on December 9, Wangchen self-immolated while wishing a long life for fellow Tibetans and His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

Since Wangchen is 17, she is considered a minor. As a result, this makes Wangchen the 8th minor to result to such an act. The youngest to self-immolate

is a Buddhist monk named Dorjee who was 15 at the time.

These self-immolations have caused concerns for the Chinese government. It has gone far to accuse the Dalai Lama of being the cause of these events. However, the Tibetan government-in-exile has fired back at the Chinese government and deny being the ones to blame.

China, in response to self-immolations, is planning to do the following: charge anybody with murder if they immolate themselves or have anything to do with it. Self-immolations will be classified as an illegal act that carries criminal penalties. So far, the Chinese government is saying that committing suicide and self-immolating are two completely different things. In the case of the latter, the Chinese government says it's a tool to split the nation.

The Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) is also taking action. So far, it is firing back at the accusations by the Chinese government. According to the CTA, it's inviting authorities of the Chinese government to come to Tibet and see things for themselves.

As December 10 was known as International Human Rights Day, many things have happened. In the case of a UNESCO event in Paris, France, it was revealed that the UN unveiled an educational fund called the "Malala Plan" to get more girls into school by the end of 2015. In the case of Tibet, pro-Tibet supporters demonstrated in front of the UN building in New York City.

Tibetans across the world are appealing to world leaders to do something about the situation.

Tibet teenager burns herself to death in China to denounce Chinese rule

By Meera Thakkar, *Global News Desk*, 11 December 2012

A 17-year-old Tibet girl set herself alight on the prairies of an ethnic Tibetan region in western China, thereby becoming the eighth Tibetan under 18 to commit self-immolation to express opposition to China's control over Tibet, as per human rights activists.

Wangchen Kyi is the teenage girl in question, who set herself on fire and died instantly in China's western Qinghai province on Sunday. Before the Tibetan teenage girl set fire to herself, she prayed that the Tibetan people and the banished Tibet spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, have a long life.

The news of the Tibetan teenage girl's death has been provided by the Washington-headquartered International Campaign for Tibet. The organisation alluded to reports from exiled Tibetans in touch with Tibetans in China.

As per human rights activists, in excess of 90 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the ethnic Tibetan regions of China. The number of Tibet residents burning themselves has increased dramatically in recent weeks, with a majority of the Tibetans practicing self-immolation having been in their late teens and 20s.

The International Campaign for Tibet has voiced that Wangchen Kyi was a hardworking student, who elected to burn herself on nomadic Tibetan grasslands because she dreaded that her corpse wouldn't be returned to her family if she self-immolated outside a Chinese government building in the Dokar Mo township in Zeku county.

The youngest Tibetan teenager to have undergone fatal self-immolation is a 15-year-old monk named Dorjee, who burnt himself in November along with two 16-year-old monks in the Aba prefecture in southwestern Sichuan province.

The Tibet activists have remarked that the self-immolations symbolise the deep-rooted anger and disenchantment that the Tibetans are experiencing under autocratic Chinese rule. Vast Tibetans deem that their culture has been marginalised violently under Chinese dictatorial rule, which has ensured ethnic 'Han' Chinese populating traditionally Tibetan areas, thereby changing the demographic balance of those areas.

A majority of the Tibetans desire freedom from China. But Communist China maintains that it safeguards Tibetan Buddhists' rights and that Tibet has undergone tremendous economic development in recent decades. China has delivered onslaughts on Tibetan pro-independence protests within China.

Tsering Tashi

Age: 22

Occupation:

Date: 12 January 2013

Place of self-immolation: Amchok, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibet Burning: Behind the Wave of Self-Immolations

Pulitzer Center, 12 January 2013

On January 12th, 22-year-old Tsering Tashi walked into the main square of Amchok township, a historically Tibetan area of China's Gansu province, and set himself on fire. As he lay in the road engulfed in flames, he somehow brought his hands together in a gesture of Buddhist prayer and called out the name of "Gyawa Tenzin Gyatso"—"His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

The first Tibetan self-immolator of 2013 left behind a young wife, his parents, and two sisters. Tashi's aunt, Tsering Kyi, later spoke with his grieving father. "Why are you crying?" he asked. His son had not died "without reason."

What is the reason behind the self-immolations of more than 100 Tibetans since 2011—monks and nuns, farmers and nomads, adults and teenagers? The Chinese government blames the gruesome deaths on "The Dalai Lama Clique." Its security apparatus has imposed harsh penalties on anyone associated with encouraging the burnings or providing information about them to foreign organizations. Tibetan exiles deny any role in instigating the fiery suicides. But they do hope the self-immolations gain the world's attention, and bring pressure on China to rethink its Tibet policies.

In this project, journalist Jeffrey Bartholet looks at the human and political dimensions of the burnings—their meaning, their possible impact, and the battle over who controls the narrative. He also explores the peculiar history of self-immolation, and the related debate among some Tibetan Buddhists about whether it constitutes acceptable or unacceptable violence.

Chinese Security Official Force Hasty Cremation of Tibetan Self-Immolator

VOA, 14 January 2013

In an apparent protest against China's repressive policies in the region, Tsering Tashi, 22, set himself on fire on Saturday, January 12, 2013 around 2 pm in Achok

Township in Sangchu County. Sources from the area told VOA that Tashi was wearing iron chains around his body when he self-immolated and shouted, "Victory to His Holiness the Dalai Lama" while engulfed in fire. Tashi died at the scene of his protest. Sources stated that local Tibetans pelted security forces with stones and were successful in securing Tsering Tashi's body and taking it to his home yesterday. After the arrival of his body at his home, several security vehicles surrounded the house and prevented monks who had come to pray for Tashi, and the general public who came to pay their respects and express their solidarity with the deceased's family. The security head who ordered the family to carry out the cremation immediately was reported to have pounded his fist on the table and accused the Tashi's family of having a close connection with the "Dalai clique." In order to avoid further repercussions, Tsering Tashi's father, Dukar Kyab, agreed to cremate his son without having carried out proper religious rites. Tsering Tashi's mother, Tsering Dolma, lost consciousness from the shock of having to perform the sudden cremation and had to be taken to the hospital for treatment. Sources describe Tsering Tashi as a good natured young man who loved to ride horses and had won races in the local horse racing contests. Tsering Tashi is the first known Tibetan to self-immolate this year, bringing the total number of self-immolation protests in Tibet since 2009 to 96. Almost all of the 96 Tibetans, who staged self-immolation protests in Tibet, called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibet. The Dalai Lama last week called on Beijing to conduct a "thorough investigation" into the causes of self-immolations in Tibet instead of blaming outside for complicity.

Drupchok

(Tsering Phuntsok)

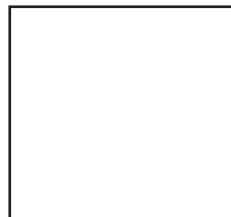
Age: 28

Occupation:

Date: 18 January 2013

Place of self-immolation; Khyungchu, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Another self-immolation in Tibet

HT Correspondent, *Hindustan Times*, INDIA Updated: Jan 19, 2013

A Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) official told that the self-immolator had been identified as Tsering Phuntsok, a resident of Drachen Yultso village in

Khyungchu, Ngaba in the north-eastern Tibet.

“Tsering Phuntsok set himself on fire in front of the local Chinese police station in Drachen village of Khyungchu region,” told the official adding that he passed away at the site of his protest.

“Tsering Phuntsok also known as Dupchok, has been survived by his wife and two daughters,” the official said.

He told that Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene and bundled away Tsering Phuntsok’s body to Barkham.

This is the second self-immolation protest in Tibet since the beginning of the new year. In 2012, as many as 82 Tibetans set themselves on fire demanding freedom and return of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from exile. Since 2009, a total of 98 Tibetans have set themselves on fire.

Tibetan Self-immolators forcibly cremated following repeated Chinese threats

Phayul, Monday, January 14, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, January 14: Tibetan self-immolator Tsering Tashi’s body was forcibly cremated late Sunday night near his home town in Amchok after repeated threats and mounting pressure from local Chinese authorities.

22-year-old Tsering Tashi passed away in his self-immolation protest on January 12 in Amchok town in Sangchu region of eastern Tibet. According to eyewitnesses, he shouted “Gyalwang Tenzin Gyatso” as he marched on the street engulfed in flames before succumbing to his injuries. Although Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene but local Tibetans were able to rescue his body following a minor scuffle.

Tsering Tashi’s body was then carried to his home in Kyi village of Amchok where monks and nearby Tibetans gathered to pay their last respects and offer prayers despite strict governmental orders against show of sympathy with self-immolators or their families.

According to a close relative of the deceased, local Chinese police and Public Security Bureau officials soon arrived in several vehicles and surrounded the entire area. The officials barred the monks of Amchok Monastery and local Tibetans from offering prayers and ordered the deceased’s family members to cremate the body as soon as possible.

However, when the family members refused to cremate the body before performing the customary Tibetan rituals, the Chinese authorities threatened them saying that they will be responsible for all the consequences and sent for a local Tibetan lama who also advised them to follow the orders.

The local Public Security Bureau head further blamed Tsering Tashi’s family

members of having “close ties with the splittist Dalai group” and banged his fist on the table.

According to the same source, the deceased’s father Dugkar Kyab, agreed to cremate his only son’s body considering the imminent threat to the livelihood and security of the people of the village.

Tsering Tashi’s body was cremated late Sunday night, January 13, when most people were fast asleep. Chinese authorities allowed only a few people to attend the cremation.

The deceased’s mother Tsering Dolma, when she heard of the orders by the Chinese authorities, she fainted and had to be rushed to the hospital.

Tsering Tashi is survived by his parents and wife Yumtso Kyi.

On the day of his self-immolation protest Tsering Tashi wore full Tibetan traditional attire and had wound his body with wire before setting himself on fire.

Local Tibetans have described him as “good natured and polite,” who had a keen passion for horses and horse racing.

Since 2009, as many as 96 known Tibetans have set themselves on fire protesting China’s rule and demanding freedom and the return of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibetan man burns to death in Tibet, 2nd self-immolation in 2013

The Tibet Post International, 18 January 2013

Dharamshala: - A Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese repressive rule over Tibet, source from inside the region said the latest in a series of protests against China’s hardline and repressive policies on Tibet.

The latest sources coming out of Tibet said that a 28-year old Tibetan man called Dupchok self-immolated on Friday (Around at 3.15pm Tibetan local time), January 18, in Drachen village, Kyungchu county, (Chinese: Hong yuan) north-eastern Tibet. Dupchok is survived by his wife and two daughters, aged 5 and 3.

“Local Tibetans and Buddhist monks gathered at his home to say prayers and pay respects for Dupchok,” sources told The Tibet Post International (TPI).

A Tibetan living in exile originally came from the region also clarified that his name is not Tsering Phuntsok, but Dupchok.

Most of the Tibetan self-immolators have doused themselves with petrol and set themselves alight after shouting slogans calling for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The latest incident brings to at least 97 the number of Tibetans who have self-immolated since 2009, including 81 last year in protest against China’s strict control over Tibet’s Buddhist culture and a suffocating security presence in Tibetan regions.

Kunchok Kyab

Age: 26

Occupation:

Date: 22 January 2013

Place of self-immolation: Bora, Kanlho,

Current status: deceased



Self-immolators in Tibet near 100 as pressure grows from China

The Conversation, January 29, 2013

On January 12, a young Tibetan man, Tsering Tashi, set himself on fire in a nomadic area in China's Gansu province, while calling for the long life of the Dalai Lama and a free Tibet. Less than a week later, another young man, Drubchog, set himself alight in a nomadic area of Sichuan province. A third young man, Kunchok Kyab, burned himself last Tuesday. All died at the scene of their protest.

These three self-immolations, the first in 2013, follow a month-long pause since the self-burning death of a teenage girl, Wangchen Kyi, in a Tibetan region of Qinghai Province on 9 December last year. Since the first such act in 2009, 97 Tibetans have now reportedly self-immolated in Tibetan-populated areas of China: 12 in 2011, 81 in 2012 and three to date in 2013, most fatally.

As they burned, the self-immolators have each called for a free Tibet and cultural freedoms they believe are under threat, but above all they call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The Chinese government has blamed the self-immolations and protests on external provocation, specifically instigation and encouragement by outside "hostile forces" the government refers to as "the Dalai clique". Official spokespeople reject any responsibility for the self-immolations.

Local authorities already deploy massive security forces in the areas where self-immolations have taken place, treating these acts as criminal threats to social stability. Government and security offices utilise additional forms of coercive and punitive measures, including propaganda efforts, blocked communications, and detention of self-immolators' associates.

Despite intensive security and other pressures, self-immolations surged in October-November last year, with 28 reported in November alone. Notably, during that period, the overall profile of self-immolators shifted from a monastic majority concentrated in Sichuan Province to a lay majority located outside of Sichuan, especially in Qinghai and Gansu provinces. From a political and security perspective, the shift to a secular majority and wider distribution poses a significantly more complex challenge to the Chinese government.

As local authorities intensified their crackdown, China's Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security issued a joint legal opinion to align judicial, prosecution and security agencies behind the drive to punish Tibetans who they suspect of having links to self-immolators as criminals, or who express sympathy for them. The opinion sets out parameters for local officials to use to criminalise a range of activities that officials associate with self-immolation, and to treat a number of such activities as "intentional homicide". Other activities, such as gathering a group to mourn or collect funds for a self-immolator, would be prosecuted as crimes under China's criminal law. This represents a more formal and powerful approach than previous measures.

State authorities may hope that such legal measures will effectively deter any further expressions of protest. Official pressures and measures putting family and sympathetic supporters of self-immolators at risk of punishment may have deterred self-immolations in the weeks between the burning deaths of 9 December 2012 and 12 January 2013. But the opinion more likely anticipates sensitive periods ahead, for example Tibetan New Year in February and the anniversary in March of the 1959 uprising in Lhasa when the Dalai Lama fled into exile.

By easing some of the pressures on Tibetans, and considering more effective application of its own system of "ethnic autonomy," Chinese authorities could reduce tensions. But the recently-issued opinion foreshadows no such relief.

Threatening the consequences of non-compliance, public security officials forced Tsering Tashi's family to forego customary Tibetan Buddhist rituals and accept the immediate cremation of his remains. Security personnel took Drubchog's body from the site of his protest and cremated it the same day without informing his relatives. Kunchok's body too was confiscated by authorities: mourners have gathered to perform prayers for him in front of the local government office, despite warnings to desist.

The disturbing probability of the 100th Tibetan self-immolation looms. Amid the strengthening of punitive measures against expressions of Tibetan grievance, the level of Tibetan resentment can only rise.

Tibetan Man Dies After Self-Immolation

VOA News, January 22, 2013 1:38 PM

Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire, making him the 99th person to self-immolate since protests against Chinese rule began in 2009.

Kunchok Kyab, 23, set himself ablaze Tuesday in Bora township, near Labrang monastery, in Tibet's eastern Kansu province.

Exile sources with contacts in the area told VOA's Tibetan Service the farmer

succumbed to his injuries and that Chinese security officials took custody of the body.

Kyab, the fourth Tibetan from Bora to self-immolate since the beginning of 2012, is survived by his wife and 10-month-old child.

Tuesday's incident is the third self-immolation this month as Tibetans continue to call for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile and freedom in Tibet.

Separately, VOA Tibetan reports the Chinese government appears to have stepped up efforts to cut off the flow of information about the situation in Tibet's autonomous region.

Beijing earlier this month accused an exiled Tibetan monk in south India of incitement and holding membership in the Tibet Youth Congress, which the Chinese government has designated as a terrorist group.

The monk, Choe Gyatso, had previously distributed information about other self-immolations inside Tibet.

New Burning; Monks Jailed

A new Tibetan self-immolation raises the burning protest toll to 98.

RFA New, 2013-01-22

A young Tibetan father of two set himself on fire and died Tuesday in protest against Chinese rule in a Tibetan-populated area of Gansu province, according to sources, while four monks in a neighboring province have been jailed for up to 10 years over alleged links to previous self-immolations. Twenty-six-year-old Kunchok Kyab torched himself near the Bora monastery in the Kanlho (in Chinese, Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture's Sangchu (Xiahe) county at noon in the third Tibetan self-immolation protest this month, a Tibetan in the area said. Chinese authorities immediately took away his body and local Tibetans threatened to protest if they did not return it to his family. "I have seen Kunchok Kyab's body being carried away by the Chinese police," a Tibetan living near Bora monastery told RFA's Tibetan Service. "The local Tibetans demanded that the body be returned to their custody and if they [the authorities] don't return it, the Tibetans threatened to stage a sit-in protest in front of the local police station," the Tibetan said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Kunchok Kyab, fondly called Kunbai by relatives and friends, protested against Chinese "repressive" rule as most other self-immolators had, according to a source based in India's hill town of Dharamsala, where Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama is living in exile.

He is survived by his wife, Dorjee Tso, and two children. No other details were immediately available as the authorities had clamped down on communications in the area, according to a Tibetan named Sonam living in

Switzerland with contacts in the region.

The latest burning brings to 98 the total number of self-immolations since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009. The protests are aimed at highlighting opposition to Chinese rule and seeking the return of the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet after a failed national revolt against Chinese occupation in 1959.

Monks jailed

Meanwhile, a local Chinese court in Sichuan province's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture recently jailed four monks from the Tsodun Kirti monastery to between two and 10 years in connection with previous self-immolations, according to two exiled monks in Dharamsala. Lobsang Sangay, Asung, Yarphel, and Namsay had been held since August following a raid by the Chinese authorities on the monastery, which is a branch of the main restive Kirti monastery in Ngaba from where many monks had staged self-immolation protests in the past. "The reasons for their detention were not known at that time of detention, but later the sources of the information learned that all the monks were detained on suspicion of their involvement in the self-immolation of [three Tibetans]," exile monks Kanyak Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe said in a note to RFA.

Asung, 22, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison while Lobsang Sangay, 19, Yarphel, 18, and Namsey, 18, were sentenced to two years, six years, and 10 years respectively, they said.

Two other monks of the Tsodun Kirti monastery—identified as Thupwang Tenzin and Rabten, who is also a member of the monastery's religion management committee—were detained around the same time and remain in the custody of the local authorities, they said.

Lobsang Namgyal

Age: 37

Occupation: monk

Date: 3 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



100th Self-Immolation Reported Inside Tibet

A former Tibetan Buddhist monk protested Chinese rule by killing himself through self-immolation this month, becoming the 100th person to do so inside Chinese-governed Tibet, according to reports on Wednesday by Tibet advocacy

groups.

The Tibetan man, Lobsang Namgyal, 37, formerly of Kirti Monastery, set fire to himself on Feb. 3 in front of an office of the public security bureau in a county of Sichuan Province and died on the scene, according to Free Tibet, which is based in London. Free Tibet said in a news release that it had taken 10 days to confirm the self-immolation “because Tibetans are too frightened of Chinese state reprisals to speak about protests.”

Another advocacy group, the International Campaign for Tibet, reported that monks living in exile in India who had received word of the self-immolation had said that during the act, Mr. Lobsang Namgyal called for the long life of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetans.

The monks, who live in Dharamsala, India, the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, come from the same monastery as Mr. Lobsang Namgyal, and said he had been an exceptional student chosen to study for a Geshe degree, the highest qualification in Tibetan Buddhism.

“He was regarded as a model for a new generation of students at Kirti,” the monks said in a statement translated by the International Campaign for Tibet.

The monks said Mr. Lobsang Namgyal had disappeared in September and was believed to have been temporarily detained in Sichuan Province by local security forces. Officials had sought to isolate him and ruin his reputation, they said, and he continued to be under intense surveillance even after leaving for a rural nomadic area. His family had also come under pressure.

The wave of self-immolations in Tibet, which began in 2009, has brought into sharp relief the intense frustration and defiance of Tibetans, whose vast homeland came under Communist rule after Chinese troops occupied central Tibet in 1951. At least 82 of the 100 self-immolators **have died**.

Earlier Wednesday, a Tibetan man walked onto a street in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, which borders Tibet, and set himself on fire. He was the latest of a half-dozen Tibetans to immolate themselves outside Tibet in protest against China. Nepal is home to thousands of Tibetan exiles.

The authorities said the man, who witnesses told The Associated Press had been wearing monk’s robes, was hospitalized in critical condition. The witnesses said the man had shouted slogans against China before falling to the ground.

The protester, who had not been identified, set himself ablaze near a Buddhist stupa in the Boudhanath area of Katmandu, where many Tibetans live. He timed his act to coincide with the important Tibetan festival of Losar, or the Tibetan New Year. Those still in Tibet have not observed the festival since a widespread uprising against China in 2008, and the government in exile, in solidarity, has asked other Tibetans not to celebrate it.

Nepal is pinched between China and India and for decades has served as a way station for Tibetans escaping Chinese rule. In recent years, Chinese leaders

have pressured Nepal's government to choke off this flow of refugees and to limit political protests by Tibetans living in Nepal, which has resulted in growing frustration among those Tibetans.

Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the Tibetan government in exile, expressed sadness about the self-immolation in Nepal and said his administration had asked Tibetans not to take drastic actions. But he also placed the blame for such acts on the Chinese government.

"The occupation of Tibet and repression of Tibetans are the primary reason for the self-immolations inside Tibet," Mr. Sangay said by e-mail while visiting the United States. "The solution to the tragedy in Tibet lies with Beijing, and my administration is fully committed to dialogue and to address the issue peacefully."

Chinese officials in Beijing and in Dzorge County of Sichuan Province, known as Zoige in Chinese, where Mr. Lobsang Namgyal died, could not be reached for comment. Government offices in China are closed for the lunar new year holiday.

Chinese officials in the past said the self-immolators were mentally unstable or blamed outside agitators. Despite the accusations, Chinese officials have never provided evidence of any connection between the acts and the Dalai Lama or other Tibetan leaders in exile. Recently, Chinese officials have tried pressing a campaign to criminally prosecute people tied to those who immolate themselves; as a result, several monks have been given harsh prison sentences.

Security forces have also flooded towns in parts of the Tibetan plateau where the self-immolations have been common. But nothing the authorities have done has curbed the acts, which are being committed by a wide range of Tibetans, from young men to middle-aged parents. They have taken place mostly in eastern Tibetan, known as Kham and Amdo to Tibetans and now part of the Chinese provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai.

"There has been clear evidence from at least some of the immolators themselves that they have acted as they have in order to demonstrate resistance to Chinese rule," said Elliot Sperling, a scholar of Tibet at Indiana University. "The fact that these immolations continue even now, after China has opted for a harsh crackdown in areas that have witnessed these acts, is telling."

Another scholar, Tom Grunfeld at Empire State College of the State University of New York, said that people on the outside had been generally "stumped as to what's driving this," but that what was interesting was "how helpless the Chinese state is in combating this."

So fearful are Chinese officials of the self-immolations and the message they send that the officials have even put fire extinguishers in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, thousands of miles from where the acts have occurred. Chinese leaders are sensitive to the fact that protesters across China often try to make their way to the square. Officials in Tibetan regions have also equipped security forces with fire extinguishers and put them in monasteries.

Officials have tried to prevent foreigners from traveling to the sites of the self-immolations.

Tibetans interviewed last year in Dharamsala said the security crackdown after the 2008 uprising had contributed to a growing spirit of defiance among Tibetans. The first self-immolation in Tibetan regions was by Tapey, a monk from Kirti, in February 2009. He survived. The next self-immolation occurred outside Kirti in March 2011.

Kirti monks in exile said Mr. Lobsang Namgyal had returned to Kirti days before his death and told some people that he wanted to go on a religious retreat.

100th self-immolation in Tibet protest

By Clifford Coonan, *The Irish Times*, Fri, Feb 15, 2013, 00:00

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/100th-self-immolation-in-tibet-protest-1.1252226>

A former Buddhist monk in Aba province has set himself on fire to become the 100th Tibetan to self-immolate in China since 2009 to protest against Chinese rule in the remote Himalayan region.

Lobsang Namgyal (37), a former monk from Kirti Monastery, died on February 3rd after setting himself on fire in front of the Dzoge People's Armed Police building in Aba prefecture in Sichuan province in southwestern China.

Self-immolation is the principal form of protest among ethnic Tibetans to express their anger at tighter political control on the Tibetan plateau and to call for the return of their spiritual leader Dalai Lama.

Most of the immolations have taken place outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region, in Sichuan, which has a sizeable Tibetan population, focused on two prefectures – Aba, which the Tibetans call Ngawa, and Ganzi, or Kardze in Tibetan. About one million Tibetans live in these areas.

The first monk to self-immolate was called Tapey, and he also came from Kirti monastery. He set himself on fire on February 27th, 2009.

In 2011 there were 12 confirmed self-immolations, and 83 during 2012, of which 28 were in November alone.

“This staggering figure of 100 individual self-immolation protests must bring the world to its senses,” said Tenzin Jigme of the International Tibet Network, an umbrella organisation for 185 Tibet advocacy groups.

“This milestone demands widespread condemnation of China's failed policies and of its brutal crackdown in Tibet.”

Diplomatic initiative

“We urgently call on world governments to issue a joint statement of concern on this tragic occasion and to collectively formulate a diplomatic initiative that will directly address China's leaders over the crisis they have created in Tibet,”

Tenzin Jigme said.

The European Union, the US and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have expressed concern at the self-immolations, but most governments have steered clear of backing calls for Tibetan independence for fear of antagonising Beijing.

However, they do encourage dialogue with the Dalai Lama, who says he does not support the immolations. His line is he wants more autonomy for Tibet, but he does not support calls for Tibetan independence.

“While there have been many ‘expressions of concern’ through back channels or by junior ministers and under secretaries, global leaders have chosen not to antagonise China by speaking up for the oppressed people of Tibet,” said Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden. “It is long past time for that to change: do another 100 have to set themselves alight before the international community holds China to account?”

Outside China

Some Tibetans outside China also have burned themselves, most recently in Kathmandu in Nepal this week.

The Chinese government blames the Dalai Lama and overseas Tibetan groups for inciting the self-immolations, and authorities in Tibetan regions recently announced that anyone inciting self-immolation would be charged with murder.

Earlier this month, the Chinese government detained scores of people as part of a widening crackdown on the protests and is running a propaganda campaign to discourage the immolations.

Two ethnic Tibetans have been jailed for “goading” people to set themselves on fire.

Tibetans accuse Beijing of orchestrating a campaign of religious oppression and cultural genocide by encouraging ethnic Han Chinese to move into Tibetan areas.

For its part, Beijing says it has invested billions to modernise Tibet and improve standards of living.

Breaking: Monk in Ngaba becomes 100th to self-immolate under China’s rule

Phayul, Wednesday, February 13, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, February 13: In confirmed reports, a Tibetan monk set himself on fire on February 3 in the Ngaba region of eastern Tibet protesting China’s continued occupation of Tibet.

Lobsang Namgyal, 37, a monk of the Kirti Monastery has become the 100th known Tibetan to self-immolate under China’s rule since the wave began in 2009.

Following immense security clampdown in the region, the news of Lobsang Namgyal's fiery protest reached exile on February 13, a day being observed by Tibetan exiles all over the world as the 100th year of His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama's Tibetan Proclamation of Independence.

According to the exile base of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala, Lobsang Namgyal set himself ablaze near the local police building in Zoege at around 6 am (local time). He passed away at the scene of his protest.

"Lobsang Namgyal, engulfed in flames, shouted slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he ran towards the local police building," Kirti Monastery said in a release citing sources in the region.

Lobsang Namgyal's identity was confirmed after Chinese police found his identity card and a letter from inside a bag near the protest site. The contents of the letter are not yet known.

"Chinese security personnel bundled away his body from the site and carried out his cremation without informing his family members," Kirti Monastery said. "Only his ashes were handed over."

In September 2012, Lobsang Namgyal had all of a sudden gone missing for two weeks prompting frantic searches from his family members and friends. It was later found out that he was taken into custody by Chinese security personnel for unknown reasons.

Upon his return, local Chinese authorities made it difficult for him to continue his stay at the Monastery and was forced to live with his relatives in the nomadic pastures. However, Chinese officials followed his movements and continued to harass him, the release noted.

Before carrying out his self-immolation protest, Lobsang Namgyal reportedly came to the Kirti Monastery to offer prayers.

Currently, all movement of his relatives are being closely watched by the police and their phone calls are being monitored, the release added. His younger brother, monk Lobsang Sangay, was also detained for a few days following the protest.

Lobsang Namgyal is survived by his father Karkho and mother Kar Kyi and eight brothers and sisters.

Earlier today, a Tibetan monk in the Nepali capital of Kathmandu set himself on fire protesting China's rule in Tibet. Clear details about the protest and the identity of the monk are still not available.

100th Tibetan self-immolation reported in a protest China can't stop

By Tom Lasseeter, *Mcclatchy Newspapers*, February 13, 2013

An account released on Wednesday of an ethnic Tibetan man in western China lighting himself on fire earlier this month, calling for the long life of the Dalai Lama before dying in the flames, marked the 100th reported self-immolation

since 2009, a dramatic milestone in a series of fiery protests that Beijing has sought to crack down on but has not managed to stop.

The fact that news of the man's Feb. 3 death – he's been identified as Lobsang Namgyal, 37 – took 10 days to surface in a release by the London-based advocacy group Free Tibet is testament to the ever-tightening cordon imposed by the Chinese Communist Party on ethnic Tibetan regions where the self-immolations have occurred.

Free Tibet said in a statement that after Lobsang Namgyal's self-immolation, his younger brother was detained, his family members were followed and their telephones were placed under surveillance.

"China employs brutal repression, propaganda and bribery to no avail: protest and resistance will continue as long as the Tibetan people are denied their freedom," said the organization's director, Stephanie Brigden.

A second prominent Tibetan rights group, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet, attributed the news of Lobsang Namgyal's self-immolation to reports from Tibetan monks living in exile.

Chinese Communist Party officials maintain that the campaign of self-immolations is being coordinated by those close to the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who fled to India after a failed uprising in 1959. The state media has announced a series of recent court cases in which ethnic Tibetans were sent to prison for allegedly inciting self-immolations and their "efforts to spread ideas" about Tibetan independence.

Those cases, and other state media reporting, assert that a conspiracy was hatched by the "Dalai Lama clique" to attempt to destabilize ethnic Tibetan areas in China by encouraging the self-immolations.

But residents interviewed in those regions say that the protests are borne from deep frustration with an authoritarian regime that they fear is working to eradicate or undermine their language, customs and religious practices.

The self-immolations began in February 2009 in a Tibetan enclave of China's western Sichuan Province, where Lobsang Namgyal also reportedly set himself aflame. They soon spread to three adjoining areas: the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu, and Tibet itself, which is tightly controlled by Beijing and known formally as the Tibet Autonomous Region.

All but that first one in 2009 have occurred since a 20-year-old monk named Phuntsog – many Tibetans have just one name – set himself ablaze on March 16, 2011, apparently to mark the third-anniversary of protests near his Kirti Monastery in the town of Aba. Tibetan advocacy groups assert that during those 2008 protests, part of wider unrest that swept across the Tibetan Plateau at the time, Chinese security forces killed at least 10 people.

More than 80 of those who've self-immolated are said to have died.

Both of the Tibetan advocacy groups who released information about the latest

self-immolation said that Lobsang Namgyal had been a monk at Kirti Monastery when he disappeared last September, reportedly into police custody for some two weeks. The Free Tibet group said that he had left the monastery after resurfacing, allegedly due to threats by police.

“Lobsang Namgyal had been so distressed that he had left for a rural nomadic area away from the monastery, but still he had been under intense surveillance,” according to a post on the International Campaign for Tibet’s website.

“Before his death on February 3, he had returned to Kirti monastery and told some Tibetans that he wanted to go away on a religious retreat,” said the International Campaign for Tibet statement. “A few days later, he set himself on fire.”

100th Tibetan self-immolates in China, advocacy groups say

By Jethro Mullen, *CNN*, Updated 0046 GMT (0846 HKT) February 15, 2013

The number of Tibetans in China who have set themselves on fire to protest Beijing’s rule has reached 100, according to Tibetan advocacy groups.

Lobsang Namgyal, a 37-year-old former monk, set himself on fire earlier this month in Aba prefecture, known in Tibetan as Ngaba, an ethnically Tibetan area of the Chinese province of Sichuan, according to Free Tibet, a London-based advocacy group.

“This grim milestone should be a source of shame to the Chinese authorities who are responsible and to the world leaders who have yet to show any leadership in response to the ongoing crisis in Tibet,” said Stephanie Brigden, the director of Free Tibet.

Self-immolation has become a desperate form of protest in recent years for ethnic Tibetans unhappy with Chinese rule, and it shows no sign of abating.

Of the 100 Tibetans who have now set themselves on fire in China, at least 82 are believed to have died from the act, according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Lobsang Namgyal died at the scene, and his body was removed by local authorities, who cremated it and returned the ashes to his family, Free Tibet said in a statement Wednesday without specifying where it got the information.

The advocacy group said it had taken 10 days to confirm his self-immolation, which took place February 3, “because Tibetans are too frightened of Chinese state reprisals to speak about protests.”

Independently verifying the reported self-immolations inside China is often difficult because of restrictions on reporting from the restive areas and the reluctance of local officials to comment on the accounts provided by foreign groups such as Free Tibet.

Local authorities in Aba declined to comment on the case on Thursday, and the

Chinese foreign ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Self-immolation began as a form of protest among Tibetans in China in February 2009, when a young monk set himself on fire in Aba. In March 2011, another young monk followed in his footsteps, becoming the first to die.

Scores of others have since followed suit, with the frequency of the self-immolations increasing significantly last year, according to Free Tibet.

Protests in other countries

Several other Tibetans have carried out self-immolations in other countries, including India. And on Wednesday, a Tibetan man set himself on fire in front of a famous Buddhist shrine in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu, police said.

The man later died of his injuries while undergoing treatment in a hospital, police spokesman Keshav Adhikari said Thursday.

Sandwiched between China and India, Nepal is home to thousands of Tibetan refugees. Many of the Tibetans who cross the Himalayan border from China into Nepal eventually make their way to India, where the Tibetan government in exile is based.

But Tibetan refugees in Nepal have claimed the Chinese government officials are pressuring their Nepalese counterparts to make the country less hospitable to Tibetans.

Beijing has taken a tough line on Tibetan self-immolators and their associates inside China, accusing the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, of fomenting unrest.

Last month, a court in southwestern China gave heavy sentences to two ethnic Tibetans convicted of murder for "inciting" people to set themselves on fire.

The Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising, has long denied China's assertion that he's seeking Tibetan independence. He says he wants only enough autonomy to protect its traditional Buddhist culture.

Beijing rejects accusations of oppression, saying that under its rule, living standards have greatly improved for the Tibetan people. It makes centuries-old historical claims on the region.

100th Tibetan Self-immolation in China

7 February 2013

<https://www.panos.co.uk/news/adam-dean-visits-families-of-tibetans-who-have-self-immolated-in-china/>

The past four years have seen an unprecedented spate of self-immolations by Tibetans across various regions of China in protest against the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the heavy security presence in areas with

large Tibetan populations. According to Free Tibet, a London-based organisation, on 3 February 2013, 37 year old Lobsang Namgyal, who had been a monk at the Kirti Monastery in Sichuan province, became the 100th person to self-immolate since February 2009. At least 82 people have died as a result of their self-immolation. Panos photographer Adam Dean was one of the only journalists to evade a heavy security presence in Gansu province to reach the families of some of the recent people who have died

With the recent spike in the number of cases which some believe to be connected with the 10-yearly meeting of the Chinese Communist Party and the change of its leadership, the government has decided to issue a warning to anyone ‘encouraging’ people to protest in this way that they will be charged with murder.

So far the protests have achieved little on the international stage and the government has responded instead with a security lockdown of the regions most affected, with all forms of communication cut off. Outside visitors have also been barred from visiting the region.

With no sense of irony, state-run Xinhua news agency has also reported that Buddhist monks have been recruited for fire-fighting duties. “In addition to their usual routine of studying scriptures and meditating, the monks engage in firefighting training sessions once a week. Large rooms outside temple prayer halls are used as fire-control offices. It’s exciting for the monks...”

A Tibetan man burned himself to death in protest against Chinese rule, reports and Western rights groups said on Thursday, bringing the total to have set themselves on fire to at least 101.

Tibetan burns himself to death in China in 101 self-immolation

AFP, Published: 12:08pm, 14 Feb, 2013

US-based Radio Free Asia said the man, Lobsang Namgyal, who it described as a former monk from the Kirti monastery, self-immolated last week near a police station in Aba prefecture, a Tibetan area of Sichuan province in southern China.

“He ran toward the police station, calling out slogans with his body on fire, and died at the scene,” it cited exiled Tibetan monks as saying. “Police then cremated his remains and handed them over to his family.”

The 37-year-old was one of a family of four brothers and four sisters and was detained and harassed last year by police, it cited the exiles as saying.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet described him as a monk and said he was “known as a serious and exceptional scholar”. The first Tibetan to set himself on fire was also from Kirti monastery, it added.

Later on Thursday, police in Nepal say a Tibetan protester who set himself on fire in Nepal's capital to protest against China has died at a hospital.

Police spokesman Keshav Adhikari said the man died on Wednesday night, hours after he self-immolated. He says police are still trying to identify the man, who appeared to be about 21 years old. No one has claimed the body yet.

The man set himself on fire and chanted anti-China slogans in the Boudhanath area of Katmandu on Wednesday.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

The earlier report takes the number of ethnic Tibetans to have set themselves on fire since 2009 to 101. At least 84 have died, tallies show.

Stephanie Brigden, director of the London-based campaign group Free Tibet, said: "This grim milestone should be a source of shame to the Chinese authorities who are responsible and to the world leaders who have yet to show any leadership in response to the ongoing crisis in Tibet.

"China employs brutal repression, propaganda and bribery to no avail: protest and resistance will continue as long as the Tibetan people are denied their freedom."

Beijing rejects criticism of its rule, saying Tibetans enjoy religious freedom and pointing to huge ongoing investment it says has brought modernisation and a better standard of living to Tibet.

Authorities have sought to crack down on the gruesome protests by arresting those it accuses of inciting them and prosecuting them for murder, and have embarked on a major publicity drive on the issue in recent weeks.

On Wednesday, the man in his early 20s doused himself with petrol in a restaurant washroom in the Nepalese capital, ran outside and set himself alight next to Kathmandu's Boudhanath Stupa, one of the world's holiest Buddhist shrines.

A Belgian woman described how she had bumped into the man shortly before he doused himself in petrol in the restaurant, saying he appeared "excited" and joked that he wanted a photo to be taken of him.

"He approached us and asked us to take a picture while he took out a lighter and turned it on. We said goodbye and headed to the cafe," said the 47-year-old, who is volunteering in Nepal and did not want to be identified.

"After a while, smoke rose from near the gate to the stupa. What I saw was astonishing. The man was completely burned. He was like a human torch."

"Everybody was shocked because it was utterly unexpected. It took some time for people to react," she said.

Beijing routinely accuses the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and his "clique" of inciting such acts to push a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama, who says he is not seeking Tibetan independence but greater autonomy, fled his homeland in 1959 after a failed uprising. He has since based himself in the Indian hill town of Dharamshala.

RFA also said that a Tibetan woman had set herself on fire in Beijing in September after officials in Sichuan province refused to allow her to keep her ancestral home, adding that she had not previously been included in lists of Tibetan self-immolators.

The 100th Tibetan has self-immolated in China in protest of Beijing rule

Associated Press. Published February 14, 2013, Last Update January 13, 2015

BEIJING – An overseas Tibetan rights group says an ex-monk has set himself on fire, becoming the 100th Tibetan to self-immolate in China since 2009 in protest of the Chinese rule.

A few Tibetans outside China also have burned themselves, most recently in Nepal on Wednesday. The protesters have called for the return of their spiritual leader Dalai Lama and more freedom for Tibetans.

London-based Free Tibet said Thursday that 37-year-old Lobsang Namgyal died Feb. 3 in front of a public security bureau in Aba county in southwestern China's Sichuan province.

The self-claimed, Tibetan government-in-exile has confirmed the report. The exile government has repeatedly urged Tibetans not to self-immolate.

Beijing has accused the Dalai Lama of inciting the self-burning acts.

Drukpa Khar/Druba Khar

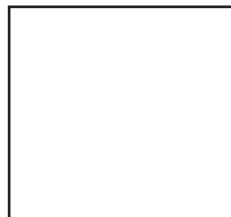
Age: 26

Occupation:

Date: 13 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Amchok, Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



101st case of self-immolation in China

Hindustan Times, 15 February 2013

A new case of self-immolation has been reported from Gansu province in northwest China, advocacy groups said on Friday, adding that it has taken the number of fiery protests by ethnic Tibetans within the country against Beijing's

hard-line rule to 101.

Rights groups, quoting Tibetan sources in exile and Radio Free Asia's Tibetan language service, said Drugba Khar, in his '20s and father of three children doused himself with petrol and set himself afire in Amchok town in Gansu province on February 13. He died of his burn injuries.

"The self-immolations of Drugpa Khar and Lobsang Namgyal (on February 3) occurred following the imposition of harsher and more systematic measures that have been imposed by the Chinese authorities to deter protests, including charges of 'intentional homicide' against Tibetans accused of "inciting" self-immolations," the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said.

It added: "Tibetan New Year (Losar) is traditionally marked by celebrations with family and friends, but for the past four years since the crackdown intensified in Tibetan areas Tibetans have chosen not to celebrate but to mark the festival with prayer."

About the case of Lobsang Namgyal, ICT said he was described by Kirti monks-in-exile in contact with Tibetans who knew him as an "exemplary" monk.

The Kirti monks in Dharamsala who are monitoring the case reported: "Lobsang Namgyal suddenly disappeared for about two weeks in September 2012. His classmates and relatives searched for him, but were unable to find him, and later came to know that he had been detained by Ngaba county police"

Chinese authorities have lately intensified its crackdown against self-immolations arresting nearly 80 ethnic Tibetans and sentencing many to years in prison.

Late last month eight ethnic Tibetans including a monk were convicted on charges of "intentional homicide" in two separate court verdicts for allegedly inciting people to self-immolate.

The accused were sentenced to three to 12 years in prison; in one case the accused monk was given a suspended death sentence.

Rights groups have decried the arrests and convictions alleging that confessions were often extracted under duress.

Self-immolation at Amchok, Toll Reaches 101

www.tibet.net, February 15, 2013

DHARAMSHALA: In confirmed reports coming from Tibet, a 26 year old Tibetan died after setting himself on fire at Amchok around 1 pm (local time) on 13 February. The self-immolator is identified as Drukpa Khar, a father of three children.

No further information is available at the moment.

Since 2009, over 101 Tibetans have set themselves on fire protesting against the repressive policies of the Chinese government in Tibet.

Druptse aka Drubchen Tsering

Age: 25

Occupation: monk

Date: 13 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Kathmandu, Nepal

Current status: deceased



Body of Tibetan self-immolator still with Nepali authorities

Phayul, Saturday, 16 February 2013

DHARAMSHALA, February 16: The body of the Tibetan monk who set himself on fire in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu on February 13 has still not been handed over to Tibetan representatives.

Our sources in the city say that Nepalese authorities, acting under the influence of China, have been creating unnecessary obstacles in the process of handing over the body.

“This is just like what is happening in China occupied Tibet where the Chinese officials bundle away the bodies of self-immolators and carry out cremations in secrecy,” a local Tibetan activist who didn’t want to be named told Phayul.

“However, concerned people are still talking with authorities and we hope that Nepali officials will respect the sacrifice of the Tibetan monk and handover the body for cremation.”

Earlier, the Tibetan monk was identified as Drupchen Tsering, a 25-year-old monk native of Gyalchung village in Nupsur town of Serta, eastern Tibet.

Druptse recently escaped from Tibet and arrived in Nepal in January this year. He was staying at the Tibetan Reception Centre in Kathmandu since his arrival according to Dharamshala based Tibetan news portal Tibet Express.

“He had told his friends and relatives that he had not been able to do anything for the Tibetan cause in the past but promised to do something constructive for the Tibetan people in the future,” *Tibet Express* cited sources in Tibet as saying.

Druptse had reportedly wrapped his body with a metal wire and doused his body with gasoline before setting himself ablaze in the morning of February 13 near the holy Boudhanath stupa in the heart of the city.

He died at around 10:30 pm (local time) same day with 96 per cent burns.

Druptse is survived by his mother Tselha and father Sangnag Tenzin, who is a reincarnated lama.

Nepalese police have since increased restrictions in Tibetan areas in the city.

Further aggravating the situation, banners under the name of “Locals and Youth of Boudha” have appeared near the protest site, warning that such acts will “make life even harder” for Tibetans.

Calling the self-immolation a “hideous and sinful” act motivated by “dirty politics,” the banner announces: “No more Free Tibet in our holy land.”

“The soul of the victim will rot in hell ... You want blood, we give you war,” further reads the banner.

Druptse’s body still in Nepal government’s custody

Tibet.net, 23 March 2013

The body of Drupchen Tsering, the 25-year-old Tibetan who self-immolated in Kathmandu this February, is still in Nepalese government’s custody.

A senior Nepalese police officer told The Himalayan News Service on 10 March that only the concerned family members had the legal rights to receive the body of any deceased as per the existing law. The 35-day official deadline to hand over the body is over. All efforts are being made to obtain his body by Tibetan leadership and community in Nepal in order to perform the last rites.

Drupchen Tsering, a monk, and a native of Gyalchug village in Nupsur of Serta region in Kardze, eastern Tibet, reached Nepal in January from Tibet. He set himself on fire in front of the Bouddhanath Stupa in Kathmandu on 13 February. Nepalese police immediately took him away to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital. He later succumbed to his injuries AFP news agency reported.

Dr Lobsang Sangay, the Tibetan president, expressed sadness about the self-immolation in Nepal and said his administration asked Tibetans not to take drastic actions. “The occupation of Tibet and repression of Tibetans are the primary reason for the self-immolations inside Tibet. The solution to the tragedy in Tibet lies with Beijing, and my administration is fully committed to dialogue and to address the issue peacefully,” Sangay told *The New York Times*.

Tibetan activists in India demand self-immolator’s body from Nepal

Times of India News, 6 March 2013

Members of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) in India held a petition and call campaign in Dharamshala to highlighting what they termed “Nepal’s failure” to return Drupchen Tsering’s body to the Tibetan community since Tsering’s self-immolation in Kathmandu in Nepal in February earlier this year.

On February 13, when Tibetans around the globe commemorated the 100th year anniversary of the Tibetan Proclamation of Independence, Drupchen Tsering, a monk living in Nepal, lit his body on fire to protest “China’s continued crackdown and brutal rule in Tibet” stated a press release from SFT-India. He was immediately taken into police custody, where he was later declared dead. It has been 22 days since he self-immolated and yet the Nepal police still have not returned his body, alleged activists.

“It has been almost 22 days! Yet we continue to see Nepal Government’s failure to return Drupchen Tsering’s body to the Tibetan community and allow them to conduct the proper final rites as per the Buddhist custom. This is outrageous!” said Dorjee Tsetan, national director of SFT-India. “Nepal should respect the basic rights of Tibetan refugees and not kowtow to China’s growing influence,” he added.

Copies of the signed petition will be delivered to the Nepal Embassy in Delhi and mailed to US, British and Indian Embassy in Nepal in the coming few days, stated the press release.

“Similar protests were carried out in Canada and U.S earlier by members of SFT. As a result, in New York the consulate’s senior staff members came out to meet with the protesters and publicly accepted the petition letter, promising Students for a Free Tibet that they would pass on the petition to the Prime Minister’s office and relay the demands of the Tibetan-American community in New York City,” stated the release.

Nepali police arrest four Tibetans, Continue to hold Druptse’s body

Phayul, Thursday, 28 February 2013

DHARAMSHALA, February 28: Four Tibetans, including two elderly women, were arrested yesterday in Kathmandu by Nepali police on unknown charges.

The arrests came exactly two weeks after a Tibetan monk, Drupchen Tsering set himself on fire protesting China’s occupation of Tibet in the Nepali capital on February 13. He passed away at a local hospital hours after his protest.

Nepali authorities, despite repeated appeals by local Tibetans, are still holding the body.

The four Tibetans, identified as Sonam Dhondup, 35, Jigme, 35, Tenzin Yangchen, 60, and Tsering, 65, were arrested near the hospital.

Sources tell Phayul that the four were shifted to the Hanumandhoka prison, the biggest in the city, earlier today.

“They could well be kept in custody for no plausible crime until March 10, the

Tibetan National Uprising Day,” a Tibetan activist in Kathmandu who didn’t wish to be named said.

The same source added that the situation in the city is “extremely tense” and the area near the hospital where Druptse’s body is being kept has been turned into a fortress.

“Fears over the arrest of local Tibetan leaders and activists over the next few days is very real,” the source said.

Nepalese authorities have maintained that Druptse’s body can legally be handed over only to his parents, family members related in blood or official diplomatic representatives. If these options are not met within 35 days, authorities say they will have legal right over the body.

Druptse had only in January escaped from Tibet and was staying in Kathmandu.

Moments before setting himself on fire near the holy Boudhanath stupa, Druptse had expressed his love for the “beautiful land” of Tibet to a foreigner.

The foreigner, speaking to Dharamshala based rights group, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy later recalled that Druptse was “very calm.”

“We arrived at Galleria cafe in Boudanath around 8:15 am. We were to have our breakfast, when a young Tibetan guy, probably between 20-25 years old, came forward to speak to us. He then spoke about Tibet and said that it is a beautiful land and he loved it so much,” said the eyewitness.

Before Druptse left the cafe, he discreetly took out a lighter and asked the eyewitness to take his pictures.

The eyewitness, who had no idea that Druptse was going to self-immolate, said that although “everything happened so fast, but he was very calm.”

“I heard a large noise, of people screaming and running away. He was running to the right, engulfed in flames. He didn’t scream. The moment lasted around three minutes. Soon, people took out their jackets and sweaters to put out the fire.”

Druptse, 25, had doused his body with gasoline before setting himself ablaze. He passed away on the same day after suffering 96 percent burns.

Druptse is survived by his mother Tselha and father Sangnag Tenzin, who is a reincarnated lama. He is a native of Gyalchung village in Nupsur town of Serta, eastern Tibet.

Druptse earlier told his friends and relatives that he had not been able to do anything for the Tibetan cause in the past but promised to do something constructive for the Tibetan people in the future.

Namlha Tsering

Age: 49

Occupation:

Date: 17 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Sangchu, Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



Another self-immolation rocks Tibet, toll reaches 102

Phayul, Sunday 17 February 2013

DHARAMSHALA, February 17: In reports just in, another Tibetan set himself on fire today in the Labrang region of eastern Tibet protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

Namlha Tsering, 49, carried out his fiery protest at around 5:40 pm (local time) in Sangchu region of Labrang. His current condition is not known although sources say chances of his survival are minimal.

Photos received by Phayul show Namlha Tsering sitting cross-legged in the middle of a street even as high flames are rising from his body. In another photo he is seen fallen on his back with fire still leaping from his body.

An exiled Tibetan, Sonam, citing sources in the region told Phayul that eyewitnesses have expressed fear over his death.

"It is very unlikely that he could have survived his protest as the fire was burning very strongly," Sonam cited an eyewitness as saying.

Chinese security personnel arrived at the scene of the protest, doused the flames and bundled him away.

In another photo, a number of armed forces could also be seen parading on the street soon after the protest.

Since 2009, as many as 102 Tibetans under China's rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

In the past few weeks, China has sentenced a Tibetan to death with a two-year reprieve and several others to lengthy jail terms of up to 13 years for "crimes" related to the self-immolation protests.

In a statement released earlier this week, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people noted that the ongoing and unprecedented self-immolations by an increasing number of Tibetans in Tibet are the "ultimate acts of civil disobedience against China's failed rule in Tibet."

"Concrete steps that the leaders of the world need to take immediately are to send Ms Navi Pillay of UNHCR on a visit to Tibet and investigate the real causes

of self immolations, and convene a meeting to discuss and address the crisis in Tibet,” Sikyong Sangay said.

Speaking to reporters, State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland on Friday said the US remains deeply concerned by the reports of Tibet self-immolations, terming the rising numbers “horrific figures.”

“We call on those who are immolating or those who might be considering this to think hard about whether it’s the best way to express yourself,” she said.

“We also, as we always do, call on the Chinese government to address its own policies in Tibet that have caused these kinds of tensions and frustration,” Nuland said in response to a question.

“I think you can tell from the situation that it remains quite tense,” she added.

New Burning Protest in Tibet

RFA, 2013-02-17

A Tibetan man set himself on fire in China’s Gansu province Sunday in protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, bringing the total number of Tibetan self-immolations to 102, sources said.

Namlha Tsering, 49, also known as Hoba, carried out his protest in the middle of a busy street in the seat of Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a source inside Tibet told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“Today, Feb. 17, a Tibetan named Namlha Tsering self-immolated in the downtown area of Sangchu county in protest against Chinese policy in Tibet,” said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

“He was a resident of Gengya township, an affiliate township of the Labrang monastery in Kanlho prefecture in Gansu.”

The burning marked the second in Sangchu county in days.

On Wednesday, Drukpa Khar, 26, died after dousing himself in gasoline and setting himself alight in Achok town in Sangchu.

Photos sent to RFA by a source from the area showed Namlha Tsering’s body engulfed in flames as he sat cross-legged in a roadway with cars passing by him.

Later photos show Chinese security personnel surrounding the area where his body had lain, ashes clearly visible on the ground.

Namlha Tsering’s condition was unknown Sunday, but reports said that he was unlikely to have survived the ordeal and that he had been bundled away by Chinese authorities.

The London-based Free Tibet advocacy group said in a statement Sunday that eyewitnesses had described Namlha Tsering as being “severely burned” in the protest and said that he had been taken away by security forces who subsequently stated that he had died.

Free Tibet said that Namlha Tsering has a wife and four sons, the oldest of whom is a monk.

His protest comes on the fifth day of the traditional Tibetan Losar New Year, which has been marked this year by most Tibetans with prayers for compatriots who burned themselves to death during the year to challenge Chinese rule.

The latest incident raised the self-immolation toll to 102 despite Chinese government moves to detain, charge, and jail Tibetans over suspected roles in the burnings or other protests questioning Beijing's rule in Tibetan-populated areas and calling for the return of Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Blame

Beijing has defended its rule of Tibet and says the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders in exile have orchestrated the self-immolations from their base in India.

But Tibetan exile leaders deny involvement in the burnings and have called on Tibetans in Tibet to exercise restraint.

At least 15 Tibetans have been jailed in recent weeks in connection with the self-immolations. Some were handed sentences up to 13 years.

Rights groups have condemned the Chinese authorities for criminalizing the burning protests and cracking down on Tibetans who are seen to have provided encouragement or support.

In addition to the harsh sentences, Chinese authorities have also deployed paramilitary forces, shut down communications and restricted travel in the areas where self-immolations have occurred.

Stephanie Brigden, director of Free Tibet, said that the burning protests had continued, despite tough new measures Beijing had introduced in the region.

"During November when the Chinese leadership transition took place, self-immolation protests were an almost daily occurrence. Since then, China has introduced a slew of new repressive measures in an attempt to stop them," she said.

"It is now clear that there are still Tibetans willing to undertake this most extreme form of protest and just as importantly, other Tibetans willing to risk the wrath of the state by reporting their actions to the outside world."

The U.S. State Department on Friday noted the "horrific figures" of burning protests in Tibet and expressed deep concern over the self-immolations.

"We call on those who are immolating or those who might be considering this to think hard about whether it's the best way to express yourself," department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said.

"And we also, as we always do, call on the Chinese Government to address its own policies in Tibet that have caused these kinds of tension and frustration."

Tibet, another self-immolation brings total of victims to 102

AsiaNews, 02/18/2013

AsiaNews: A 49 year old man identified as Namla Tsering set himself on fire in a crowded street in Sangchu County to protest against Chinese rule of Tibet and demand the return of the Dalai Lama. The man, a husband and father of four children, was taken away by the Chinese authorities. His condition is unknown, but local sources say it is “unlikely” he survived. The total number of victims from self-immolations protesting Chinese rule now stands at 102.

It is the second such act to take place in the Kanlho (Ch. Gannan) in the western Amdo province a few days ago another Tibetan, Drukpa Khar, 26, set himself on fire in the same area. Namla's is sixth so far in 2013.

The Chinese government has chosen to respond with an iron fist. Instead of listening to the protests of the population it is pointing the finger at the “Dalai clique” that “is orchestrating these suicides.” It has also issued new, harsher regulations against those planning a self-immolation or even speaking about them in public. In recent weeks, a Chinese court sentenced at least 15 Tibetans (many of them Buddhist monks) to up to 13 years in prison.

Moreover, the Chinese authorities have blocked access to foreign travels to Tibet and have deployed paramilitary forces in the area. It is now almost impossible to communicate with the interior and even move between prefectures. Stephanie Bridgen, director of Free Tibet says: “Despite these decisions, the self-immolations continue. There is clearly the need for decisive action by the international community against Chinese repression.”

Father of Four Dies After Self-immolation in Tibet

VOA Tibetan, 18 February 2013

Tibetan sources say a Tibetan, father of four, has died after self-immolation today in Sangchu Dzong in Gansu province, Tibet. Namlha Tsering, 49, as an apparent protest against Chinese repressive policy in Tibet, set himself on fire outside County Cinema of Labrang at about 5:40 pm local time.

Quoting eyewitnesses from the area, Sonam, told VOA Tibetan Service this morning that Namlha Tsering was severely burned and has succumbed to death. Photographs received at the Service also show him sitting cross-legged in flames and another picture shows that he had fallen on his back in flames. Other sources say Tsering's severely burned body and his motorbike were taken away by security forces who subsequently stated that he had died.

Namlha Tsering, also known as Hoba, is survived by his wife and four sons. The oldest is reported to be a monk. His self-immolation today brings the total number of self-immolations since February 2009 to 102.

Namlha Tsering was from the Ri Ngun village in Gangya Town Sangchu Dzong, Gannan prefecture in Gansu province, Tibet.

On 13 Feb. 2013, Drugpa Khar, 26, self-immolated in Amchok region of eastern Tibet, a day observed by Tibetans as the centenary celebrations of the 13th Dalai Lama's Proclamation of Tibetan Independence. On the same day, a Tibetan monk who had recently arrived in Nepal from Tibet set himself on fire and had died in a hospital in Katmandu.

The London-based Free Tibet says Namlha Tsering's protest is the seventh confirmed in 2013 and has taken place in the context of a crackdown by Chinese security forces specifically intended to curb this form of protest.

"Recent weeks have seen a wave of arbitrary detentions and severe sentences for Tibetans accused of involvement in self-immolation protests. In Jan. a monk called Lobsang Kunchok was given a suspended death sentence for 'intentional homicide' after allegedly inciting eight such protests, & 8 others have been given lengthy jail terms so far this year," according to Free Tibet. The self-immolators have called for freedom in Tibet and return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet from exile. The self-immolation campaign began in February 2009 to protest what Tibetans say is China's repressive policy in Tibet. China denies the charge and says the self-immolation protests are acts of terrorism.

Rinchen

Age: 17

Occupation:

Date: 19 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzorge, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



Sonam Dhargyal

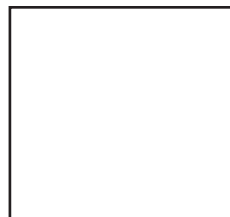
Age: 18

Occupation:

Date: 19 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzorge, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Teenagers Die in Double Self-Immolation

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2013

Two Tibetan teenagers killed themselves by self-immolation on Tuesday to protest Chinese rule in Tibet, according to reports on Wednesday by a Tibet

advocacy group and Radio Free Asia. The two were among the youngest Tibetans to kill themselves in protest, and the act was a rare instance in which Tibetans committed self-immolation together.

The teenagers were identified as Rinchen, 17, who went by only one name, and Sonam Dargye, 18. They had been elementary school classmates in Sichuan Province, in western China, according to Radio Free Asia, which is financed by the United States government. They killed themselves in Ngaba Prefecture, or Aba in Chinese, which has a large Tibetan population and has been at the epicenter of the self-immolation protests.

At least 104 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009 in protests against China. Since a widespread Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule in 2008, tensions between Tibetans and Chinese officials have been high across the Tibetan plateau, and officials have deployed large numbers of security forces, mostly ethnic Han, who rule China, in the crucial areas of the region.

Twenty of the self-immolators have been 18 or younger, according to statistics compiled by the International Campaign for Tibet, an advocacy group based in Washington.

Free Tibet, an advocacy group based in London, said the two teenagers who killed themselves on Tuesday had died at the scene of their self-immolation at about 9:30 p.m., and that their families had retrieved the bodies.

On Sunday, a Tibetan man, Namlha Tsering, 49, set himself on fire in the main street of Labrang, an important monastery town in Gansu Province. A photograph released by Tibet advocacy groups shows a man aflame and sitting in the street. Another photo shows security troops in riot gear marching in a street in Labrang, known as Xiahe in Chinese. The reports said the man was from a nomadic area.

The self-immolations began with monks, mostly from Kirti Monastery, in Ngaba. Since then, the profile of Tibetans who have self-immolated has widened. They have included women, middle-aged parents and nomads. Tibetans have self-immolated together a handful of other times, including in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and in Ngaba.

The Chinese government has blamed outside forces for the self-immolations, particularly the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of the Tibetans, who is regarded by China as a subversive. The Dalai Lama's supporters have denied such accusations.

"Beijing should stop playing the blame game," Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the Tibetan government in exile, which is based in Dharamsala, India, said in an e-mail last week. "Instead, it should thoroughly overhaul its failed hard-line policies, which are the main cause of the self-immolations."

Two Tibetan Teenagers Self-Immolate and Die in Amdo Ngaba

VOA Tibetan, 21.02.2013

Two teenagers protesting repression in Tibet have died from twin self-immolations that took place around 9:30pm local time. Rinchen, 17 and Sonam Dhargyal, 18, set themselves on fire in Kyangtsa region of Dzoge County, Ngaba Prefecture (Chinese: Aba). Lobsang Yeshi, spokesperson for the Dharamsala-based Kirti Monastery, told VOA Tibetan Service that the two teenagers died on the scene of their protest, and their families were in possession of their bodies.

Rinchen is survived by his father Dhondup Tsering, and Sonam Dhargyal is survived by his father Tsering Dhondup and mother Takho. The latest self-immolations brings the total number of cases inside Tibet and Tibetan regions to 104, with 88 resulting in death.

Following the latest immolations, the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala again called on the international community to put pressure on Beijing to allow independent observers to visit Tibet to investigate the causes for increasing number of Tibetans resorting to self-immolations.

As part of a simultaneous world-wide prayer service, Dharamsala, the seat of the Central Tibetan Administration, held a special prayer session today for all Tibetans who have died or become injured through carrying out such protests. Speaking at the prayer service, Kalon (cabinet minister) Dolma Gyari said that, “the international community should press China to open up Tibet to independent fact-finding missions and the international media to probe the root causes of the crisis.”

Free Tibet director Stephanie Brigden says that self-immolation protests by such young people highlights the plight of Tibetan children who “face all the challenges of life under oppression, and are often full participants” in the Tibetan struggle for freedom.

Past self-immolators have called for freedom in Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The self-immolations in Tibet started in February 2009 with many Tibetans describing them as being protests against China’s repressive policies in Tibet and Tibetan regions. China denies the charge and describes the self-immolations as being acts of separatism incited by the ‘dalai clique’, and has carried out mass arrests and handed out heavy sentences to Tibetans they say encouraged the self-immolations.

Tibetans deny China’s charge on Dharamsala monk

By Ananth Krishnan & Sandeep Dikshit. *The Hindu*, APRIL 08, 2013

In an unprecedented move, China has asked **India** to investigate a 32-year-old

monk in Dharamsala for allegedly instigating two self-immolation protests in Sichuan province.

Government sources in Delhi, however, denied having received any such request so far. But Tibetans living in New Delhi set their machinery in motion, traced the monk named in a Xinhua report and claimed he was too apolitical to have done such a thing.

The extraordinary request from the Chinese authorities suggests a marked stepped-up of campaign by Beijing against self-immolation protests, with at least 110 Tibetans having set themselves ablaze to protest China's policies.

The Chinese police last month sent a "co-investigation request to the police authorities" in India, according to Xinhua news agency. The case was of self-immolations by two young monks in the Aba region of Sichuan, a predominantly Tibetan prefecture, where a series of immolations began in 2009.

The Chinese authorities have accused the uncle of one of the monks, who resides in India, of "inculcating the idea of 'Tibet independence'" and describing self-immolation "as a beautiful thing," Xinhua said, naming the man as Tenpa Gyatso (32).

Senior ranking Tibetans attached to the Dalai Lama's office confirmed the monk's name but said, contrary to the Xinhua report, he was not with the media department of the Kirti Monastery near Dharamsala and too apolitical to have suggested such a step to his nephews. Anyway, he has not spoken to the nephews, they added.

The authorities say his 15-year-old nephew, Rinchen Tseli, set himself on fire and died on February 19 in Jamcha village in Aba. The same day, Sonam Dhargyal (16) also set himself on fire in Aba. Chinese officials, Xinhua said, have alleged that Mr. Gyatso encouraged the two boys to protest. "The Indian side will carve your name on the Monument to Self-immolators.... and pray for you," officials alleged Mr. Gyatso told them.

Mr. Gyatso, however, told Lobsang Reshi, one of the information communicators heading the media department at the Kirti Monastery that he had never spoken to his nephews but had once or twice telephoned his brother, the father of Rinchen, who lives in eastern Tibet's Nagaba region, the hub of protests and self-immolation. This is also the location of the original Kirti Monastery.

Tenzing Letshay, media coordinator of the Dalai Lama's office in Delhi, told The Hindu that the monk was "shocked" when confronted with the Xinhua report. "The accusations generally are a lie. If he had done something like that, that would have been a wrong thing to do. But the fact is he didn't do it. He had spoken to his brother in the past and discussed the wellbeing of his family members in Tibet," he said.

Other Tibetan sources, preferring to remain anonymous, said the Chinese retaliation could be because of the leading role by the Dharamsala version of

the Kirti Monastery in highlighting the immolations, as the region has been the hub of protests.

Asked for his take on this story, Director General of Indian Council of World Affairs Rajiv Bhatia said, “We follow closely developments relating to China’s internal politics, economy and external relations, but we have no immediate comment on this episode. In case a Chinese request is received by our authorities concerned, I am sure it will be processed suitably.”

The Chinese authorities have accused exiled monks in Dharamsala of organising many of the protests. They said videos and photographs had been sent to India for dissemination.

Exiled groups, however, say resentment, because of restrictive Chinese policies, was the root cause of self-immolations. Many of the protesters called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The Chinese government has accused the exiled leader of encouraging such incidents by honouring protesters. The Dalai Lama has strongly denied the allegation and urged Beijing to examine its policies.

Phagmo Dhondup

Age: 21

Occupation:

Date: 24 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Bayan Khar, Tsoshar

Current Status: deceased



Young Tibetan Burns Himself in a Monastery

RFA, 2013-02-24

A young Tibetan torched himself at a monastery in Qinghai province on Sunday in protest against Beijing’s “hard-line” policy in Tibet, triggering a security clampdown, according to sources.

Phagmo Dhondup, in his 20’s, set himself alight at the compound of the Jachung monastery in Tsapon township in Tsoshar (in Chinese, Haidong) prefecture’s Bayan Khar (Hualong) county and was immediately taken to a nearby hospital with serious burns, the sources from inside Tibet said.

“At around 8 p.m., he self-immolated in protest against the hard-line Chinese policy in Tibet,” a source told RFA’s Tibetan Service. “He was immediately rushed to the local hospital and is being treated.”

Phagmo Dhondup, who lives in Upper Sakar village close to the Jachung monastery, is the 105th Tibetan so far to self-immolate in protests questioning

Chinese rule in Tibetan-populated areas and calling for the return of Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

"Monks at the monastery are conducting special prayers for his recovery," the RFA source said. "At the same time several hundred security forces have arrived at the monastery and imposed restrictions," the source said.

Beijing has stepped up its crackdown to preempt Tibetan self-immolation protests but to no avail.

Chinese courts have jailed a number of Tibetans, including monks, over their suspected roles in the burnings in the last few weeks. Some have been given jail terms of up to 13 years.

Human rights groups have criticized Chinese authorities for criminalizing the burning protests and cracking down on Tibetans deemed to have provided encouragement or support.

Chinese authorities have also deployed paramilitary forces and restricted communications and travel in the areas where self-immolations have occurred.

Appalled

Many of the recent self-immolators are young Tibetans appalled by human rights abuses & excessive controls by the Chinese authorities, rights groups say. Twenty-two of the Tibetans who have self-immolated so far have been 18-years old or younger, according to figures compiled by the International Campaign for Tibet advocacy group. Over 80 of the 105 self-immolators so far have died. The self-immolations by the new generation of Tibetans born under Chinese rule "are sending an unequivocal message to the world about the gravity of the situation in Tibet," said Dicki Chhoyang, Minister of Information and International Relations in the Dharamsala-based Tibetan exile government, the Central Tibetan Administration.

She told a meeting in Geneva last week ahead of the 2013 U.N. Human Rights Council session that China must be held accountable to the pledges it made to the world body to improve its human rights record.

Beijing has defended its rule of Tibet and says the Dalai Lama and other leaders in exile have orchestrated the self-immolations from their base in India.

But Tibetan exile leaders deny involvement in the burnings and have called on Tibetans in Tibetan-populated regions of China to exercise restraint.

Tibetans continue to self-immolate to protest China's repression

www.tibet.net, February 26, 2013

DHARAMSHALA: The situation inside Tibet continues to remain grim as three more Tibetans set themselves on fire in the last two days taking the total number of self-immolations to 107.

A latest report coming out of Tibet say Sangdak, a monk of Dhiphu monastery, set himself on fire on a highway in Ngaba on Monday night. The police immediately extinguished the flame and took him to the local hospital. He was later taken away to an unknown location. His whereabouts remain unknown.

There are currently around 500 monks at the Dhiphu monastery.

The situation in the area remain tense following the deployment of a large number of armed police.

In another incident on Monday, Tsesung Kyab, a Tibetan youth in his late twenties, set fire to himself outside the main temple of Shitsang Gonsar monastery in Luchu county in eastern Tibet's Amdo province (incorporated into China's Gansu Province). His body was taken to his home in Choekhor village for prayers. A large number of Tibetan pilgrims have gathered at the monastery at that time for a prayer service marking the last day of Tibetan New Year.

Earlier on Sunday, Phagmo Dhondup, a Tibetan youth in his early 20's, set himself on fire at Jakhyung monastery in Bayan in eastern Tibet's Amdo Province, where hundreds of Tibetans had gathered for a traditional prayer service. Monks tried to put out the flame and took him to a hospital. He succumbed his injuries at a hospital in Siling (Ch:Xining) on Monday night, reported International Campaign for Tibet quoted Tibetan sources in exile.

Since 2009, 107 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibet. 90 of them have died.

The international community, including the UN and the EU parliament, have strongly urged the Chinese government to address the Tibetan people's genuine grievances and end its policies which is pushing Tibetans to take such drastic actions. But the Chinese authorities have responded to the crisis with more repressive measures. Despite repeated appeals from the Central Tibetan Administration not to take drastic acts, the self-immolations persist.

'Without independence Tibet will be annihilated,' a self-immolator's last words

Phayul, Thursday, May 09, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, May 9: More than two months after Tibetan self-immolator Phagmo Dhondup set himself on fire, details of a conversation he had with a friend before he set himself on fire, has come out.

According to Kunsang Rinzin, a Tibetan living in south India, Phagmo Dhondup went to a restaurant with a friend before his self-immolation protest and left a message for Tibet's independence and freedom.

"Till now, over a hundred Tibetans in Tibet have set themselves on fire for freedom. They are the true martyrs of Tibet. If Tibet does not get its freedom and independence, China will annihilate Tibetan culture and tradition," Phagmo Dhondup had told his friend.

Phagmo also expressed sadness over restrictions on Tibetan language.

“This year, Chinese authorities have restricted studying Tibetan language in our Tibetan areas in Bayen and all teachers have been expelled from the region. I am really sad now,” Phagmo told his friend. “Today on the night of the 15th day of the Tibetan New Year, I will set myself on fire in front of the debating grounds at the Jhakhyung Monastery. Today is Tibetan Independence Day.”

According to the same source, an eyewitness, who confirmed the meeting between Phagmo Dhondup and his friend, recounted details of the self-immolation protest.

“On February 24, at around 7 pm, Phagmo Dhondup bought two bottles of kerosene and some colored papers,” the eyewitness said. “He then drank a bottle and a half of the kerosene and burnt the paper raising slogans, ‘Tibet is independent,’ ‘Freedom in Tibet,’ and ‘May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for thousands of aeons.’”

Later, when Phagmo Dhondup reached the ancient Jhakhyung Monastery in Palung region of Tshoshar, eastern Tibet, he doused himself with the remaining kerosene and set himself on fire.

The monks at the Monastery rushed Phagmo Dhondup to a nearby hospital. After undergoing treatment at a hospital in Siling for over a month, Phagmo Dhondup succumbed to his injuries on an unknown date.

Phagmo Dhondup was a native of Tsaphuk town in Palung region. He is survived by father Shawo and a sibling.

Since 2009, as many as 117 Tibetans under China’s rule have set themselves on fire calling for freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. 100 Tibetans have passed away in the wave of fiery protests while little is known about the condition of the survivors.

Sangdhak

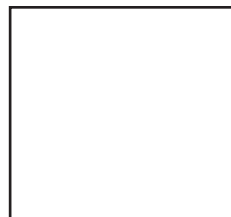
Age: 23

Occupation:

Date: 25 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Luchu,

Current Status: deceased



Tibetan town shaken by six self-immolations in one week

By Ananth Krishnan, The Hindu, BEIJING, NOVEMBER 19, 2012

In the past week alone, six Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest Chinese policies in the remote Tibetan monastery town of Rebkong in north-western Qinghai province, overseas groups said, marking an escalation in the

protests which have seen at least 76 Tibetans set themselves on fire.

On Saturday, a 24-year old Tibetan, named Sangdhak Tsering, died after setting himself on fire, monks in India said on Monday. His death followed a protest by Chagmo Kyi, a mother of two, who set herself on fire outside the 14th century Rongwo monastery that sits at the centre of the town, which is called Tongren in Chinese. Hundreds of Tibetans gathered over the weekend to attend the cremation of Chagmo Kyi.

The Dolma Square, named after a golden statue of Jetsun Dolma, a Bodhisattva and female deity known for her compassion, has been a site of several protests by Rongwo monks and local Tibetans since March, when two Tibetans set themselves on fire in the town. The square sits at the entrance of the Rongwo monastery, which is a site of significance for Tibetans and particularly for the Yellow Hat sect, for whom the Dalai Lama is the most important figure.

During a visit to Rebkong in April, The Hindu found tight security outside Dolma Square, where a black SWAT van was permanently stationed. Monks at Rongwo Monastery told The Hindu in interviews that tensions had been high in the monastery after two self-immolation protests at Dolma Square in March, where a monk and a farmer, in separate incidents, set themselves on fire.

Rebkong is a quiet town, where small Tibetan shops displaying artwork and handicrafts line narrow, muddy streets that run outside the monastery's walls. Further down the road from the monastery, monks and school-students walk amidst groups of paramilitary security forces.

In recent weeks, the town has emerged at the centre of spreading self-immolation protests, with Tibetan monks in India, citing their sources in Rongwo, recording at least eight protests since November 7, the day before the Communist Party of China began its leadership congress.

That day, Tamding Tso, a 23-year-old Tibetan mother of one, set herself on fire. Then, five days later, on November 12, Nyangkar Tashi (24), set himself on fire as dozens of monks and residents gathered at a prayer meeting for Tso. Nyangchang Bum (20), the oldest of three brothers, also set himself on fire that same day when the death of Tso was being mourned, overseas groups said.

Two more self-immolation protests followed on November 15, when Tenzin Dolma, a 23-year-old woman, and a teenager named Kharbum Gyal, set themselves on fire. In interviews in April, monks at Rongwo expressed sympathy with the protesters. In a grainy video, one monk showed dozens of monks gathered near the Dolma statue after the March immolations, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.

The immolations have, however, divided opinion. Some monks noted that they feared the protests would lead to a tighter security clampdown and prove to be counterproductive: Rongwo had seen easing of some restrictions that had been imposed following the 2008 protests across Tibetan areas.

In recent months, images of the Dalai Lama had been allowed for public display in some main halls. Some monks also expressed sadness that young Tibetans were giving up their lives by carrying out protests. Earlier this year, a group of Tibetan writers issued an appeal calling on Tibetans to cherish their lives regardless of the magnitude of oppression, and to carry on their struggle through different forms of protest.

Latest Tibetan self-immolation protest in Tibet, toll 107

THE TIBET POST INTERNATIONAL, 26 FEBRUARY 2013

Dharamshala: – February 25th 2013, Emerging reports from Tibet say one more Tibetan burned himself to death in Ngaba county of Amdho region, eastern Tibet to protests against China's hardline and repressive policies on Tibet.

A latest report coming out of the region told The Tibet Post International (TPI) that Sangdhak, a monk of Dhiphu monastery, burned himself on a highway in Ngaba on Monday morning, at approximately 10.00 am locally. Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the scene and extinguished the flame. Sources said the authorities took him to a local hospital.

"His current whereabouts and condition is unavailable as the authorities later moved him to an unknown location," Ven Kanyak Tsering from India based Kirti Monastery told TPI.

"Although the situation became very tense in Ngaba county after massive protests occurred recent years." It said the Chinese authorities had imposed heavy restrictions on Tibetans in the county as well as the large-scale deployment of armed forces and paramilitary police.

"Approximately 500 Buddhist monks are currently studying at Dhiphu Monastery- also known as 'Dhiphu Gelek Terdzod Ling,' according to the sources.

The total number of Tibetan self-immolations has reached 107 since that form of protest against Chinese repressive rule their homeland Tibet began in 2009. Nine Tibetans self-immolated in Tibet within this month alone, 90 of them have been confirmed dead from their severe burn injuries.

Most of the Tibetan self-immolators have called for the return of Tibet's spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to his homeland and political, cultural and religious freedom in Tibet.

Tsesung Kyab

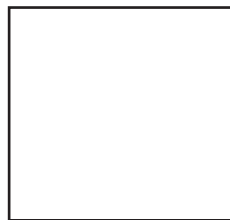
Age: 27

Occupation:

Date: 25 February 2013

Place of self-immolation: Luchu,

Current Status: deceased



Tibetan monks in China set themselves on fire in protest

The Frist Post. India, Feb 26, 2013 17:59:41 IST

Beijing: Two Tibetan monks in their early 20s set themselves on fire in protest against Chinese rule near dozens of pilgrims who had gathered for prayers to mark the end of the Tibetan New Year festival, a Tibet rights group said.

Both died. A third monk was taken to a hospital after setting himself alight in a separate incident, another group reported. His condition and whereabouts weren't immediately known.

The self-immolations bring the total reported since 2009 to 107.

One of the monks, Tsesung Kyab, self-immolated Monday outside a temple in Luqu county in northwestern Gansu province while the other, Phagmo Dundrup, set himself ablaze Sunday at a monastery in neighboring Qinghai province, the Washington, DC-based International Campaign for Tibet reported.

Tibetan monks in China set themselves on fire in protest

Associated Press

It said large numbers of religious pilgrims had gathered at both monasteries for prayer ceremonies to commemorate the end of the Tibetan new year festival, Losar. The group said it received images of the self-immolation in Luqu in which pilgrims watched as Tsesung Kyab burned.

The third monk, Sandhag, set himself on fire in the main street in the town of Aba in an ethnically Tibetan area of Sichuan province on Monday morning, according to London-based Free Tibet.

Police extinguished the flames and took Sandhag to a hospital, the group said. A resident of the local Dhupu monastery, he has since been moved to another unknown location, it said.

Last week, two Tibetan teenagers set themselves on fire in a double self-

immolation in Aba prefecture, Tibet rights advocacy groups said. Seventeen-year-old Richen and his childhood friend Sonam Dargye, 18, were among the youngest to have died in the fiery protests.

The protests have continued despite an intensified crackdown in Tibetan areas by Chinese authorities hoping to stop the self-immolations. Authorities have detained and jailed Tibetans they accuse of helping others self-immolate, an act that Beijing now considers a crime. Tibet and adjoining ethnically Tibetan regions have been sealed-off to most outsiders, making independent confirmation of the self-immolations virtually impossible.

A woman who answered the phone at the Communist Party's propaganda department in Gannan prefecture, which oversees Luqu county, said she was unaware of the reported self-immolation, while county officials could not be reached. Authorities in Qinghai's Haidong prefecture, where the second protest took place, could not be reached or said they had no information on the case.

China sentences three Tibetans upto 15 years for self-immolation” crimes”

Phayul, 2 March 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 2: A Chinese court in eastern Tibet has passed down heavy prison terms of up to 15 years to three Tibetans for their “crimes” relating to the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

An official Chinese newspaper in Kanlho region reported that a court in Luchu carried out the rulings on Thursday.

The court sentenced Lhamo Dorjee to 15 years in prison, Kalsang Sonam to 11 years, and Tsesang Kyab to 10 years on charges of “intentional homicide.”

According to US based Radio Free Asia, the court hearing was “largely a closed door affair” and was held “under tight security” as opposed to China’s earlier claims of open trials attended by relatives of the accused.

“The trial was conducted quietly with a huge presence of security forces in and around the Kanlho Prefecture court. The Tibetans were barred from coming close to the court premises,” the radio service quoted a Tibetan source as saying.

Although details of the court ruling are not available, it was earlier reported that nine Tibetans were standing trial on the same day in connection with the self-immolation protest of Tsering Namgyal.

Phayul had earlier reported on the arrest of eight Tibetans, including a family member of Tsering Namgyal, for sharing information with outsiders.

The eight arrested Tibetans have been identified as Kalsang Samdup, Nyima, Lhamo Dhundup, Dorjee Dhundup, Kalsang Kyab, Kalsang Sonam, Kalsang Namdren, and Sonam Kyi.

Tsering Namgyal, 31, succumbed to his injuries after setting himself on fire near a local Chinese government office in Luchu on November 29, 2012. He is survived by his wife Choekyong Tso, their two children, Dorjee Kyi, 7, and Kalsang Dolma, 3, and his parents.

In the past few months, Chinese courts have carried out a number of rushed hearings and sentenced a Tibetan monk to death with a two-year reprieve and several others to lengthy jails terms.

Following the court rulings, the New York-based Human Rights Watch demanded the immediate release of jailed Tibetans arguing that their conviction “relied solely on confessions they gave during five months in detention.”

“These prosecutions are utterly without credibility,” HRW said. “The Chinese government seems to think it can stop self-immolation by punishing anyone who talks about it. But in pursuing these ‘incitement’ cases, the government compounds the tragedy of these suicide protests.”

HRW noted that it has documented “endemic use of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and coercion of Tibetans in detention.”

“Self-immolations take place in the context of the Chinese government’s long-standing repressive policies in the Tibetan areas that have seen severe restrictions on Tibetans’ rights,” the rights group had said.

Kunchok Wangmo

Age: 30

Occupation:

Date: 13 March 2013

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



Tibetan woman self-immolates on eve of Xi’s appointment as president

Phayul, 17 March 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 17: Exile Tibetan media are reporting on a self-immolation protest by a Tibetan woman on the eve of Xi Jinping’s formal

selection as the new President of China earlier this week.

According to Tibetan news reports, Kunchok Wangmo, in her 30s, set herself on fire protesting China's rule at around midnight on Wednesday, March 13 in the Dzoegje region of Ngaba, eastern Tibet. She passed away in her fiery protest.

Xi, communist party general secretary, was formally appointed to the largely ceremonial post of president by the rubber stamp parliament on Thursday, completing China's once in a decade leadership transition.

Chinese authorities took possession of Kunchok Wangmo's body and carried out the cremation without informing her family members. They later handed over the remains.

Kunchok Wangmo's husband Dolma Kyab, has been arrested after he refused to comply with local Chinese authorities' orders to declare internal family feuds as the reason for her self-immolation.

The present condition and whereabouts of Kyab are not known.

Due to intense restrictions on communication channels in the region, information on self-immolation and fall out of Kyab's arrest is not yet known.

Kunchok Wangmo is the 15th Tibetan woman to set herself on fire demanding freedom and the return of Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

In the same week, a monk at the Kirti Monastery set himself on fire on Friday in Ngaba, taking the toll to two in the week marked by China's leadership transition.

On March 16, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the brutal killings of peaceful Tibetan protesters by Chinese armed forces in 2008, Lobsang Thokmey, 28, a monk of the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba set himself on fire.

Lobsang Thokmey carried out his fiery protest at the Kirti Monastery and later succumbed to his injuries.

109 Tibetans living under China's rule have torched their bodies since 2009 protesting China's rule.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people, in his March 10 Tibetan National Uprising Day statement this year blamed China's occupation and repression in Tibet for driving Tibetans to self-immolation.

"The prohibitions of peaceful protest and harsh punishments compel Tibetans to resort to self-immolation. They choose death rather than silence and submission to the Chinese authorities," Sikyong Sangay said.

CTA holds prayer service for Tibetan self-immolators

Phayul, 21 March 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 20: Hundreds of Tibetans, including Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay, Speaker Penpa Tsering, Kalons or cabinet ministers and members of the the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile attended a special prayer service today at Tsug-la Khang, the main temple in Dharamshala. “Since the wave of self-immolation began in Tibet, the Chinese government has always called the Tibetan self-immolators as drunkard or mentally ill and it has continued the same but now, it has been clear that none of the claims made by Chinese government were proved right even after their repeated attempts to disgrace the self-immolators,” the Tibetan prime minister said while addressing the people gathered for the prayer. The service was held in honour of the two recent self-immolators Kunchok Wangmo and Lobsang Thokmey who set themselves on fire in protest against China’s occupation of their homeland. Kunchok Wangmo, in her 30s, set herself on fire at around midnight on March 13 in the Dzoge region of Ngaba, Northeastern Tibet. She died in the protest. On March 16, Lobsang Thokmey, 28, a monk at the Kirti Monastery set himself on fire at around 2:40 pm (local time).

Monks and people gathered at the scene of the protest and took Thokmey to the local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

The deepening crisis in Tibet has witnessed large scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that has now seen 109 Tibetans set themselves on fire since 2009. The self-immolators have demanded freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. Ninety-one of them have died.

China police accuse Tibetan of killing wife amid latest ‘self-immolation protest’

By Tania Branigan. Beijing. *The Guardian*. 19 March 2013

Chinese authorities have accused a Tibetan man of murdering his wife, in response to reports that she self-immolated in protest at Beijing’s policies.

An exile group and Radio Free Asia had reported that 30-year-old Kunchok Wangmo set fire to herself on 13 March on the main street of Ruogergai county town in Aba county, Sichuan province.

More than 100 monks, nuns and lay people have self-immolated in the last two years in predominantly Tibetan areas across western China. Aba, known to Tibetans as Ngaba, has recorded more than 30 such cases. Local authorities there revealed recently they had cut off the internet and text messaging, and tightened control over the sale of petrol and painkillers in their attempts to halt the protests.

Exile groups said police seized and cremated Kunchok Wangmo's body and handed her husband Dolma Kyab the ashes. They detained him only after he refused to blame the self-immolation on domestic problems.

Dzoge Lekshek, an exile with contacts in the region, told Radio Free Asia: "The authorities wanted Dolma Kyab to declare that she burnt herself as a result of a family conflict and when he refused to comply, he was detained and taken away."

The English-language edition of state newspaper Global Times reported on Tuesday that police were holding him because he had strangled his wife and then burned her body.

Aba prefecture spokesman Jiang Zuquan told the newspaper he was certain the case was not a protest against Chinese policy in Tibetan areas. He alleged Dolma Kyab strangled his wife at their home after a row about his alleged alcoholism, before moving her body to a nearby building and setting fire to it.

Repeated phone calls to the propaganda office went unanswered.

Alistair Currie, spokesman for the Free Tibet campaign, said it was seeking further information but remained sceptical about police claims.

"We have no reason to trust Chinese authorities and experience shows they are actively seeking to denigrate those who conduct these protests ... This would fit in with that," he said.

"No one can have any faith in the legal system in Tibet and the only way to ensure a full and accurate account would be if international observers were given free access to the area and allowed to perform an investigation. China has consistently refused to allow any such external involvement, despite repeated requests from governments and the UN."

Chinese authorities have jailed people for "encouraging" self-immolations in recent months and have detained many more.

The Chinese Human Rights Defenders group reported last week that a senior monk from Qinghai province, known only as Yaphel, had been jailed for 15 months for "disrupting traffic" and "disrupting public order" after he carried the ashes of a nephew who had self-immolated in a procession from a monastery to

his nephew's home last year.

The Global Times recently revealed that officials in Xiahe, Gansu province, have required residents to sign letters of commitment against self-immolation following cases there.

"The families of self-immolators can't keep the bodies, residents are forbidden to offer condolences, and monks are not allowed to chant sutras for the dead," added Bai Weilong, a government worker.

In Hezuo, Gannan prefecture, in the same province, the chief of a township told the newspaper it had driven out 16 monks from its monastery who "misbehaved or violated monastery rules", following the self-immolation of a villager.

Separately, Chinese authorities confirmed that a Tibetan monk from Kirti monastery in Aba burned himself to death there on Saturday. Lobsang Thokmey was 28.

Radio Free Asia said he had wanted to mark the fifth anniversary of a Chinese crackdown on the 2008 Tibetan protests in the area.

The Chinese government has blamed followers of the Dalai Lama for the self-immolations. They accuse the exiled spiritual leader of seeking to split Tibet from the rest of China.

He says he seeks only meaningful autonomy for Tibet and has blamed the burnings on discontent at the way China rules the region.

UK appeals China to commute Kyab's death sentence

Phayul.com, 4 September 2013

DHARAMSHALA, September 4: The British Foreign Secretary William Hague yesterday appealed the Chinese government to commute Dolma Kyab's death sentence and conduct "free and fair trials" in line with international standards.

"We urge the Chinese authorities to commute the sentence and give a reprieve," said Hague to the House of Commons.

Earlier in August, China sentenced Dolma Kyab to death for allegedly killing his wife Kunchok Wangmo, who the exile Tibetans say had died after setting herself on fire in protest Chinese rule.

After Dolma Kyab from Tibet's Zoege County refused to comply with the Chinese authorities orders to declare internal family feuds as the reason for his wife's self-immolation, he was arrested.

Expressing his concern over the escalating rate of self-immolation protests in

Tibet Hague called on all parties to use their influence to bring “an end” to it (self-immolation protests).

Since 2009, as many as 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet calling for freedom in Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Answering a question of risking harm on religious and political freedom by making excessively large noises about human rights abuses with the Chinese government, Hague said, “I think that we should always be clear in the United Kingdom about our belief in universal human rights and never be afraid to give our advocacy for those rights. That includes relations with China.”

Last month, Dharamshala based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has condemned the use of the death penalty and said it violates the fundamental right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

“The persistent use of death penalty demonstrates China’s rejection of the United Nations Global Moratorium on the Death Penalty, adopted in 2007, which establishes a suspension on executions with the view to abolish the death penalty,” the Tibetan right group said.

Exile Tibetans appeal for commuting of Konchok and Kyab’s death sentence

Phayul, 23 September 2013

Kirti Rinpoche, the exiled head of the Kirti monasteries in Tibetan area of Ngaba, which has seen much of the self immolation protests by Tibetans since 2009, on Saturday condemned the death sentence of Lobsang Konchok and Dolma Kyab terming the Chinese legal system “unfair”.

“Chinese government earlier sentenced Lobsang Konchok and Dolma Kyab to death for their connection with self-immolation protests without any concrete evidences, which clearly shows China’s violation of the international law and disregard to basic human rights,” said Kirti Rinpoche, who was speaking at an event ‘Petition to the UN’ organized by National Democratic Party of Tibet.

In January this year, a Chinese court sentenced Lobsang Konchok, 40, a monk of Ngaba Kirti Monastery, to death with a two-year reprieve, and Dolma Kyab, the husband of Tibetan self-immolator Kunchok Wangmo, in August.

Rinpoche also appealed the United Nations and international community to release all the Tibetan political prisoners including the young Panchen Rinpoche.

“This is not only an utter disregard of International laws and basic Human

Rights, but also a clear proof of a nation's systematic violation of civilian rights," said Gelek Jamyang, President of National Democratic Party of Tibet. "The dictatorial excesses of the Communist regime of China are a crime against humanity and it is a blot on peace at large in the world."

The campaign was aimed to bring the situation in Tibet to the notice of the UN and to solve the crisis inside Tibet. Also present at the event were Dharamshala settlement officer Sonam Dorjee, Tsering Tsomo, Director of Tibetan Centre for Human Rights, and Democracy and leaders of Tibetan NGOs.

As a part of the campaign, songs were performed in honor of Tibetan self-immolators. Since 2009, 121 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet calling for freedom in Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile. A number of Tibetans were also persecuted for their alleged involvement in the self-immolation protests in various regions of Tibet.

Lobsang Thokmey

Age: 28

Occupation: monk

Date: 16 March 2013

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



Kirti monk marks March 16 with self-immolation, Toll rises to 108

Phayul, 16 March 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 16: A Tibetan monk in Ngaba region of eastern Tibet has become the 108th Tibetan living under China's rule to self-immolate, marking five years since the 2008 peaceful protests in the region.

Lobsang Thokmey, 28, a monk at the Kirti Monastery set himself on fire today at around 2:40 pm (local time). He passed away in his protest.

According to the Dharamshala based Kirti Monastery, Lobsang Thokmey doused his body with kerosene in front of his monastic quarters in the west of the Kirti Monastery and started running towards the east.

"Lobsang Thokmey was in flames as he began running with the Buddhist flag in his hands," the Kirti Monastery said in a release. "Before he could reach the main gate, he fell on the ground."

Monks and people gathered at the scene of the protest carried Lobsang Thokmey to the local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

“A large number of Chinese security personnel arrived at the hospital soon after Lobsang Thokmey was admitted and later forcibly took away the deceased’s body to the regional headquarters of Barkham,” the same source said.

It is not yet known what slogans Lobsang Thokmey raised during his self-immolation protest.

He is survived by his parents Rogtrug and Depo and a sister and three brothers.

Lobsang Thokmey became a monk at the Kirti Monastery at a young age and was currently enrolled in the pharchin class.

“His conduct was excellent and he was very diligent in his studies,” the Kirti Monastery recalled contacts as saying.

On March 16, 2008, around 28 Tibetans were shot dead on a single day by Chinese security forces during the peaceful protest in Ngaba as part of the wider uprisings that engulfed the entire Tibetan plateau.

On the third anniversary of the 2008 killings, Kirti monk Lobsang Phuntsok set himself on fire at a busy market place in Ngaba on March 16, 2011, triggering in earnest the continuing wave of self-immolations.

A year later on March 16, 2012, another Kirti monk Lobsang Tsultrim torched his body, marking the anniversary of the March 16 killings and protests in Ngaba.

Since Kirti monk Tabey’s self-immolation protest in 2009, as many as 108 Tibetans living under China’s rule have set themselves on fire protesting China’s occupation and demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

The exile Tibetan govt. called the unprecedented number of self-immolations “ultimate acts of civil disobedience against China’s failed rule in Tibet.”

“Concrete steps that the leaders of the world need to take immediately are to send Ms Navi Pillay of UNHCR on a visit to Tibet and investigate the real causes of self immolations, and convene a meeting to discuss and address the crisis in Tibet,” Sikyong Sangay, the elected head of the Tibetan people said last month.

Tibetan monk self-immolates inside China temple

By *Associated Press* and Christopher Bodeen, March 17, 2013

BEIJING (AP) — A Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire inside a western Chinese monastery recently singled out by authorities as a hub of the grisly self-immolation protests striking the region, reports said Sunday.

U.S.-backed broadcaster Radio Free Asia said Lobsang Thokmey, 28, was the 108th Tibetan to self-immolate in a string of protests against Chinese rule and religious restrictions starting in February 2009. His protest took place on the fifth anniversary of a 2008 government crackdown in the area in which police fired into a crowd, allegedly killing 10 people.

The monk set himself on fire Saturday inside his room in Kirti monastery in Sichuan province's mountainous Aba county, RFA said. Carrying a Tibetan Buddhist prayer flag, he ran toward the monastery entrance before collapsing and was rushed to hospital where he died, the report said.

A man who answered the phone at Kirti said the monastery was open to the public, but hung up when questioned about the self-immolation report. Calls to local government and police offices rang unanswered.

The London-based advocacy group Free Tibet also reported Lobsang Thokmey's self-immolation. It said a large force of security personnel at the county hospital had removed his body.

Earlier this month, Wu Zegang, the governor of Aba prefecture, accused monks at Kirti monastery of collaborating with exiled Tibetans, including spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, to organize locals to set themselves on fire. He offered no concrete evidence. The Dalai Lama and exiled Tibetans have said it is Beijing's repressive controls that drive the protests.

Like monks across Tibet and surrounding regions, those at Kirti have often been at the forefront of unrest following the 2008 uprising that was quashed by a massive and continuing show of force.

Chinese authorities have been at a loss to stem the self-immolations, despite the mass deployment of security forces and informants and other heavy-handed policies that critics have blamed for stirring further resentment.

Confirming claims long circulating among Tibetan activists, the official Global Times newspaper last week said that family members of those who self-immolate were barred from retrieving their relatives' bodies, while neighbors were not allowed to offer condolences and monks were barred from offering prayers for the dead.

Restrictions on religious activities have been tightened and monks wishing to take leave are required to apply to their monastery's government-run management office, said the paper, which is published by the official Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily. Monks are already required to spend hours each week in Chinese "patriotic education" classes, taking up time usually devoted to

religious studies.

Kirti is under especially close watch, with four vehicles belonging to the paramilitary People's Armed Police permanently stationed at its front gate, the *Global Times* reported. The area is off-limits to foreign journalists, making it impossible to verify claims about conditions inside.

Tibetan Monk Dies In Self-Immolation on Sensitive Date for Amdo Ngaba *VOA Tibetan*, 17 March 2013

A 28-year-old monk named Lobsang Thokmey set himself on fire around at 2:40pm Saturday, March 16 local time. Sources in the region have stated that Thokmey poured gasoline over himself near his residence at the monastery, and after igniting himself on fire, walked towards the western gate of the monastery, before finally falling down. Witnesses have reported that the monk was holding a religious flag in his hands but could not confirm if he shouted any statements. Monks and local Tibetans rushed Lobsang Thokmey to an area hospital where he succumbed to his injuries within a few hours.

A large security force arrived at the hospital and transferred the monk's body to Barkham county against the wishes of Thokmey's family and that of his monastery. It is customary in Tibet to conduct religious rituals and prayer services in the presence of a deceased person immediately following his or her death.

Lobsang Thokmey was born in Rangtrig Tsang, a nomadic area of Tington (Chi: Cheng Guan) township in Ngaba County, Ngaba Tibetan and Qing Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province.

Lobsang Thokmey's father's name is Rangtrig and his mother's name is Tepu. He joined Kirti monastery as a child and was in his 8th year of Buddhist studies according to the traditional monastic system. Thokmey is known to be a role model for younger monks as an excellent scholar and for his socially conscious activities within his community. Lobsang Thokmey is survived by his parents, three brothers and one sister.

March 16th is a sensitive day in the region as it is the 5th anniversary of the mass shooting of protesters by security forces and the heavy crackdown of 2008. In the over 150 protests that occurred throughout the Tibetan plateau in 2008, the suppression of peaceful protesters was the most violent and unrelenting in this region of Sichuan province.

Three years after the Ngaba crackdown, a monk named Lobsang Phuntsok self-

immolated in Ngaba on March 16, 2011, becoming the second Tibetan to self-immolate inside Tibet. Last year on the same day, Lobsang Tsultrim set himself on fire to continue the deadly commemoration.

Lobsang Thokmey's self-immolation protest today is the third to take place on March 16 and the 108th self-immolation in Tibet and Tibetan regions in China.

Kalkyi

Age: 30

Occupation: Housewife

Date: 24 March 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzamthang, Ngaba, Amdo

Current Status: deceased



Tibetan mother of 4 sets self on fire, report says

By *Associated Press*, Mar 25, 2013

BEIJING - A U.S.-backed broadcaster says a Tibetan mother of four young children has killed herself in the latest self-immolation protest in western China. Radio Free Asia said 30-year-old Kalkyi set herself on fire Sunday near a monastery in Sichuan province's Aba county. The report said she died at the scene and her body was placed in the nearby Jonang Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Aba has seen the largest number of the 110 such protests that have occurred starting in 2009. Tibetan rights advocates say the self-immolations aim to protest Chinese rule and call for the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. China accuses the Dalai Lama's supporters of encouraging the suicides. Calls to the local government and police rang unanswered Monday.

Breaking: 110th Tibetan Self-immolation

Phayul, Sunday, 24 March 2013

A Tibetan woman today set herself on fire in an apparent protest against China's continuing occupation of Tibet.

Thirty-year-old Kal Kyi, a mother of four has set herself ablaze protesting near Jonang monastery in Zamthang in Eastern Tibet at 3:30 pm (local time).

"The local Tibetans carried her charred body inside the monastery premises

to prevent it from falling into the hands of Chinese security personnel,' said Tsangyang Gyatso, an exile Tibetan who has close contacts in the region.

She died from injuries and is survived by her husband, Gyepo, and four children.

Last year in May, another Tibetan woman, Rikyo 33 has set herself on fire near the Jonang Gonchen monastery in Zamthang County, which is located in Ngaba, the nerve centre of the ongoing wave of self-immolations in Tibet.

With Kyi's self-immolation the confirmed number of Tibetan self-immolation has reached 110. The primary demand of those who set themselves on fire are freedom for Tibet and return of His holiness the Dalai lama from exile.

Fourteen Tibetans have self-immolated since the beginning of this year. Eight of them happened in February alone.

Mother-of-four dies after setting herself on fire in latest self-immolation protest against China's rule over Tibet

By Suzannah Hills, *The Daily Mail*-UK, 25 March 2013

A Tibetan mother of four young children has killed herself in the latest self-immolation protest against Chinese rule.

Kalkyi, 30, doused her body in petrol before lighting a match near a monastery in Sichuan province's Aba county in western China yesterday.

The mother died at the scene and her body was placed in the nearby Jonang Tibetan Buddhist monastery, Radio Free Asia reports.

Her death comes just a week after 28-year old Kirti monk Lobsang Thogme set fire to himself on March 16 in Aba.

Aba has seen the largest number of the 110 self-immolation protests that first began in 2009. Many of the deaths have occurred in the last two years. There were 25 deaths - aged between 15 and 30 - in November alone, according to campaigners.

Tibetan rights advocates say the self-immolations aim to protest Chinese rule and call for the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. China accuses the Dalai Lama's supporters of encouraging the suicides.

Calls to the local government and police rang unanswered today.

Self-immolations reveal the desperation among Tibet's youth after 60 years under Beijing's thumb.

The Chinese government has sought to crack down on Tibetan dissidents issuing a stern warning to the authorities of eastern Tibet to punish all self-immolators

and their relatives - and even those who send condolences to bereaved families.

It said all government aid would be removed from the families of self-immolators while development projects in communities that have been home to such protesters would be cancelled.

The campaign group Free Tibet says it has documented multiple cases of collective punishment, imposed against the communities & families where individuals have set themselves on fire, or where other forms of protest have taken place.

It says punishments have included homes being ransacked, development projects which were planned for a village cancelled and 'public criticism'.

Of the 110 protesters who have set themselves on fire, the majority have died of their injuries. Those who survive, are arrested and taken away. They are rarely seen again, say campaign groups.

Stephanie Bridger, director of Free Tibet, said: 'Tibetans from all walks of life, young and old, mothers, nomads, students, monks and nuns are rejecting China's occupation of their homeland.

'China is trying to crush protest through arbitrary detention, collective punishment, communications blackouts, bribery and much more – this has only strengthened the resolve of the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom.

'Free Tibet is receiving reports of protests inside Tibet on an almost daily basis. These protests will only continue until each and everyone one of us stands with the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and our Governments stop kowtowing to an unelected Chinese regime.'

But it is also a moral and policy dilemma for Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and a new generation of exiled politicians.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 with hundreds of followers and set up base in Dharamsala, a town about 400 km north of New Delhi.

The deaths raise theological questions about non-violence and highlight a long-standing schism between the elderly Dalai Lama's softly, softly approach to China and activists who want to fight for independence.

Tibetan Mother of Four Dies in Self-immolation Protest

VOA News, 25 March 2013

A 30 year old Tibetan woman set herself on fire today (March 24, 2013) around 3:30 pm local time, in an apparent protest against the Chinese

government's repressive policies in Tibet and Tibetan areas in China. The self-immolation took place near Zamthang Jonang Monastery in Zamthang county, Ngaba Prefecture, Sichuan Province. The monastery is one of the region's largest with around 4,000 monks. Sources say Kalkyi, a mother of four children, died at the site of her immolation, and that eyewitnesses saw her engulfed in flames but could not identify what she was saying.

VOA has learnt that Tibetans in the area were able to take her body to Zamthang Jonang Monastery, and that monks were carrying out prayers and rituals for the deceased. Chinese officials and security personnel had arrived at the monastery an hour after the self-immolation incident and had ordered that the body be cremated before Sunday midnight, according to the same source who spoke to the VOA Tibetan.

Kalkyi's self-immolation brings the known number of self-immolations in Tibet since February 2009 to 110. Except for two immolations that were property rights protests, the rest were reported to have been protests against repression or calls for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Kalkyi is survived by her four children, husband Dupae, father Choden, and mother Pari. She leaves behind three sons—Denam, Pochung, Sopo, and a daughter who is the youngest child, named Chung.

Last week the Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Menendez, expressed concern on the continuing unrest in Tibet and what he described as, "the tragic trend of self-immolations in Tibet." In his speech on the Senate floor, Menendez stated that, "Tibet today is one of the most repressed and closed societies in the world, where merely talking on the phone can land you in jail. Support for the Dalai Lama can be prosecuted as an offence against the state."

The Senator addressed the Tibet self-immolations by stating, "Like so many others, I wish that Tibetans would not choose self-immolations, a horrific act, as a method of protest. I hope Tibetans will find other ways to express their grievances and despair and halt these self-destructive acts", and identified the causes of these protests as being rooted in the Chinese government's policies in Tibet by stating, "At the same time, we must understand that these sorts of acts are indicative of the deep sense of frustration felt by the Tibetan people. This is not a conspiracy of "foreign forces" but indicative of the deep sense of hopelessness of a people denied their basic dignity," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Menendez said.

30-year old woman dies of self-immolation in Tibet: Toll rises to 110

Tibet Post International, 24 MARCH 2013

Dharamshala: - A Tibetan woman has died Sunday after setting herself ablaze in eastern Tibet - the latest in a series of self-immolation protests against China's hardline and repressive policies on Tibet.

This incidents has pushed the total number of self-immolations in Tibet to 110, at-least 92 of them reportedly passed-away due to burn injuries.

Kalkyi, 30-year old Tibetan woman set herself ablaze on March 24, around 3.30pm (Local Tibetan Time) near Dzamthang Jonang Monastery in Dzamthang township in Golok Pema, Ngaba in Amdho region, eastern Tibet." Tseyang Gyatso, a Tibetan currently living in Dharamshala told The Tibet Post International.

Kalkyi, a mother-of-four has reportedly died after setting herself on fire in Ngaba, (Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province in China), souces said, the latest in a wave of self-immolation protests against Chinese rule over Tibet.

Local Tibetans protected her body from Chinese authorities shortly after the protest. The body was then taken to Jonang Monastery where a traditional prayer service is being held by monks, Tseyang further added.

Kalkyi was from yultso village in Dzamthang county. She is survived by her husband Drupe and four children, a young daughter Bhumo Chung and three sons-Denam, Pochung, Sopo, all aged under 15. She is the 5th Tibetan from Dzamthang county, who set on fire to protest against Beijing's failed policeis in Tibet, the sources said.

In last two weeks, a man and a woman set themselves alight in separate incidents in different areas of Ngaba County, Amdho, Tibet. Konchok, a 30-year old Tibetan woman has staged her protest just before China's new leader Xi Jinping was formally appointed as president of the communist regime and Thokmey, a 28-year old Buddhist monk set himself on fire just two days after Xi became as new Chinese president.

The most common call for the return of the spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the preservation of the Tibetan language, and an end to restrictions on freedom of religion. However, many also called for Tibetan independence

Lhamo Kyab

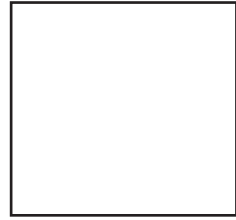
Age: 43

Occupation:

Date: 25 March 2013

Place of self-immolation: Sangchu,

Current Status: deceased



Breaking: Second self-immolation in 24 hours, Toll rises to 111

Phayul, Monday, March 25, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 25: Within 24 hours of Kal Kyi's self-immolation in Zamthang, another Tibetan has set himself on fire today in an apparent protest against China's continuing occupation of Tibet.

Forty-three-old Lhamo Kyab set himself ablaze in a forest in Sangchu County in Amdo, Eastern Tibet. The self-immolation took place around 10 pm (local time). He died in his fiery protest.

According to our sources in exile, Lhamo Kyab set himself in a forest where he works as a forest guard.

"Early morning, he doused himself in kerosene and jumped into a fire which he started with timber wood," said the same source, who did not want to be named.

Following his self-immolation protest, a large number of armed security personnel arrived at the location and the situation in the region is described as tense "under strict surveillance".

Kyab's self-immolation is the second such case in one day. Thirty-year-old Kal Kyi, a mother of four has set herself ablaze on 24 March in Eastern Tibet at 3:30 pm (local time). She died at the protest site.

Tibetan Forest Guard Who Self-immolated Dies

RFA News, 26 March 2013

A Tibetan man who self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule in Gansu province on Monday has died, according to a source inside Tibet.

The fate of Lhamo Kyab, 43, who burned himself in Tsoe town in Sangchu (Xiahe) county within the Gannan (Kanlho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, was not immediately known due to communication problems.

The source told RFA's Tibetan Service Tuesday that he had died on the spot in

the predawn self-immolation.

Unlike most other Tibetan self-immolators, Lhamo Kyab, a bachelor forest guard, jumped into a raging fire he set up using wood and kerosene and was mostly consumed by the flames.

“When the locals reached the site, his body was totally burnt except for his head,” the source said.

“Not long after, the Chinese security forces arrived and cordoned off the area. The local Tibetans were stopped from going near the site of the self-immolation,” the source said.

111th self-immolator

Lhamo Kyab was the 111th Tibetan to self-immolate since the fiery protests began in February 2009 challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan-populated areas and calling for the return of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

The desperate protests are raging on despite tighter restrictions imposed by Chinese authorities. Ninety of the protesters have died.

Lhamo Kyab’s self-immolation came a day after a Tibetan mother of four burned herself to death near a monastery in protest against Chinese rule in Sichuan province’s Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) prefecture.

Kalkyi, 30, who left behind a husband and three sons and a daughter, all under 15 years of age, self-immolated near the Jonang monastery in Dzamthang (Rangtang) county and local Tibetans immediately took her body into the monastery before Chinese security forces arrived, sources said.

Chinese authorities have recently tightened controls in Tibetan-populated areas to check the self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing more than a dozen Tibetans who they accused of being linked to the burnings. Some were jailed up to 15 years.

Tibetan Man Self-immolates in Labrang Area Village

VOA News, 25 March 2013

A 43 -year-old man named Lhamo Kyab, who worked as a forest keeper, burnt himself to death on a wooden pyre in the small village of Lushoe at approximately 10 am local time on Monday, March 25. Kyab’s self-immolation was discovered by locals in the late morning who say that

there was little remaining of his body except for his skull

Today's self-immolation comes a day after Kalkyi, a Tibetan woman who was the mother of four children set herself ablaze in Zamthang, Ngaba Prefecture, Sichuan province. She died at the site of her protest. Since February 2009, there have been a total of 109 self-immolations in Tibet and Tibetan regions reported to focus on political and religious issues, with another two self-immolations that were reported to have been motivated by property rights issues.

Another self-Immolation protest inside Tibet: Toll rises to 111

By Smuel Ivor, *THE TIBET POST INTERNATIONAL*, 25 MARCH 2013

Dharamshala: Reports are emerging from Eastern Tibetan that a young man has self-immolated, taking the estimated toll to 111 since 2009.

According to our sources inside Tibet, a very few detail has surfaced from a reported self-immolation staged this morning in Amdho; Eastern Tibet. Lhakyab Jinpa, a Tibetan currently living in India, told The Tibet Post International about the latest self-immolation protest.

It is reported that Lhamo Kyab, a 43 year old Tibetan man self-immolated in Medshul Town; of Sangchu county, Kanlho, Amdho province of eastern Tibet (Chinese: Xiahe Xian, Gannan prefecture in Gansu).

A Tibetan mon has been confirmed dead after setting himself alight in Sangchu county, a latest source from inside the region say, in the latest apparent protest against rule from Chinese government. Protocol by Chinese authorities in previous protests has witnessed mass media blackouts and police crackdowns.

The last two weeks alone have seen one male and one female set themselves alight in separate incidents in areas of Ngaba County, Amdhot. Konchok, a 30-year old Tibetan woman has staged her protest just before China's new leader Xi Jinping was formally appointed as president of the communist regime and Thokmey, a 28-year old Buddhist monk set himself on fire just two days after Xi became the new Chinese president.

Patterns in the immolation protests have highlighted a return for the spiritual leader of Tibet His Holiness the Dalai Lama to His homeland, as well as the preservation of the Tibetan language, and an end to the heavy restrictions on freedom of religion in the region. Many have also called for Tibetan independence, and an estimated 92 have died of their injuries when attempting self-immolation.

Kunchok Tenzin

Age: 28

Occupation: monk

Date: 26 March 2013

Place of self-immolation: Luchu,

Current status: deceased



Breaking: A monk sets self ablaze in Tibet

Phayul, Friday, March 29, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, March 29: A monk from Mogri Monastery in Luchu in Eastern Tibet has set himself on fire in an apparent protest against China's continuing occupation of Tibet.

"Kunchok Tenzin set himself ablaze at a road intersection near his monastery at 7pm (local time) on Tuesday, March 26," said Kanyag Tsering of Dharamsala-based Kirti Monastery, who closely monitors self-immolations inside Tibet.

Twenty-eight-year-old Tenzin died in his fiery protest.

"Following his self-immolation protest, the local Tibetans carried his charred body inside the monastery premises and cremated it on the same night to prevent the body from falling into Chinese security personnel's hands," Tsering added.

Tenzin, son of Lhakho and Lhamo Tso, became a monk in Morgi Monastery at young age.

Last week, David Sweet, a Canadian parliamentarian raised the issue of Tibet in the House of Commons and called upon Xi Jinping to meet with the leaders of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

"I would like to note that the world is now watching how President Jinping's government lives by those words and lives up to those expectations with regard to the situation in Tibet," said Sweet.

There have now been 114 confirmed self-immolations in the occupied Tibet. Sixteen of them took place since the beginning of this year.

China's media blackout and severe security clampdown in Tibet are some of the reasons why the news of Kunchok Tenzin's self-immolation took two days to get out.

Tibetan Monk Dies in Burning Protest Against ‘Ruthless’ Rule

RFA News, 28 March 2013

A Tibetan monk has burned himself to death near a monastery in northwestern China’s Gansu province in the latest self immolation protest challenging Chinese rule, exile sources said Thursday, citing local contacts. Kunchok Tenzin, 28, torched himself at a major road intersection near his Mori monastery in Luchu (in Chinese, Luqu) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on Tuesday, the sources said.

News of the burning protest was relayed only two days later due to communication difficulties, they said.

“He set himself on fire at 7 p.m. at a major crossroads in close proximity to the monastery in protest against the ruthless Chinese policy in Tibet and died,” India-based Tibetan exile monks Kanyak and Lobsang Yeshi said in a statement.

“Fearing they may lose custody of the body to the Chinese security forces, the Tibetans in the area managed to move his body to the monastery first and then cremated him late at night,” they said.

“After the fiery protest, security forces were deployed in all the neighboring towns located in the neighborhood of Mori monastery and restrictions were imposed on the locals,” according to Kanyak Tsering and Lobsang Yeshi, who are based in the Indian hill town of Dharamsala, where Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama lives.

They said that Kunchok Tenzin was enrolled in the monastery at a young age and known for his “accomplishments in the study of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy.”

His burning raised the number of Tibetan self-immolation protests challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan-populated areas and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet to 114.

Updated toll

Earlier Thursday, it was confirmed for the first time that a Tibetan monk and his niece had died nearly a year ago in a self-immolation protest against Chinese rule and not due to a home accident as reported previously. Tulku Athup and niece Atse self-immolated at his Dzogchen monastery in Sichuan Province on April 6 last year, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the official name of the India-based exile government, said on its website on Wednesday. But fearing closure of the monastery, officials at the institution had told Chinese

police then that they had died due to an “accidental fire,” the CTA said.

The police then withdrew from the monastery.

On the day of his burning protest, he told his family by phone: “Today I feel at ease and [am] ending my life by offering butter lamps for all those Tibetans who have set themselves on fire for the cause of Tibet,” according to the CTA.

“Immediately after making the call, he and his niece set themselves on fire.” Tulku Athup was 47 years old when he died and Atse was 25.

Kate Saunders, London-based spokesperson for the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), said that though Tulku Athup and Atse are already referenced in an ICT database of self-immolators, they were never listed in the advocacy group’s final count.

“Shortly, we may include them in our total of Tibetans who have self-immolated in China,” Saunders said.

13 ‘unlawful behaviors’ in Malho

Chinese authorities have recently tightened controls in Tibetan-populated areas to check the self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing more than a dozen Tibetans who they accused of being linked to the burnings. Some were jailed up to 15 years.

In the latest move, sources told RFA’s Tibetan Service this week that Chinese authorities are circulating a new list of 13 “unlawful” behaviors in a protest-hit Tibetan county in China’s northwestern Qinghai province, warning Tibetans against involvement in self-immolation protests and a range of other activities deemed supportive of challenges to Chinese rule.

An undated document listing the restricted behaviors, including filming self-immolation protests and seeking welfare donations, has been disseminated in all towns and villages of Rebgong (in Chinese, Tongren) county in Qinghai’s Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the sources said.

A typed copy of the document was received on Wednesday by RFA’s Tibetan Service. Prohibitions listed in the document are aimed at “strengthening the protection of social stability and maintaining discipline by cracking down on unlawful activities in the relevant areas,” the document, written in Tibetan, says.

Activities now forbidden include fundraising “in the name of social welfare,” urging protection of the environment or the Tibetan language, and conducting prayer rituals or other religious ceremonies if these carry “overtones” of support for Tibetan independence.

Other unlawful activities listed as unlawful include “intimidating” government officials, inciting self-immolation protests, obstructing the “rescue” of self-immolators by Chinese security forces, and sending images or information about self-immolations to “outside separatist forces.”

The list particularly bars Tibetans from “taking pictures and filming the actual scene of self-immolation and mass gatherings” and “providing secret information to separatist forces,” apparently referring to Tibetan exile groups. Some reports said the new list was based on points made by an unnamed senior Chinese official at a recent provincial-level meeting.

A 28-Year-Old Monk Latest to Self-Immolate

VOA News, 29 March 2013

A 28-year-old Tibetan monk from Mogri Monastery in Luchu has set himself ablaze around 7pm Tuesday. Kunchok Tenzin is reported to have died after the protest against Chinese rule over Tibet. Sources told VOA that local Tibetans carried Tenzin’s charred body inside the monastery and cremated that night.

Since February 2009, there have been a total of 110 self-immolations in Tibet and Tibetan regions reported to focus on political and religious issues, with another two self-immolations that were reported to have been motivated by property rights issues.

Jugtso

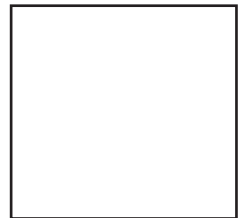
Age: 20

Occupation:

Date: 16 April 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzamthang, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Young mother sets herself on fire, bringing number of self-immolations to 115

AsiaNews, 17 April 2013

A young Tibetan mother burnt herself to death on Tuesday in Sichuan province to protest Chinese rule, calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and true religious

freedom for the region. The woman, identified as Jutso (or Chutso depending on the transliteration), leaves a husband and a three-year-old child. Her death brings the number of Tibetans who took their own life this way to 115.

According to local sources, the suicide took place near Jonang Monastery in Rangtang (Dzamthang in Tibetan), eastern Ngaba (*pictured*), a predominantly Tibetan area in Sichuan province, scene of many previous self-immolations, including two mothers, Kalkyi, 30, and Rikyo, 33, and two cousins in a separate protest, sources said.

After Jutso's death, her body was brought to the Monastery. Following this, local government officials and security forces pressured the family to cremate her remains during the night, in violation of local tradition.

For the moment, "Thousands of local Tibetans and monks are gathering at the monastery and her home to show solidarity with the deceased and her family," a local source noted.

Jutso's death "shows that even the full force of the Chinese state cannot deter some Tibetans from this act. Self-immolation is a protest, not a suicide, and until China addresses the grievances of the Tibetan people, protests of all forms will continue in Tibet," said Alistair Currie, a spokesman for the British-based Free Tibet.

The Dalai Lama, who has been accused by Beijing of "orchestrating" the self-immolations, has repeatedly called on the faithful to value life first and that protest can and should be carried out by other means. At the same time, the religious leader acknowledged that he could not fully comprehend his people's pain.

Tibetan mother immolates herself

The Latin American Herald Tribune, 17 April 2013

<http://www.laht.com/article.asp?CategoryId=12395&ArticleId=750170>

BEIJING – A young mother died after setting herself on fire to protest Chinese rule over her homeland, prompting thousands of people to gather near her home and the monastery where the self-immolation occurred. Chutso, 20, set herself ablaze Tuesday near Dzamthang county's Jonang monastery, in Sichuan province, bringing to 116 the number of people who have killed themselves in this fashion since 2009, Radio Free Asia said. The woman, who leaves behind a husband and a 3-year-old son, died shortly

after the flames engulfed her near the monastery, and neighbors later carried her remains to her home.

“Local authorities and the security forces later pressured the family to cremate her that night,” RFA said, adding that Chinese officials usually made such demands in the wake of these incidents. As a show of support, thousands of people from the surrounding area gathered outside Chugtso’s home and the monastery.

The London-based Free Tibet organization noted that the Jonang monastery was the scene of other self-immolations in May 2012, when two other mothers of small children set fire to themselves there.

The organization’s spokesman described the actions as “protests, not suicides” and said they would continue until China makes amends for the “damage” it has inflicted on the Tibetan population.

Of the 116 cases of people setting themselves on fire since 2009, at least 97 have ended in death. Eighteen such protests have occurred thus far this year. Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama and pro-Tibetan independence groups in exile for encouraging the self-immolations, even though the spiritual leader and 1989 Nobel Peace Prize laureate has called for an end to the protests.

China has regarded Tibet as part of its territory for centuries, though Tibetans say the “Roof of the World” was effectively independent until being occupied by the Red Army in the early 1950s.

Thousands Gather After Young Tibetan Mother Self-Immolates

RFA News, 16 April 2013

A young Tibetan mother burned herself to death on Tuesday in Sichuan province to protest Chinese rule in Tibetan areas, drawing thousands of villagers and monks to her home and a monastery near which she self-immolated, according to sources in the region and in exile.

Chugtso, 20, self-immolated at about 3:00 p.m. local time near Dzamthang (in Chinese, Rangtang) county’s Jonang monastery, a Tibetan living in India and with contacts in the county told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“Her self-immolation was in protest against China’s repressive policies in Tibet,” Tsangyang Gyatso said, citing sources in the region.

Chugtso’s burning brings to 116 the number of Tibetans who have burned themselves to protest Chinese rule and policies, with many also calling for the

return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Chugtso died at the scene and was brought to the nearby Jonang monastery, where monks performed prayers. Afterward, her remains were taken to her home, Gyatso said.

“Following this, local government officials and security forces pressured the family to cremate her remains during the night,” Gyatso said, adding, “This has been the usual practice of the government in handling self-immolation incidents.”

Show of support

The incident brought “thousands” of area residents out in support, Gyatso said.

“Thousands of local Tibetans and monks are gathering at the monastery and her home to show solidarity with the deceased and her family,” he said.

Chugtso, a native of Dzamthang’s Barma Yultso village, is survived by her husband and a three-year-old child. Her father’s name is Tenkho and her mother’s name is Dronkyi, Gyatso said.

Separately, the London-based Free Tibet advocacy group confirmed Chugtso’s death, noting that Jonang monastery has been the scene of other self-immolation protests in the past.

On March 24, Kalkyi, 30, a mother of three sons and one daughter and also from Barma village, torched herself near Jonang to protest Chinese rule, while another Tibetan woman, Rikyo, 33 and a mother of three, burned herself to death near the monastery in May 2012.

Two cousins self-immolated at the same site about a month before in a separate protest, sources said.

‘Protest, not suicide’

In a statement, Free Tibet spokesperson Alistair Currie said that though the pace of self-immolation protests in Tibetan areas has slowed in recent months, “the death of [Chugtso] shows that even the full force of the Chinese state cannot deter some Tibetans from this act.”

“Self-immolation is a protest, not a suicide, and until China addresses the grievances of the Tibetan people, protests of all forms will continue in Tibet,” Currie said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department on Monday said Washington is “very concerned by the self-immolations, detentions, [and] arrests of family members and associates of those who have self-immolated.”

“We call on the Chinese Government to engage in substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama [and with] his representatives, and without preconditions,” acting deputy spokesperson Patrick Ventrell said.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in Tibet and in Tibetan prefectures in Chinese provinces to check the fiery protests, cutting communication links with outside areas and jailing Tibetans believe to be linked to the burnings. Over a dozen have been jailed so far, some with jail terms of up to 15 years.

Young Tibetan mother dies in self-immolation protest

By *SAPA-DPA*, 17 April 2013

<https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/world/2013-04-17-young-tibetan-mother-dies-in-self-immolation-protest/>

A 20-year-old Tibetan woman died after setting fire to herself outside a Buddhist monastery in the latest of more than 100 similar protests in Tibetan areas of western China.

The woman, identified by the single name Chugtso, self-immolated on Tuesday at the Jonang monastery in Rangtang county, or Dzamthang in Tibetan, in the restive Ngaba area of Sichuan province, London-based Free Tibet and US-based Radio Free Asia said.

Hundreds of Tibetans gathered later Tuesday at the monastery and at the family home of Chugtso, who was the mother of a 3-year-old child, the reports quoted exiled Tibetans with local contacts as saying.

“Her self-immolation was in protest against China’s repressive policies in Tibet,” the broadcaster quoted Tsangyang Gyatso, an exiled Tibetan based in India, as saying.

About 116 Tibetans have set fire to themselves in China since 2009, most of them in the past two years. Many of the previous self-immolations were in Ngaba.

Tuesday’s self-immolation was the first reported this month.

“The intensity of self-immolation protests has diminished so far in 2013 but the death of Jugtso (Chugtso) shows that even the full force of the Chinese state cannot deter some Tibetans from this act,” Free Tibet spokesman Alistair Currie said.

Protests were likely to continue “until China addresses the grievances of the Tibetan people,” Currie said.

Thousands offered prayers for Jغتso

Phayul, Thursday, April 18, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, April 18: Following the self-immolation protest by Jغتso or Chuktso in Zamthang in Ngaba, Eastern Tibet, thousands of local Tibetans at the Jonang Monastery to offer their prayers and last respects.

Jغتso, 20, mother of four, set herself alight outside Jonang Monastery in Zamthang around 3 pm local time yesterday.

She died at the protest site and was then taken to the monastery where religious ceremonies were carried out. The family members later took the body home.

According to Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), “Family members of Chuktso were forced to cremate the body in haste that same night after orders came from County government and Public Security Bureau (PSB) office asking for an immediate cremation or allow confiscation of the body.”

Jغتso was a native of Bharma Village in Zamthang County. She is a daughter of Tenkho and Donkyi.

Jغتso became the sixth Tibetan to self-immolate in Dzamthang.

In Dharamshala, the de-facto capital of exile Tibet, hundreds of Tibetans and supporters carried out a candlelight vigil from the McLeod Ganj Square to the Martyr’s Pillar at Tsuglakhang in solidarity with Jغتso.

The deepening crisis inside Tibet has witnessed large-scale anti-China protests and a series of self-immolations that reached 115.

Tibetan 20-Year-Old Self-Immolates in Sichuan

VOA News, April 16, 2013

A 20-year-old Tibetan woman set herself ablaze on Tuesday in China’s western Sichuan province, in an apparent protest against Chinese rule in Tibet.

Witnesses reported that the woman, identified as Jغتso, died at the scene .

Her body was taken to a local monastery, where monks carried out prayers and rituals for the deceased. Hundreds of local community members are reported to have gathered near Jغتso’s home in preparation for her cremation.

She was married and had a three-year-old child.

Last month, a mother of four set herself alight in a similar protest against what Tibetans say is Chinese repression of their culture. China denies the charges and

calls the suicide acts terrorism.

Since February 2009, more than 100 Tibetans have self-immolated reportedly to protest Chinese rule, with another two self-immolations motivated by property rights issues.

Lobsang Dawa

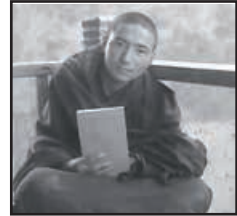
Age: 20

Occupation: monk

Date: 24 April 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzoegge, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Kunchok Woesser

Age: 23

Occupation: monk

Date: 24 April 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzoegge, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Two Tibetan monks in China die after self-immolations

BBC News, 25 April 2013

Two Tibetan monks have died after setting themselves alight in southern China's Sichuan province, reports say.

The monks, aged 20 and 23, set themselves on fire at the Kirti monastery in Aba county, said Radio Free Asia and Free Tibet.

The monastery has been a focal point of protests in recent months.

More than 100 Tibetans, mostly young monks, have set themselves on fire since 2011 - many fatally - in apparent protest against Chinese rule.

The monks, who reports identify as Lobsang Dawa, 20, and Konchog Woesser, 23, set themselves on fire on Wednesday, US-based Radio Free Asia and London-based Free Tibet said.

The monks at the monastery held prayers for the two who died and their bodies were to be cremated on Thursday, Radio Free Asia added.

The majority of the self-immolations since 2011 have taken place in ethnic Tibetan areas outside Tibet, many in Aba county.

Most involved Buddhist monks or nuns calling, Tibetan activist groups say, for greater religious freedom and the return of their exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The Chinese government accuses the Dalai Lama of orchestrating the protests, a charge he strongly rejects.

Foreign media are banned from the region, making verifying the self-immolation cases difficult. Chinese state media have confirmed some but not all.

In January, China found two men guilty of inciting immolations in Sichuan, believed to be the first cases since a legal ruling stipulating that anyone aiding immolations would be charged with murder.

Tibetan activists said the men, one of whom received a commuted death sentence and the other 10 years in jail, were forced to confess to the charges.

Breaking: Twin self-immolation protests in Tibet, Toll rises to 117

Phayul, Wednesday, 24 April 2013

DHARAMSHALA, April 24: In reports coming just in, two young Tibetan monks of the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Zoege, eastern Tibet set themselves on fire today protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet.

The exile seat of the Kirti Monastery in Dharamshala identified the two monks as Lobsang Dawa, 20 and Kunchok Woesser, 22.

"The two monks set themselves on fire at 6:40 pm (local time) near the right side of the main prayer hall of the Taktsang Lhamo Monastery protesting China's repressive policies," the Kirti Monastery release said. "Both of them passed away at the site of the protest."

According to reports, the body of the two monks were later taken to their respective monastic quarters where fellow monks carried out prayers.

"Local Chinese authorities have issued orders for the cremation of the two monks by early tomorrow morning," the release said.

Lobsang Dawa is a native of Zaru region of Zoege and the youngest of seven siblings.

Kunchok Woesser is a native of Zoege and is survived by his parents Tsering Norbu and Samdup Dolma and his two brothers.

"The two monks were enrolled at the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery at a

young age and were known for their exemplary conduct and studies,” the release said.

In 2008, following a series of anti-China protests across Ngaba region, local Chinese authorities had indefinitely closed down a school run by Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery.

The primary reason for its closure was cited as participation by a number of students of Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in the March 15th protest along with other senior monks of the monastery at the Zoege county headquarters.

Since 2009, as many as 117 Tibetans living under China’s rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Two Tibetan monks, woman die in self-immolations

The Hindu, DPA BEIJING, APRIL 25, 2013

Two Tibetan Buddhist monks and a young woman died in the latest of nearly 120 self-immolation protests in Tibetan areas of south-western China, reports said on Thursday.

Monks Lobsang Dawa, 20, and Konchog Woesser, 23, set fire to themselves early Wednesday evening at the Tagtsang Lhamo Kirti monastery in Ruo’ergai county, or Dzoegé in Tibetan, in Sichuan province, London-based Free Tibet and US-based Radio Free Asia said.

The monks’ bodies were taken inside the monastery, where other monks held prayer ceremonies for them, the broadcaster quoted Indian-based exiled Tibetan monks with contacts in Sichuan as saying.

In a separate protest on Tuesday afternoon, a young Tibetan woman died after self-immolating in Sichuan’s Rangtang, or Dzamthang, county, the broadcaster said.

Tsering Woesser, a well-known Tibetan writer based in Beijing, reported on Twitter that the woman was a 23-year-old herder.

“All the Tibetans who resort to self-immolation do so because they feel they have no other way to make China and the world listen to their country’s call for freedom,” Free Tibet director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said of the latest protests.

Twin Self-Immolation Protests Hit Tibet

www.tibet.net, April 25, 2013

DHARAMSHALA: Two monks of Kirti Monastery in Ngaba in northeastern Tibet died after setting themselves on fire on Wednesday, taking the total self-immolation protests by Tibetans to 117. 100 of them are known to have died.

Lobsang Dawa, 20, and Kunchok Woesser, 23, set fire to themselves near the prayer hall of the monastery. They shouted slogans to protest the Chinese government's repressive policies against Tibet. Both died on the spot.

The monks then carried their bodies into their rooms and offered prayers. The local authorities have ordered the monastery to immediately cremate the bodies next morning.

Both the monks joined Kirti Monastery at a young age and are known for their exemplary conduct and excellence in monastic studies.

The international community, including the UN and the EU parliament, have made clarion calls to the Chinese government to address the Tibetan people's genuine grievances and end its policies which are pushing Tibetans to burn themselves to death in protest.

But the Chinese authorities have responded to the crisis with more repressive measures such as deployment of massive security forces in the Tibetan areas and meting out death and long prison sentences to Tibetans on trumped-up charges.

The universal call of the self-immolators is for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibet. The self-immolation protests persist despite the Central Tibetan Administration's consistent appeals to Tibetans to refrain from taking drastic actions.

Two Tibetan monks self-immolate in China

2013-04-25

<https://www.news24.com/World/News/Two-Tibetan-monks-self-immolate-in-China-20130425>

Beijing - Two Tibetan monks in south-western China died after setting themselves on fire, a media outlet and a rights group said, the latest in a series of such protests against Beijing's rule.

Lobsang Dawa and Konchog Woesser set themselves ablaze on Wednesday in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture, where many such incidents have occurred,

said US-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) and Britain-based rights group Free Tibet.

“All the Tibetans who resort to self-immolation do so because they feel they have no other way to make China and the world listen,” Free Tibet director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement.

RFA said monks held prayers for the deceased, aged 20 and 23, and the bodies were due to be cremated on Thursday.

More than 110 Tibetans have set themselves alight since 2009, with most dying of their injuries, in demonstrations against what they view as Chinese oppression.

Beijing rejects such claims, pointing to substantial investment in Tibet and other regions with large Tibetan populations, although critics say economic development has brought an influx of ethnic Han Chinese and eroded traditional Tibetan culture.

Authorities have ramped up security in the areas, sometimes blocking communications, according to RFA.

In recent months Tibetans have been jailed on charges of inciting the protests and spreading information about such incidents overseas.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate who has lived in exile in India since 1959 after a failed uprising in Tibet, has described the protests as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Tenzin Sherab

Age: 31

Occupation:

Date: 27 May 2013

Place of self-immolation: Yulshul, Kygudo, Kham

Current status: deceased



Breaking: Tibet burns with another self-immolation, Toll reaches 118

Phayul, Wednesday, May 29, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, May 29: In reports coming just in, a Tibetan man set himself on fire in Adril region of eastern Tibet protesting China's occupation and hard-line policies in Tibet.

Tenzin Sherab, 31, carried out his self-immolation protest on May 27. He succumbed to his injuries at the site of his fiery protest.

According to Jampa Younten, a monk living in south India, Tenzin Sherab's family members and friends came to know about his self-immolation protest only after he had passed away.

"Soon after the protest, Chinese security personnel from Chumar arrived at the site and confiscated Tenzin Sherab's body," Younten said. "However, the next day, on May 28, his body was handed over to his family members."

In the days preceding his self-immolation protest, Tenzin Sherab had spoken to his friends about the evil policies of the Chinese government and expressed his concern about Tibetan religion and culture reaching a point of annihilation.

"We can no longer bear to live under China's constant torture and repression," Tenzin Sherab had told his friends.

Preparations are afoot for his cremation, the same source added.

Tenzin Sherab is the son of Dhondup and Choemey and is the eldest among five siblings.

Since 2009, as many as 118 Tibetans living under China's rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

The Chinese government has responded with even harsher policies, criminalising the self-immolation protests and sentencing scores of people to heavy prison terms on charges of "intentional homicide" for their alleged roles in self-immolation protests. Chinese officials have barred Tibetans from offering prayers and showing solidarity with families of self-immolators and announced the cancellation of development funds to those villages where self-immolations have taken place.

New Tibetan Self-Immolation After One-Month Hiatus

RFA News, 2013-05-29

A Tibetan man has burned himself and died after protesting against Chinese rule in the first Tibetan self-immolation in more than a month, according to sources.

Tenzin Sherab, 31, torched himself in Chumarleb, (in Chinese, Qumalai) county in Qinghai province's Yulshul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on Monday.

“He protested against the Chinese policy on Tibet and died on the spot,” Jampa Yonten, a monk living in southern India, told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“Chinese police rushed in to take away his body,” he said.

A few days before his self-immolation, Tenzin Sherab had complained to his friends about Chinese “discriminatory” policy and “destruction” of Tibetan religion and culture, saying he could no longer tolerate the “repressive measures in Tibet,” Jampa Yonten said.

Funeral plans in limbo

Tenzin Sherab’s body was returned to his family a day after the self-immolation, but they have been unable to take the body to a monastery in Sershul (in Chinese, Shiqu) county in neighboring Sichuan province to hold the funeral rites, he said. “The body is currently placed in the home of the deceased. His family had originally planned to take it to Wonpo Monastery in Sershul county for religious services,” Jampa Yonten told RFA’s Mandarin Service.

“But I was just told that as family members are being visited and interrogated repeatedly by police, they have not been able to take his body to Wonpo Monastery. It’s hard to say if they will be able to [take the body to the monastery].”

The advocacy group International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said the family members were questioned on why they thought Tenzin Sherab had self-immolated.

Tenzin Sherab was the oldest of five siblings from a village in Chumarleb and, according to exile Tibetan sources quoted by ICT, his nomad family had been resettled there “under the Chinese authorities’ policies of settlement, land confiscation, and fencing of pastoral areas inhabited by Tibetans, dramatically curtailing their livelihoods.”

Toll rises

The new burning brings to 119 the number of Tibetan self-immolations since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009 to oppose Chinese rule and policies, with many also calling for the return of Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. “Tenzin Sherab’s death is a reminder that Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule and oppression remains undimmed after a lifetime of occupation,” London-based advocacy group Free Tibet’s director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement.

“Like most people who set themselves alight and most people in Tibet today, he

never knew a Tibet that was free. Protests have gone on for decades and will go on until Tibetans are given the power to determine their own future.”

On April 24, two monks set themselves ablaze and died in Sichuan province's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in protests against Chinese rule. The two monks from the Tagtsang Lhamo Kirti monastery in Dzoegé (in Chinese, Ruo'ergai) county set themselves alight and died near the monastery. Chinese authorities have tightened controls in Tibet and in Tibetan prefectures in Chinese provinces to check the self-immolations, cutting communication links with outside areas and jailing Tibetans they believe to be linked to the burnings.

More than a dozen have been jailed so far, with some handed jail terms of up to 15 years.

Tibetan Man Self-Immolates in Protest against China

VOA News, 30 May 2013

A Tibetan man set himself on fire Monday in Kyaring area, near Chumarleb county, Kham Yushul of eastern Tibet (Chinese: Yushu, Qinghai) in protest against China's repressive policies on Tibetans. Tenzin Sherab, 31, succumbed to his injuries at the site of his protest. An exile source from India with contacts in Tibet said Tenzin Sherab's family members and friends learned about the self-immolation after Sherab had passed away. According to the same source, Chinese security personnel confiscated Sherab's body and handed to his family members next day.

In the days preceding his self-immolation protest, Tenzin Sherab had criticized Chinese policies on Tibetans and expressed concern about Tibetan religion and culture. He was a native of Adrel village in Chumarleb County, Kham Yushul of eastern Tibet. Since February 2009, there have been a total of 114 self-immolations in Tibet and Tibetan regions reported to focus on political and religious issues, with another two self-immolations that were reported to have been motivated by property rights issues.

Wangchen Dolma

Age: 31

Occupation: nun

Date: 11 June 2013

Place of self-immolation: Tawu, Karze, Kham

Current status: deceased



Wangchen Dolma, Tibetan Nun, Self-Immolates To Protest Chinese Rule

By *Agence France Presse (AFP)*,

A Tibetan nun who last week set fire to herself in protest at Chinese rule has died, a US-based broadcaster and rights group said.

The woman set herself ablaze on June 11 near Nyitso monastery, the scene of similar protests, in Daofu country of southwest China's Sichuan province, Washington-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported on its website.

Wangchen Dolma, aged 31, died on Friday in hospital and was "secretly cremated", RFA said, citing the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) — the India-based government-in-exile — in confirming the death.

The US-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) rights group said she was "taken away by police" after setting herself ablaze during a "gathering of several thousand monks". The ICT on Thursday confirmed the death.

RFA said "Chinese authorities have moved to block demonstrations of support" for the nun.

The ICT said "communications were restricted in the area and surveillance of monks at Nyitso monastery was intensified" following the self-immolation attempt.

Rights groups often raise concerns over surveillance issues in restive Tibetan areas.

Meanwhile, a report in China's state-run Global Times newspaper Thursday said that all Internet, landline and mobile phone users in the Tibet region have provided service operators with their real names as part of government efforts which local officials claim will help curb "the spread of detrimental information".

The local regulation was passed in November 2011 to "help resolve problems, including the rampant circulation of online rumours, pornography and spam messages" local official Dai Jianguo was quoted as saying.

RFA said the nun was the 120th person to set themselves alight since February

2009 in a wave of protests by Tibetans against what they view as Chinese oppression. Many of them have died.

Self-immolations peaked in the run up the ruling Communist Party's pivotal Party Congress last November.

They have become less common in recent months, but two monks died after setting themselves on fire in Sichuan province's Aba prefecture in April.

Soldiers and police blockaded Nyitso monastery in 2011, after Tsewang Norbu, a 29-year-old monk, set himself on fire.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate who has lived in India since 1959 after a failed uprising in Tibet, has described the protests as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Latest Tibetan self-immolator identified as nun Wangchen Dolma

Phayul, Saturday, June 15, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, June 15: The Tibetan nun who set herself on fire in protest against China's continued occupation of Tibet on June 11 in Tawu region of Kham, eastern Tibet has been identified as 31-year-old Wangchen Dolma.

Although she is believed to have survived her fiery protest, there is no further information on her present condition. She is currently believed to be in a hospital in Dartsedo after Chinese security personnel arrested her from the protest site.

It has also been reported that an unidentified Tibetan man, who tried to rescue Dolma, was severely beaten and arrested by Chinese security personnel.

Following a major clampdown by the authorities on all communication channels in the entire Tawu region, sparse details about Tuesday's protest is trickling out.

Dharamshala based Tibetan language news portal, Tibet Express identified the nun citing sources in exile as well as inside Tibet.

Wangchen Dolma set herself on fire at around 5 pm (local time) on June 11 outside the Nyatso Monastery in Tawu, where thousands of monks from all over Tibet were participating in a major religious gathering.

According to an eyewitness, a Tibetan man tried to put off the flames on Wangchen Dolma's body, shouting, "if we don't rescue the nun, she will fall into the hands of the Chinese."

"Within minutes of the self-immolation protest, Chinese security personnel

arrived, extinguished the flames, and bundled the nun away in a police vehicle” the same source said. “The man who tried to save the nun was severely beaten by two Chinese security personnel and later arrested.”

Whereabouts of the unidentified Tibetan man is not known.

Dolma’s monastery is located near Dakar Jangchup Choeling, the nunnery to which nun Palden Choetso, who self-immolated on November 3, 2011, belongs.

Wangchen Dolma is a native of Tawu. Further personal details, as well as information on the present situation at her monastery are not available.

Also, a picture currently under circulation, claiming to be of Wangchen Dolma, has not been confirmed by sources.

Since 2009, as many as 119 Tibetans living under China’s rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile.

The Chinese government has responded with even harsher policies, criminalising the self-immolation protests and sentencing scores of people to heavy prison terms on charges of “intentional homicide” for their alleged roles in self-immolation protests. The officials have barred Tibetans from offering prayers and showing solidarity with families of self-immolators and announced cancellation of development funds to villages where self-immolations take place.

The exile Tibetan administration has repeatedly appealed to Tibetans not to take drastic actions, including self-immolation, while attributing the current crisis in Tibet to China’s policies of “political and religious repression, economic marginalisation, social discrimination, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction in Tibet.”

This week, Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama expressed doubts over the effectiveness of the unprecedented wave of self-immolations while speaking to reporters in Sydney on Thursday.

“It’s a sad thing that happens. Of course it’s very very sad. In the meantime, I express I doubt how much effect (there is) from such drastic actions,” the 77-year-old Tibetan leader was quoted as saying.

Clampdown Imposed as Nun Secretly Cremated After Burning Protest

RFA News, 2013-06-17

Chinese authorities have moved to block demonstrations of support for a Tibetan nun who was secretly cremated after she died days after her self-immolation protest in Sichuan province, according to sources.

The local government in Tawu (in Chinese, Daofu) county in the Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture has also restricted family members of Wangchen Dolma to their home after she died in hospital on Friday following her burning protest three days earlier during a large religious gathering near a monastery, Tibetan sources in the region and in exile said.

On the same day of the death of Wangchen Dolma, aged 31, a group of local officials arrived at her home, an area resident told RFA's Tibetan Service on Sunday.

"[They] forbade their neighbors, relatives, nuns, and monks from visiting her house," the resident said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "At the same time, they ordered family members to remain within the confines of their house," he said.

Separately, Tibet's India-based government in exile, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), confirmed Wangchen Dolma's June 14 death at a hospital in Sichuan's Dartsedo (Kangding) county, adding that Chinese authorities had quickly cremated the nun's remains at the hospital rather than return them to her family.

"The authorities have surreptitiously cremated the body at the hospital. They have also kept the family members of the deceased under house arrest," the CTA said on its website on Monday.

Because authorities had cut off all phone and Internet connections to the area, details concerning the nun's identity and background were not immediately available after her self-immolation, CTA said.

'Additional distress'

Authorities' refusal to hand over Wangchen Dolma's remains or ashes so that her family could perform traditional death ceremonies have caused her relatives "additional distress," the London-based Free Tibet advocacy group said in a statement on Monday.

"Chinese authorities also prevented local people from visiting the family to pray and show solidarity. The family were ordered to not contact people about Wangchen Dolma's protest or visit the monastery," Free Tibet said.

Following Dolma's protest, monks and nuns attending the annual gathering at Nyatso monastery circulated a leaflet requesting "prayers and blessings" for the deceased nun, "who self-immolated ... for Tibet's political and religious freedom."

While the majority of Tibetans who have set themselves ablaze to protest Chinese rule are lay people, “it is not uncommon for them to stage their protests near monasteries,” Free Tibet director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement the day after Wangchen Dolma’s protest.

“While Chinese authorities have permitted the gathering at Nyatso monastery this year, Tibet’s religious heritage has been decimated by the Chinese occupation and what remains is barely tolerated by the regime.”

“Restrictions on religious practice by the Chinese regime are among the deepest grievances of the Tibetan people,” Byrne-Rosengren said.

Wangchen Dolma was a daughter of the Gyalbum family of Drakthok village in Tawu, the source said. Her father’s name was Tenzin and her mother’s name was Yudron.

Wangchen Dolma’s fatal burning brings to 120 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans protesting Chinese rule since the wave of fiery protests began in February 2009.

Wangchen Dolma passes away, Self-immolation death toll rises to 102

Phayul, Monday, June 17, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, June 17: Wangchen Dolma, the Tibetan nun who set herself on fire in protest against China’s continued occupation of Tibet on June 11 in Tawu region of Kham, eastern Tibet has succumbed to her injuries.

Family members of the deceased’s are being kept under house arrest by local Chinese authorities, following an ongoing clampdown on all channels of communication in the region.

According to the Dharamshala based exile Tibetan administration, Wangchen Dolma passed away on June 14 in a hospital in Dartsedo where Chinese security personnel had forcibly taken her from the protest site.

Authorities further cremated Wangchen Dolma’s body without informing her family members, as has been the standard practice with other self-immolators.

“The authorities have surreptitiously cremated the body at the hospital. They have also kept the family members of the deceased under house arrest,” the Central Tibetan Administration said.

Despite the restrictions placed on the family members, it is being reported that local Tibetans have been gathering at the deceased’s home to offer their last respects and condolences.

Wangchen Dolma set herself on fire at around 5 pm (local time) on June 11 outside the Nyatso Monastery in Tawu, where thousands of monks from all over Tibet had congregated to take part in a major religious gathering.

A day before her self-immolation, on the evening of June 10, Wangchen Dolma reportedly advised students of a school in her native Tawu to diligently study Tibetan language.

Wangchen Dolma was born to Tenzin and Youdon of Gyal Bum Tsang family in Dragthok village in Minyag Drapa region of Tawu. She was enrolled at a Buddhist institute located on Barshab Dragkar, a sacred hill near her village.

Earlier reports had indicated that Chinese security personnel also severely beat and arrested an unidentified Tibetan man, who had tried to rescue Wangchen Dolma from falling into the hands of Chinese authorities. His current condition and whereabouts remain unknown.

Since 2009, as many as 119 Tibetans living under China's rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile. 102 of the self-immolators have passed away while the condition of more than ten remains unknown.

Prayer Service for Tibetan self-immolator Wangchen Dolma

www.tibet.net, June 19, 2013

DHARAMSHALA: Thousands of local Tibetans and Tibet supporters attended a prayer service yesterday (18 June) held as a mark of respect and solidarity with all the self-immolators including nun Wangchen Dolma who burned herself on 11 June. Most of the self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans. The prayer service was organised by the Department of Religion and Culture of the Central Tibetan Administration.

Jhador rinpoche, former abbot of Namgyal monastery presided over the prayer service which was attended by all the staff and officials of the Central Tibetan Administration including the heads of the three pillars of Tibetan democracy.

Addressing the prayer service, Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay said that a total of 119 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet since 2009. 102 have died while the whereabouts and the physical condition of the remaining are unknown, he said.

Sikyong Dr Lobsang Sangay also spoke about his recent trip to Lithuania. He

met with various important personalities of the country and his visit was well documented in the media. Sikyong Dr Sangay's visit to Lithuania was aimed to drum up support in Lithuania during the next six months of Lithuania's stewardship of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union starting next month.

Kunchok Sonam

Age: 18

Occupation: monk

Date: 20 July 2013

Place of self-immolation: Dzoegge, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Breaking: 18-year-old Tibetan monk sets self on fire, Toll reaches 120

Phayul, Saturday, July 20, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, July 20: The wave of self-immolations inside Tibet continues to rage on with reports of yet another fiery protest in the Zoege region of eastern Tibet earlier today.

Kunchok Sonam, an 18-year-old monk of the Zoege Monastery, set himself on fire at around 8:40 am (local time) protesting China's occupation of Tibet. He passed away at the site of his protest.

More details about the fatal self-immolation protest are not yet available.

According to Tibetan language media portal, Tibet Times, Kunchok Sonam carried out his protest soon after the morning prayers at the Monastery.

Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of the protest and, as in earlier instances, tried to bundle away Kunchok Sonam's body. However, local Tibetans present there succeeded in rescuing the body from falling into Chinese hands.

No information is available on where the body is being kept or on the current situation in the region at the time of filing this report.

Konchok Sonam is the son of Sonam Palden and Lentrug.

With today's self-immolation, a total of 120 Tibetans living under China's rule have now set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Zoege has witnessed a number of self-immolations in the past. On April 24

this year, two Tibetan monks Lobsang Dawa, 20 and Kunchok Woese, 22 of the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Zoege set themselves on fire today protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet. Both of them died.

The Chinese government has responded to the self-immolations with even harsher policies, criminalising the fiery protests and sentencing scores of people to heavy prison terms on charges of "intentional homicide" for their alleged roles in the protests. The officials have barred Tibetans from offering prayers and showing solidarity with families of self-immolators and announced cancellation of development funds to those villages where self-immolations have taken place.

The exile Tibetan administration has made repeated appeals to Tibetans inside Tibet to refrain from drastic action including self-immolations.

The Central Tibetan Administration maintains that the self-immolations "represent a new threshold of Tibetan despair and resentment" and attributes the current crisis in Tibet to China's policies of "political and religious repression, economic marginalisation, social discrimination, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction in Tibet."

Tibetan monk dies after self-immolation in China

By *AFP*, 21 July 2013

Kunchok Sonam, 18, carried out the protest on Saturday outside a monastery in Aba prefecture, part of Sichuan province, Radio Free Asia said in a report which cited local residents.

Sonam shouted slogans "crying for Tibetan freedom," the broadcaster, which is funded by the US government, cited a local resident as saying.

The self-immolation was the first by a Tibetan in China for five weeks, the report said, adding that his fellow monks had prevented Chinese authorities from taking away the Sonam's body after the deadly protest.

Restrictions on communication in the area "have been intensified," following the self-immolation, the London-based Free Tibet group said in a statement.

Some 120 Tibetans have set themselves alight since February 2009 in protests against what they see as Chinese oppression, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet said before news of the latest self-immolation emerged.

The protests – which reportedly have resulted in dozens of deaths – peaked in the run up to the ruling Communist Party's pivotal Party Congress last November, but have become less common in recent months.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

But Tibetans and human rights groups say the protests are a response to tight controls on religion in the region.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate who has lived in India since 1959 after a failed uprising in Tibet, has described the protests as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Self-immolator's mother among others detained in crackdown

Phayul, Friday, July 26, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, July 26: More than a dozen Tibetans, including the mother of Tibetan self-immolator Kunchok Sonam, his relatives, teacher, and monks of the Thangkor Sogtsang Monastery were arbitrarily detained by Chinese security forces following the young monk's fiery protest on July 20.

According to exile sources, the condition and whereabouts of six of those detained remains unknown while the others have been released.

Kunchok Sonam, 18, a monk at the Thangkor Sogtsang Monastery in Zoege, eastern Tibet set himself on fire on Saturday, July 20 protesting China's continued occupation of Tibet. He passed away at the site of his protest.

Chinese security personnel arrived at the site of the protest and tried to bundle away Kunchok Sonam's body. However, local Tibetans present there succeeded in rescuing the deceased's body from falling into Chinese hands.

More than 1500 Tibetans later gathered at the monastery to pay their last respects to Kunchok Sonam and also took part in a prayer ceremony.

On the night of Kunchok's self-immolation, Tenzin Gyatso, a monk of Thangkor Sogtsang Monastery was detained. In the next two days, Palden Gyatso, 20, and Sangye Palden, 25, both monks of the same monastery, were detained.

Kunchok Sonam's mother Lentrug, his teacher, and relatives were released after a day's detention, according to sources.

Regarded as 'exceptional' in his studies, Kunchok Sonam had reportedly told friends that "living under Chinese rule in Tibet had brought too much suffering."

Kunchok Sonam is the son of Sonam Palden and Lentrug.

A newly arrived Tibetan, Dawa (name changed), 36, a monk from Barmi Monastery in Tsongru in the same Zoege region in a testimony given to the Daharamshala based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has

recounted the current situation inside Tibet and in particular his hometown.

He said that local Chinese authorities have planted spies in every village to monitor conversations and keep a strict watch over Tibetan activities, in an ongoing effort to prevent self-immolation and other protests.

“On 22 May 2013, a meeting attended by representatives of 13 counties was held in Kyangtsa (Ch: Jiangzha) Township in Zoege County. At the meeting, relevant officials were ordered to preempt any incidents of self-immolations in each township, and to take responsibility for any political incidents or activities under their jurisdiction,” TCHRD quoted Dawa as saying in his testimony. “Following the meeting, spies were planted in many villages, making even casual communication or interaction amongst Tibetans difficult, as suspicion and distrust overwhelm their day-to-day encounters.”

Since 2009, as many as 120 Tibetans under China’s rule have set themselves on fire demanding freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile. 103 of them have died while the condition of more than ten remains unknown.

China has criminalised self-immolation and sentenced scores of Tibetans to heavy prison terms on charges of “intentional homicide” for their alleged roles in the fiery protests. The officials have barred Tibetans from offering prayers and showing solidarity with families of self-immolators and announced the cancellation of development funds to villages where self-immolations take place.

Shichung

Age: 41

Occupation: farmer

Date: 28 September 2013

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Father of Two Self-Immolates in Protest Against Chinese Rule

RFA News, 2013-09-28 Updated at 6:15 p.m. ET on 2013-9-28

A Tibetan father of two burned himself to death in Sichuan province to protest against Chinese policies in the first self-immolation in China’s Tibetan-populated areas in more than two months, according to sources.

Shichung, 41, self-immolated near his house in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county

in the Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after lighting butter lamps in front of a portrait of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, sources in Tibet said.

“He was protesting against Chinese policy towards Tibetans,” a Tibetan living in the area told RFA’s Tibetan Service, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The burning protest occurred in the Gomang Yutso township at about 2.30 p.m. after Shichung attended a prayer function. He torched himself at home and ran about 40 steps towards a busy road but succumbed to his burns and died.

“His body was held by the Tibetans but later forcefully taken away by the police,” the source said. “He is survived by his wife & two daughters, 18 and 14.”

Gunpoint

Chinese police trained their guns at the Tibetans to keep them at bay as they took away the body of Shichung, according to Kanyag Tsering, a Tibet monk at the Kirti exile monastery in India’s Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama lives.

“Some of the Tibetans who had gathered for prayers [nearby] rushed to get possession of the burned body, but the police, who were already present to watch over the prayer gathering, stopped them,” Tsering said.

“The police pointed their guns at the Tibetans, took charge of the body, and took it away in a vehicle to Ngaba,” he said.

Shichung’s burning protest was the first Tibetan self-immolation in China since July 20, when a teenage monk set himself on fire and died in Dzoegé (in Chinese, Ruó’ergai) county, also in Ngaba prefecture.

The incident on Saturday brings to 122 the total number of Tibetans in China who have self-immolated calling for Tibetan freedom and for the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in 1959 following a failed national uprising against Chinese rule.

Another six Tibetans have staged self-immolation protests in India and Nepal.

On Aug. 6, a Tibetan monk self-immolated and died in Nepal—the third Tibetan burning protest in the small Himalayan nation where thousands of Tibetan refugees live.

Controls tightened

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing’s rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the

burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

The authorities have also attempted to pressure local Tibetans to sign an official order that forbids any kind of activities to support or sympathize with self-immolation protests, residents said.

Tibetan man immolates self in Ngaba

Phayul, Saturday, September 28

A Tibetan man died after setting himself on fire today around 4.30 PM(local time) in Gomang Thawa township in Ngaba County, reported the Tibet Times.

Engulfed in flames, Shichung, 41, ran from his house towards the main road before collapsing, a Tibetan monk from south India told the Tibet Times. He succumbed to his burns and passed away at the site of his protest.

Following his self-immolation protest, local Tibetans tried to take the body to his home but were confronted by Chinese security personnel numbering over 150, who were already stationed for the Man-sTon festival, which involves collection of lists of prayers local Tibetans have said at home and an entertainment show. The locals did manage to take the body to his home but the authorities eventually confiscated the body and drove with it towards Ngaba county.

Every year, the local Tibetans of Gomang Thawa township gather for the religious festival called Man-sTon. Shichung had just returned to his home after the program today. He had lit a butter lamp in front of a portrait of the exile Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama before setting himself on fire.

He also reportedly told his friend yesterday during the preparations for the festival where police were patrolling, "These Chinese will not let us live, I think I should burn myself in front of them."

Shichung is survived by his wife and two children.

Since 2009, as many as 121 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet calling for freedom in Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Tibet, at Mani prayer festival a new self-immolation against the Chinese occupation

AsiaNews, 30 September 2013

Lhasa (AsiaNews) - A 41-year-old father of two has become the latest Tibetan to set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Shichung, a

farmer and part-time tailor, self-immolated at around 4pm (local time) in Gomang Thawa village, Goman township, Ngaba County, eastern Tibet on 28 September. He died at the scene. Free Tibet has received confirmed reports of the incident.

This is the 121th self-immolation since February 2009, when protests against China exploded once again demanding full religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

The protest took place during the annual Mani prayer festival. According to our sources, Shichung (see photo) left the festival around midday and returned home to prepare for his self-immolation. He lit butter lamps in front of a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet. He set himself on fire just outside his home and ran towards the nearby main road before dying in the street.

Shichung had expressed his inner feelings about the ongoing Chinese occupation to some friends in a tea shop a few days ago saying: “These people (Chinese authorities) look down on us (Tibet) and it seems they won’t leave us in peace.”

After the protest more than 100 police and military personnel, who were already in the village to supervise the celebration of the Mani festival, arrived at the scene.

The authorities confronted the local Tibetans who had gathered to take Shichung’s body home. They forcibly took the body; claiming it was necessary as part of their investigation into the incident. Some Tibetans attempted to take it back but were restrained by local elders who feared the incident could escalate and result in a brutal crackdown by the Chinese authorities.

Ngaba - Remains of Tibetan self immolator forced into river

Phayul, Tuesday, October 01, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, October 1: The Chinese authorities in Ngaba County have forced the family members of the latest Tibetan self immolator to throw his remains into a river, a Tibetan source said.

According to Tsayang Gyatso, a Tibetan living in exile, some monks of Jonang Se monastery and the family members of the deceased approached the County authorities to collect the ashes of Shichung, the 41 year old Tibetan who died immediately after his self immolations protest in Gomang Thawa township in Ngaba county on September 28.

“However, a day after his self immolation Chinese officials and the police barred them from taking Shichung’s remains to their home, compelling them to

throw it into the Ngachu river.”

Shichung, a father of two, set himself on fire on Saturday around 4.30 PM (local time) in Gomang Thawa Township in Ngaba County. He lit a butter lamp in front of a portrait of the exiled Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama before taking setting himself ablaze.

Sources said that local Tibetans confronted the Chinese security forces numbering over 150 trying to stop the body from being taken away. A major confrontation was avoided, sources said, after local Tibetan elders present there calmed the situation down. However, the Chinese authorities confiscated his body and drove with it towards Ngaba County.

Following his self-immolation protest, around 200 monks of Jonang Se monastery arrived at Shichung’s home and performed the final rites. Local Tibetans also paid their last respects.

The same source also noted that Chinese authorities yesterday barred local Tibetans from visiting Shichung’s home, frisked every Tibetan and even confiscated their mobile handsets.

Shichung is survived by his wife and two children.

Since 2009, as many as 122 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet calling for freedom in Tibet and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama from exile.

Condemning the Chinese authorities’ act of forcibly taking the custody of Tibetan self-immolators body, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy said, “There is a pattern to the way China has been disposing off bodies of self-immolation protesters. In many cases, Chinese authorities had given only ashes to families and relatives of self-immolation protesters.”

“In Tibet today, even the dead are denied their right to a culturally appropriate cremation. Moreover, restrictions have become more severe on families and friends who hold necessary religious rituals in memory of a deceased in self-immolation protests.”

Prayer for Shichung in Dharamsala

VOA News, 4 October 2013

Tibetans gathered at the main temple of Tsuk-lag-khang, Dharamsala, India to pay respect and pray for Shichung, a 41 year old farmer and part time tailor, who self-immolated in Goman township of Ngaba County, Sichuan Province on September 28, 2013.

The prayer organized by Department of Religion and Culture in exile was presided over by Kirti Rinpoche, head of the Kirti Monastery. At the gathering, Lobsang Sangay, head of Tibetan administration in exile, paid respect to the family members of the deceased and urged everyone to do the same. He further expressed concern over the heightening security and restrictions of the Tibetans living in Driru, Tawu, and Zotoe region as imposed by the Chinese officials.

While speaking to VOA, Tibetans present at the prayer expressed deep sadness and concern over increasing number of self-immolations inside Tibet.

The Tibetan Parliament in Exile also reiterated China to stop the repressive policies in Tibet in a press statement they issued.

Shichung becomes the 121st Tibetan since 2009 to burn themselves on fire in protest against China's repressive policies towards Tibetans.

Tsering Gyal

Age: 20

Occupation: monk

Date: 11 November 2013

Place of self-immolation: Pema Dzong, Golog

Current status: deceased



Tibetan monk burns self to death in protest against Chinese repression

www.tibet.net, November 12, 2013

DHARAMSHALA: Reports coming out of Tibet say a young Tibetan monk has set himself on fire in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China's Qinghai province) on Monday (11 Nov) to protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese government in Tibet. He died when he was being taken to the hospital by Chinese authorities, confirmed reports say.

Tsering Gyal, a 20-year-old Tibetan monk from Akyong monastery, set himself on fire in Pema county in Golog around 6 pm Monday. The police and security forces immediately arrived at the protest site and doused the fire. They took him to the county hospital and barred local people and fellow monks from Akyong monastery from visiting him.

"He did it for the freedom of six million Tibetans and to highlight the need to re-install His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his golden throne," the Radio Free Asia

quoted a source as saying. “He called on the Tibetans to rise up now.”

Tsering Gyal, son of Sherphun and Rindon, is the youngest of eight children.

Since 2009, over 122 Tibetans have set themselves on fire inside Tibet in protest against the Chinese government. The self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Young Tibetan Monk Sets Himself on Fire to Protest Chinese Rule

RFA News, 2013-11-11

A young Tibetan monk burned himself Monday in protest against Chinese rule in Tibetan-populated areas and demanding the return of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, sources said.

The protest came as Tibetans in several counties in Sichuan and Qinghai provinces refused Beijing’s orders to fly China’s national flag from their homes amid a campaign of forced displays of loyalty to the Chinese state.

Tsering Gyal, 20, set himself ablaze at 6:30 p.m. in Pema (in Chinese, Banma) county in Qinghai province’s Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a source in Tibet said.

The condition of Gyal, from the Akyong monastery in Pema county, is not immediately known as Chinese police put out the fire and took him to a nearby hospital, the Tibetan source said.

“He did it for the freedom of six million Tibetans and to highlight the need to re-install His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his golden throne,” the source told RFA’s Tibetan Service. “He called on the Tibetans to rise up now.”

“Not long after he set his body on fire, police arrived and intervened. They put out the fire and rushed him to the local county hospital,” the source said. “The hospital is surrounded by police who have imposed restrictions in the area.”

The self-immolation came over a month after a father of two burned himself to death in Sichuan province to protest against Chinese policies in late September.

Shichung, 41, self-immolated near his house in Ngaba (Ch: Aba) county in the Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after lighting butter lamps in front of a portrait of the Dalai Lama.

Tibetans defy flag orders

Gyal’s self-immolation brings to 123 the total number of Tibetans in China who have self-immolated calling for Tibetan freedom and for the return to Tibet of

the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in 1959 following a failed national uprising against Chinese rule.

The self-immolation occurred after residents of Sichuan province's Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) county in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and in Dzatoe (Zaduo) county in Qinghai province's Yulshul (Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture refused orders to fly China's national flag from their homes last week.

Previously, Tibetans in another county in Qinghai had refused the order to fly the flag, and residents of a county in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) took flags distributed for display and dumped them in a river, prompting a security crackdown in which Chinese police fired into unarmed crowds.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing's rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

The authorities have also attempted to pressure local Tibetans to sign an official order that forbids any kind of activities to support or sympathize with self-immolation protests, residents said.

Golok self-immolator Tsering Gyal succumbs to burns

Phayul, Tuesday, November 12, 2013

DHARAMSHALA, November 12: The 20 year old Tibetan monk who set himself ablaze yesterday died on the way to Xiling hospital, a Tibetan source said.

The source told Phayul that Tsering Gyal succumbed to his burn injuries yesterday around 10 PM (local time) as he was being moved to a bigger hospital in Xiling city.

Before dying, Gyal had said, "Today, I burned myself for the re-union of Tibetans. My only hope is the unity among Tibetans and the preservation of the Tibetan language and tradition. If we do that, all the Tibetans will be re-united."

Tsering Gyal set himself ablaze in Pema County in Golok to protest against the Chinese government and its hardline policies. Engulfed in flames, Tsering collapsed after walking a few metres from a giant lotus made up of concrete at the centre of the town towards the County headquarters.

Witnesses have told our source that he was chanting "Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso

khyen” (may His Holiness the Dalai Lama know) before collapsing. Chinese police on street patrol arrived at the scene and doused the fire.

At midnight, his charred body was taken to Aakyong monastery where over 200 monks from Akyong, Peyag and Gomang monastery performed death rituals.

A large number of armed forces have now been deployed in Pema County and a strict monitoring of people’s movement in and out of the county is in place.

Gyal is the 123rd Tibetan to have immolated self in protest against the Chinese government since 2009.

Kunchok Tsetan

Age: 30

Occupation:

Date: 3 December 2013

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan man self-immolates in China

VOA News, 4 December 2013

Tibetan exiles are reporting that another person has self-immolated to protest Chinese rule. Sources tell VOA that Kunchok Tseten set himself on fire on Tuesday in the town of Meruma in Sichuan province, an area that has seen a number of self-immolations since 2009. It is not known if he survived.

Lhamo Kyap, who is from the same town but now lives in Dharamsala, India, told VOA the father of two had been planning this act for quite some time.

“Kunchok Tseten had told a relative this summer that he would set himself on fire to protest against the Chinese atrocities on Tibetans.

The relative had advised him not to take his own life,” said Kyap. Police clashed briefly with locals who tried to prevent them from taking away Kunchok Tseten’s body. His wife and other relatives were later detained and businesses in the town were forced to shut down for the rest of the day.

Chinese authorities have not commented on the latest self-immolation.

More than 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 to protest what they say is Chinese repression of their culture. China denies the charges and calls the suicide protests acts of terrorism.

Self-immolation in Ngaba, number goes up to 123

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, MCLEOD GANJ, India, 4 December 201

A Tibetan youth has set himself on fire in a town in northeastern Tibet on Tuesday to protest against the repressive Chinese rule in Tibet, according to exile Tibetan sources.

Kunchok Tsetan, 30, lit himself on fire in the main market of Meruma town in Ngaba. He raised slogans for the long life and the return of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, and the early reunion of Tibetans in Tibet.

Police and security forces immediately arrived at the spot to take Tsetan into their custody. But the local Tibetans prevented them from doing so, resulting in clashes between the two sides. The police then managed to take Tsetan away after arresting several Tibetans, including his wife and some relatives.

At the time of filing this report Tsetan's well-being and whereabouts were not known.

All the shops and restaurants in the area remained closed, while mobile phones of Tibetans were confiscated as the Chinese government stepped up security across the region.

Kunchok Tsetan, a father of two, comes from Chukhama village in Machu county, which is incorporated into today's Gansu Province. He had reportedly told a relative this summer that he would set himself on fire to protest against the Chinese atrocities on Tibetans. The relative advised him not to take his own life.

He became the 123rd Tibetan to have self-immolated since Tapey in 2009.

"Tibetans inside Tibet are living under heavy repression. There is a total clampdown on any conventional means to express their grievances," said Mr Tashi Phuntsok, Secretary for Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration.

"These conditions have led to the growing number of self-immolations inside Tibet. We implore Chinese leadership to address the grievances of Tibetans immediately."

He further added that "The only way to end this brutal and grave situation is for China to change its current hardline Tibet policy by respecting the aspirations of the Tibetan people."

The exile administration has consistently appealed to and discouraged Tibetans from drastic action, including self-immolation, as a form of protest.

The CTA has stated that the blame as well as the solution for the self-

immolations lies with the Chinese government

Tibetan Father of Two Self-Immolates in Ngaba

RFA News, 2013-12-04

A Tibetan father of two self-immolated in protest against Chinese rule in a restive Tibetan prefecture in Sichuan province, triggering clashes and a security crackdown in the area, according to sources.

Konchok Tseten, aged 30, torched himself late Tuesday at the Ngaba county's Meruma township center in the Ngaba (Ch: Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, shouting slogans against Beijing's rule in Tibet and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, said the sources, speaking from inside Tibet.

With his body engulfed in flames, Tseten managed to run for a distance along the main street before he collapsed, the sources said.

Local residents clashed with police as they tried but failed to stop security forces from taking the severely injured Tseten away, they said.

"While his body was on fire, he called for the long life of the Dalai Lama and appealed for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet," a Tibetan with contacts in the area told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"He also called for the reunion of Tibetans inside and outside Tibet." "Even after he collapsed on the ground, he was seen by local witnesses folding his hands together in prayer and uttering some words that were not audible," the Tibetan said.

Eyewitnesses also said that local residents resisted police attempts to take away Tseten, who had suffered severe burns, resulting in a scuffle and the detention of several Tibetans.

"The police arrived at the scene and tried to take him away as he was burning, but the local Tibetans who had gathered at the township resisted and tried to stop the police. This lasted for about one hour before the security forces took him away," another Tibetan said.

Relatives detained

Police detained Tseten's wife and several of his relatives, among others.

"All the Tibetan stores and restaurants in Meruma town were ordered to be closed and many mobile phones were confiscated from the locals."

Details of Tseten's condition were not immediately available amid a clampdown

on information in Ngaba county following the self-immolation, the 124th since Tibetans launched burning protests in 2009 calling for Tibetan freedom and for the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in 1959 following a failed national uprising against Chinese rule.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing's rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

The authorities have also attempted to pressure local Tibetans to sign an official order that forbids any kind of activities to support or sympathize with self-immolation protests, residents said.

Tibetan women jailed for self-immolation links freed

By Tenzin Tsetan, *Phayul*, December 05, 2016

A Tibetan woman jailed for her alleged involvement in a self immolation of a Tibetan man named Kunchok Tsetan was released after three-year prison term on Sunday. Families and friends greeted Dolma Tso upon her return to Ngaba yesterday evening.

Other detainees charged with the 'offence' were also released along with Tso. A mother of 15-year-old daughter, Tso, 33, was in detention facility for over eleven months since her arrest in December 2013.

Witnesses said she underwent severe torture and beatings during interrogations, and was even operated upon a few times. Ngaba County Intermediate Court sentenced eight Tibetans back in 2013 on charge of murder for their alleged involvement in self-immolation of Tibetans.

Tso was among those charged and was sentenced to three years prison term. The sentencing were linked with the self-immolation of Kunchok Tsetan at Serde village, Meruma in Ngaba. At least 20 Tibetans have been arrested from Meruma following the incident. Some were released while others remained in detention.

Dolma Tso helped lift the charred body of the deceased into a vehicle following which she was arrested by Chinese police under suspicion of link with the self-immolation. However she denied the charges of murder and remained firm on her statement that she simply lifted his body to put into the vehicle as she was nearby.

Tsultrim Gyatso

Age: 44

Occupation: monk

Date: 19 December 2013

Place of self-immolation: Amchok, Kanlho

Current status: deceased



The last message of Tsultrim Gyatso:

I, Tsultrim Gyatso, the warrior of the snows, set myself on fire for the welfare of all Tibetans. The golden teardrops.

Alas Tears. Heart break. Brothers, do you hear? Do you see? Do you hear? To whom should I tell about the suffering of six million Tibetans? In this the brutal Chinese prison, all our precious treasures such as gold and silver are stolen. People are made to suffer. Tears fall down thinking about all these. Precious human body engulfed in flames.

I set myself on fire for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, to free Panchen Rinpoche from prison and for the welfare of six million Tibetans.

May all sentient beings residing in the three realms be free from three poisons and attain Buddhahood. May the lama and the Three Jewels hold dear those who are downtrodden and without refuge.

Brothers and sisters of the Land of Snow, for the sake of Tibet's unity, do not fall under deceitful ways of the foxes.

From Tsultrim Gyatso, the warrior of the snows.'

(Translated by Bhuchung D Sonam)

Respected Tibetan Monk Burns Himself to Death in Gansu

RFA News, 2013-12-19

A respected Tibetan monk burned himself to death in Gansu province on Thursday in protest against “suppressive Chinese law,” saying in a suicide note that he wanted to “sacrifice” his life for the interest of the Tibetans, according to sources.

Tsultrim Gyatso, 43, self-immolated at a road junction in Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after penning his one-page suicide note at his monastery in which he also called for

the return of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the sources in the area said.

“Before his self-immolation at a cross-section in Sangchu, he went to his room after lunch break, lit a lamp, opened a book on the teachings of Buddha and wrote his one-page suicide note,” a lecturer at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education in Bangalore, India, told RFA.

“Tibetan treasures of gold and silver have been looted under suppressive Chinese law,” Gyatso said in his note, according to the lecturer, citing contacts in the region. “All citizens are driven to sufferings,” Gyatso said.

“Tears drop from my eyes when I dwell on this state of sufferings [of the Tibetans],” according to Gyatso’s note. “For the return of the Dalai Lama, and the release of the Panchen Lama, and the well being of six million Tibetans, I sacrifice my precious life in self-immolation.”

The Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was just six years old when he was kidnapped by the Chinese authorities in 1995 after he was identified as the reincarnation of the second-highest monk in Tibetan Buddhism by the Dalai Lama, who is living in exile in India.

A Tibetan source in Sangchu told RFA that Gyatso, known locally for his accomplishments in the study of Buddhism and Tibetan culture, died on the spot and his body was taken to the Achok monastery where more than 400 monks conducted funeral prayers.

Prayers stopped by police

Chinese police ordered the monks to halt the prayers but the monks continued the prayers in a different section of the monastery, the Tibetan lecturer in Bangalore said.

“Over 400 monks of Achok monastery were saying prayers for the late Tsultrim Gyatso but a group of 10 Sangchu police arrived at the monastery and interrupted the prayers. The monks [in a different section of the monastery] continued the prayers,” he said.

Gyatso’s burning protest was the 125th Tibetan self-immolation in China since the fiery campaign began in 2009 calling for Tibetan freedom and for the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in 1959 following a failed national uprising against Chinese rule.

Before Gyatso’s burning protest, a Tibetan herdsman had self-immolated on Dec. 4 in protest against Chinese rule at Ngaba county’s Meruma township

center in Sichuan province.

He died on the way to the hospital and his remains were secretly cremated by the authorities.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing's rule have continued in Tibetan areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

Controls tightened

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

The authorities have also attempted to pressure local Tibetans to sign an official order that forbids any kind of activities to support or sympathize with self-immolation protests, residents said.

In the latest crackdown, the authorities detained two monks and a government worker on suspicion they were supportive of 20-year-old Tibetan monk Tsering Gyal, who burned himself to death in Qinghai province last month in protest against Chinese rule, according to sources.

The two monks were dragged at night from their quarters, while the government worker was beaten and detained for possession of Gyal's photo on her mobile phone, the sources said this week.

Monk in Amchok dies after self-immolation protest

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, MCLEOD GANJ, India, 19 December 2013

A Tibetan monk from north eastern Tibet has died after he set himself on fire in protest against Chinese rule, according to exile Tibetan sources.

Tsultrim Gyatso, 42, of Amchok monastery in Amchok (Ch: Amuqu) town in Sangchu (Ch: Xiahe) County, set his body on fire at around 2:30 pm local time, and died soon after, reports Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

A note purportedly written by the deceased in Tibetan reads, "I am setting myself on fire for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the release of the Panchen Lama and freedom for Tibetans."

Local Tibetans and monks took his charred body to his monastery, where over 400 monks gathered to recite prayers and conduct the last rites for the deceased.

A string of self-immolations began with Tapey's fiery protest in February 2009. The number has reached 124 with Gyatso's protest, and many have died.

Tibetan Monk Self-Immolates in China; Another Dies in Police Custody VOA News, December 19, 2013

A Tibetan monk in China's Gansu province has set himself on fire to protest Chinese rule and call for the return of the Dalai Lama, according to recent news reports by China Xinhua News Agency.

The man, identified as Tsultrim Gyatso, set himself on fire and burned to death Thursday in Amchok, a town with a large ethnic Tibetan population.

Portion of handwritten note left by behind by Tibetan monk Tsultrim Gyatso, unknown location.

A note that he left behind, obtained by VOA's Tibetan service from Tibetan exile sources, said in part "The oppressors have robbed our land's treasures, the oppressors have stolen our peace and happiness."

According to a man who only goes by Anjum, a native of Amchok now living in exile, authorities made his family conduct a rushed funeral service.

"The authorities ordered Tsultrim Gyatso's family to cremate his body immediately, not allowing time for proper funeral prayers and services," he said. "This has caused a lot of anguish and anger in the community."

Exiled Tibetans are also reporting that 45-year-old Ngawang Jamyang, a Tibetan monk and scholar, has been beaten to death in Chinese police custody.

Ngawang Jamyang, a Tibetan monk, age 45, who is said to have died in police custody in China, seen teaching, unknown location, undated.

Jamyang, from the restive Driru area of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, was detained along with two other monks on November 23 while visiting Lhasa. The circumstances of his death are not clear and Chinese officials have not commented on the case.

According to one Belgium-based observer of Driru unrest in who identified himself as Samdup said Jamyang's body was given to his family along with a warning on Tuesday.

"They told me he was killed from severe torture," Samdup said. "His family was warned that anyone who tells about his death to outside would be executed."

The fate of the other two monks remains unknown.

In August, the government in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) launched a special patriotic campaign in Driru, ordering villagers to fly Chinese national flags from their rooftops. But people in at least two villages reportedly dumped the flags into a river.

Since then, there have been reports of protests, arrests and shootings by police. Meanwhile, Wu Yingjie, the vice secretary of the CCP in TAR, recently completed a visit to Spain, where a court has issued arrest warrants for former Chinese President Jiang Zemin and three others for alleged rights abuses in Tibet.

Spanish media reports say Wu, the man who launched the patriotic campaign in Driru, lobbied officials in Madrid to halt the court case.

Since 2009, more than 120 Tibetans demanding the return of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan freedom have self-immolated.

Phagmo Samdup

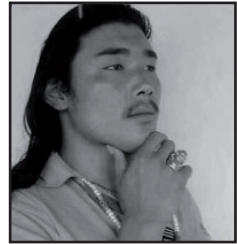
Age: 27

Occupation:

Date: 5 February 2014

Place of self-immolation: Dokarmo, Tsekhog, Malho

Current status: deceased



Self-immolation at Tsekhog county

www.tibet.net, February 7, 2014

DHARAMSHALA: Phagmo Samdrup, a 27-year-old Tibetan set himself on fire at Tsekhog (incorporated into China's Qinghai Province) in an apparent protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese government on Wednesday. It was the first Tibetan self-immolation protest of 2014, taking the total self-immolation toll to 125 since 2009.

Phagmo Samdrup burned himself at around 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday near the Panchen Day School in Dokarmo township in Tsekhog (in Chinese, Zeku) county in the Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Chinese police reportedly arrived at the immolation site and took his body away. His current whereabouts and condition remain unknown at the moment.

Chinese authorities deployed massive security forces in the wee hours of the night, tightening security and restricting the movement of Tibetans in Tsekhog and Rebgong county, where several self-immolations have taken place earlier.

All communication in the area were reportedly disconnected after the self-immolation in an attempt to prevent reports from reaching the media.

Prior to Phagmo Samdrup's self-immolation, there were reports of heightened

security and military clampdown in various parts of Tibet and Tibetan areas ahead of the upcoming Tibetan new year celebrations, which fall on 2 March.

Phagmo Samdrup was a Tibetan tantric practitioner. He is married with two kids. His mother's name is Drugmo.

Wave of Self-Immolation in Tibet

The wave of self-immolation in Tibet began in 2009 when Tapey, a young monk of Kirti monastery burned himself protesting against the Chinese government's violent clampdown in Ngaba county (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) in response to the peaceful protest of 2008.

Since then, over 125 Tibetans from various parts of Tibet, set themselves on fire in protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese government in Tibetan areas. Out of them, 107 have died while the whereabouts and condition of the remaining self-immolators are unknown.

Most of the self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Tibetan Man Carries Out Self-Immolation Protest

VOA News, 7 February 2014

In the first self-immolation protest to take place this year in Tibet or Tibetan regions, a 27 year old man named Phagmo Samdrub set fire to himself on Wednesday at 9:30 pm local time.

Mr. Samdrup carried out his protest near a school in the township of Dokarmo in Tsekhog county, situated in today's Malho Tibetan Prefecture, Qinghai Province. The area is traditionally known as Amdo Rebkong by Tibetans across Tibet.

A source wishing to remain anonymous for fear of retribution told VOA that local authorities arrived at the scene within a short period of time and took away Mr. Samdrup's body. His current whereabouts and condition remain unclear, and the area is reported to be seeing a dramatic increase in armed troop presence.

This brings the total number of known self-immolations on the Tibetan plateau since March 2009 to 126.

While it is unclear whether Mr. Samdrup left any written statements or voiced any demands before his act, many past self-immolators have called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and for freedom from oppression.

The United States government has called on China to end the repressive policies and actions that have exacerbated the situation in Tibet and urged China to talk with the Dalai Lama's representatives to find a solution to the problems in Tibet. Phagmo Samdrup is survived by his young wife and two children.

Tibetan sets self on fire in Tsekhog in Amdo

By Lobsang Wangyal, *Tibet Sun*, India, 7 February 2014

A Tibetan man set himself on fire in protest against the repressive Chinese policies in Tibet, according to exile Tibetans.

Phagmo Samdrup, 29, set himself alight in Tsekhog county in the Malho "Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" in north western China's Qinghai Province.

Samdrup became the first such protest this year, and the 126th person since the first self-immolation was reported in February 2009.

A handful of Tibetans and supporters marched in a quickly organised candle light vigil by Tibetan non-governmental organisations in McLeod Ganj to stand in solidarity with Samdrup.

Reports say that police arrived at the site of the immolation and took away Phagmo's body. His current whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

Samdrup was a tantric practitioner, and is married with two child.

China arrests five Tibetans for "links" to self immolation protest

Phayul, Tuesday, February 18, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, February 18: Chinese authorities in Tibet's Tsekhok County had arrested five Tibetans including a younger brother of Phagmo Samdrup who died a day after his self immolation protest on Feb. 5, a Tibetan source said.

The five Tibetans were identified as Gyatso, Samdup's younger brother, Pema, Tseten Gyal and a couple belonging to family of Pado. However, after days of interrogation the authorities held back Tseten Gyal and released the other four.

Doused in gasoline, 27 year old Phagmo Samdup set himself on fire near Bhenchen School in Dokarmo town around 9.30 PM (local time) on February 5.

Chinese police took him away immediately. He succumbed to his burn injuries at a hospital in Xiling the following day. Without informing his family members, Chinese authorities cremated Samdup's body at an undisclosed cremation site.

Samdup's family members were restricted to offer any prayers or butter lamps

for him by armed soldiers patrolling at their door. Monks and local Tibetans were also barred from visiting the family.

Chinese authorities also forced his family to throw his remains in Machu River, a Tibetan source said, adding that they even confiscated a golden ring belonging to the deceased.

Since 2009, 127 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet to protest against China's occupation of Tibet and its hard-line policies.

Chinese authorities over the past year have arrested family members and relatives of Tibetans who have carried out self immolation protests. In Zoege County, the authorities last year issued a circular listing 16 articles that warn Tibetans of harsh punishments for any link to self immolation protests.

Lobsang Dorjee

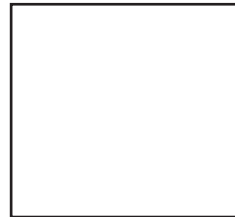
Age: 25

Occupation:

Date: 13 February 2014

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Self-immolator Lobsang Dorjee dies; video of protest on Youtube

www.tibet.net, February 17, 2014

DHARAMSHALA: Lobsang Dorjee, a 25-year-old Tibetan who set himself on fire near Kirti monastery in Ngaba in northeastern Tibet (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province) last Thursday has succumbed to his injuries the next day. The video of the self-immolation protest was posted on YouTube.

Lobsang, who was a former monk of Kirti monastery, set fire to himself to protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies on Tibet on Thursday, days after offering prayers at the prayer congregation being held at Kirti monastery. He was immediately bundled away by the security forces. He later died at a hospital in Barkham in Ngaba, sources said, adding that the Chinese authorities surreptitiously cremated the body despite repeated requests from the family members to hand over the body to them.

Local Tibetans in Ngaba closed their shops and restaurants for three days to

mourn and express their solidarity with the family members of the deceased.

The Chinese government has stepped up security clampdown in the region. A large number of police officials in plain clothes have been deployed at the ongoing prayer congregation in Kirti monastery.

Tibetan leader expresses concern over rising self-immolation cases

By ANI, 19 February 2014

Dharamsala, Feb.19 (ANI): The spokesperson of the Tibetan Government in-exile, Tashi Phuntsok, on Tuesday said that escalating self-immolation cases by the Tibetans must be looked into.

“In Tibet 126 Tibetans have self-immolated and two of the recent self-immolators have died. Which clearly shows that situation is not good. It’s becoming more serious and it’s quite concern for us,” said Phuntsok.

Phuntsok said self-immolations could be stopped if the root cause is addressed.

“Despite all the Chinese security measures and Tibetan measures, Tibetans continue to self-immolate. So, until the root of self immolation is addressed, any measure will not prevent it,” Phuntsok said.

At least 126 Tibetans have set themselves on fire to protest against Chinese rule since 2009, with most of them dying from their injuries.

Reportedly, a 25-year-old Tibetan, Lobsang Dorjee, who set himself on fire near Kirti monastery in Ngaba in Tibet on February 13, has succumbed to his injuries.

Violence has flared in Tibet since 1950, when Beijing claimed it “peacefully liberated”. Many Tibetans say China had eroded their culture and religion.

The Chinese government, however, denies trampling Tibetan rights and boasts of having brought development and prosperity to the region. (ANI)

New document sheds light on China’s campaign against self-immolations in Tibet

By *The Lowy Institute*, 17 February 2014

A Chinese and Tibetan-language document obtained and published by Radio Free Asia reveals how the Chinese Government is ‘striking hard’ against the families, relatives, villages and monasteries of self-immolating Tibetan protesters. The document was issued as a government notice in Zoigê County, in Sichuan Province’s Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, on 8 April 2013.

Since February 2009, over 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese Government's policies on the plateau. Beijing blames the 'Dalai Lama clique' for inciting the acts.

Among the sixteen provisions of the document are the following:

The immediate relatives of self-immolators in the county will not be approved for permission to leave China or travel to the Tibet Autonomous Region for three years.

The direct relatives (mother, father, spouse, children and siblings) of self-immolators will be ineligible to apply for national civil servant examinations or work for the state in any enterprise, service or military capacity.

The temple of a village or suburb in which an act self-immolation occurs will be subject to an anti-immolation bond of between ten and 500,000 Renminbi. If another act of self-immolation is not committed within two years, the deposit will be returned in full. If otherwise, the bond will be forfeited and a second will be applied.

The sermonising activities of monks at monasteries associated with the self-immolations will be severely restricted.

All national investment projects in the village (or suburb) and temple of the self-immolator will be cancelled or suspended, and all private capital and social investment projects in the village (or suburb) will be halted.

Those monitoring the situation in Tibet have long held that the families and communities of self-immolators were being punished for the acts. In January 2013, a monk was handed a suspended death sentence for inciting eight people set themselves ablaze.

A similar notification to the one RFA has published was obtained by the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala in 2012. It was issued by Chinese authorities in Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province and carries comparable punishments for self-immolators' families and communities. Unlike the Sichuan document, however, the Qinghai document did not describe its provisions as part of a 'strike hard campaign'. The new document thus hints at a broader policy, and is the first evidence of punishments for the families and communities of self-immolators outside Qinghai.

The measures seem to be working. Only seven self-immolations have taken place since July 2013, compared to 86 in 2012.

But the two self-immolations so far this year have both occurred in areas associated with the tough punishments on families and communities. On

5 February Phakmo Sambup, 29, set himself alight in Malho. He died at the scene. Last Thursday, Lobsang Dorjee attempted to self-immolate during a Tibetan New Year prayer festival in Ngawa Prefecture, Sichuan. It's the same prefecture the RFA document originated from.

Lobsang Palden

Age: 20

Occupation: monk

Date: 16 March 2014

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tenzin Jigme

Age: 28

Occupation: monk

Date: 16 March 2014

Place of self-immolation: Tsekhog, Malho

Current status: deceased



Two Tibetan Monks Self-Immolate on Crackdown Anniversary

RFA News, 2014-03-16

Two Tibetan monks set themselves on fire Sunday on the sixth anniversary of a deadly crackdown by Chinese authorities on Tibetans that had sparked an unending spate of self-immolation protests against Beijing's rule, according to exile sources.

Lobsang Palden, 20, from the restive Kirti monastery in Sichuan province's Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, self-immolated in Ngaba county while another monk, whose name was not immediately available, set himself on fire in Tsekhog (Zeku) county in Qinghai province's Malho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the sources said.

Palden self-immolated on the main road in Ngaba county, which was renamed in 2012 by Tibetans as "Heroes Street" after it became a regular venue for burning protests against Chinese rule, according to Tibetan exile monks Kanyak Tsering and Lobsang Yeshi, based in India's northern hill town Dharamsala.

The monks, citing local contacts, said Palden self-immolated to protest “against the violent crackdown on the Tibetans” on March 16, 2008 in Ngaba when Chinese police opened fire on a crowd of Tibetans, killing at least 10, including one monk.

The crackdown had agitated Tibetans in the area and sparked a spree of burning protests, the number of which reached 129 on Sunday, sources said. Tibetans have been marking the Ngaba crackdown anniversary by staging self-immolation protests over the last four years.

Protest slogans

Palden shouted protest slogans as he walked while he was on fire before Chinese security forces rushed to the scene and doused the flames and took him away, Tsering and Yeshi said.

“When [Palden] set himself on fire and walked several steps shouting slogans, several police arrived, put out the flames, forced him into a small vehicle, and took him away,” Tsering and Yeshi said in a statement to RFA’s Tibetan Service.

His condition and where he was taken were not immediately available.

Palden left behind a written and voice message calling for unity among Tibetans and sincerity in whatever they strive to achieve, Tsering and Yeshi said. “He also thanked his mother and relatives for their love and affection,” they said.

All Tibetan-owned restaurants and shops in Ngaba were closed Sunday “to express solidarity with the self-immolator,” they said.

“There is a huge presence of both armed and unarmed police forces in Ngaba town,” Tsering and Yeshi said.

Self-immolation in Qinghai

In the other self-immolation on Sunday, a monk set himself on fire outside the Sonag monastery in Tsekhog county’s Jador township, exile sources said. His name and other details of the incident are not available.

“The local authorities immediately blocked the Internet, mobile phone, and [micro-messaging service] WeChat communications” immediately after the burning protest, a Tibetan exile source based in Europe told RFA’s Mandarin Service.

A Tibetan in the area told RFA’s Tibetan Service that after the self-immolation, he was not allowed to enter the Sonag monastery by Chinese security forces who he said had surrounded the institution.

Sunday's burnings brings the number of self-immolations this year to four. Two fatal self-immolations occurred last month—one in Ngaba and the other in Tsekhog.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests in Tibetan populated areas, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

Two Tibetan Monks Carry Out Self-Immolation Protests

VOA News, 17 March 2014

Two monks set themselves on fire on Sunday in separate incidences in Tibetan regions of China's Qinghai and Sichuan provinces

Losang Palden, in his 20s, and belonging to Kirti Monastery in Ngaba prefecture, Sichuan province, set himself ablaze around 11:40 AM local time. Kanyag Tsering, spokesperson for the India-based Kirti Monastery, told VOA that Palden's immolation was in protest of the continuing crackdown and repression in the regio

The same source stated that Palden doused himself with kerosene and set himself on fire on the road known locally as 'Heroes' Street', and that he was heard to have shouted slogans that could not be clearly heard

Citing sources in the area, Kanyag Tsering said that soon after the monk was in flames, Chinese security personnel took Palden away in a small vehicle. Palden's condition and whereabouts are not known at this reporting

Losang Palden became a monk at the monastery in Amdo Ngaba at a young age and had a younger brother who is also a monk at the same monastery. His mother's name is Namkho and his step-father's name is Sherab. To show their solidarity, Tibetans in Amdo Ngaba closed their restaurants and shops soon after learning of the self-immolation

Sources in the region have stated that strict restrictions have been imposed in the area, with both uniformed and plain clothes Chinese security personnel patrolling the streets

The second self-immolation on Sunday was carried out by a monk from Shaderi Monastery in Huangnan Tibetan autonomous prefecture in Qinghai province according to Xinhua news service. The report stated that the police were rushing to the site, but gave no further details.

AP reported that a man at the Zekog county public security bureau confirmed

the immolation and said that it took place outside the monastery. He said that he had no other information and refused to be identified. Tibetan sources also confirmed the incident, but say that all communication in the area had been cut off soon after the incidence.

The above self-immolation bring the total number of self-immolations in Tibet since February 2009 to 129.

China has enacted laws that criminalize self-immolations and have arrested and handed heavy sentences to people related or connected to past self-immolators, while also painting a picture of the individuals carrying out the self-immolations as being marginal people in society.

The exile-based Central Tibetan Administration in northern India has repeatedly urged China to end political repression and religious persecution in Tibet, and urged Tibetans inside Tibet not to resort to drastic actions, including self-immolation.

The US government has called on China to resolve the Tibetan issue through dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives, and to respect the human rights and religious freedom of Tibetans.

Tibetan self-immolator Lobsang Palden dies

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, Sunday, March 23, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, March 23: A Tibetan monk from Kirti monastery in Ngaba who set himself on fire on the sixth anniversary of a 2008 crackdown has succumbed to his burns on Friday around 1.30 pm (local time).

Watch an amateur video taken moments after the self immolation [here](#).

Lobsang Palden, 23, set himself ablaze on March 16 at the Martyr's Street in Ngaba town around 11.30AM (local time). Chinese police immediately arrived at the protest site, doused the flame and took him away in a vehicle. On March 16, 2008, at least ten Tibetans were shot dead by Chinese security forces who fired indiscriminately on a group of Tibetans protesting against Chinese government in Ngaba. Four monks of Kirti Monastery had died after immolating themselves at the same spot which became to be known as Pawoe Sanglam (Martyr's Street) since 2011. They were Lobsang Phuntsok (2011), Lobsang Tsultrim (2012), and Lobsang Thokmay (2013) and Lobsang Palden (2014).

Before setting himself on fire, Palden had reportedly left a text message in his phone in which he prayed for his parents, family members, teachers and relatives.

He also called for unity among Tibetans. “We should maintain cordial relations with others, particularly with Chinese because if we are united and have love for each other, no matter what our thoughts are, it will enable us to communicate with each other better,” the message says (translated from Tibetan by phayul).

On the same day, another Tibetan monk set himself on fire in Tsekhog County. The monk belonged to the Sonag monastery in Jhador township, Tsekhog County. Chinese authorities immediately shutdown all communication lines in the area to censor the incident. It is not known if the monk, whose name is not yet known, has died or is still alive.

Since 2009, 129 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet to protest against Chinese occupation of Tibet and its hard-line policies.

Dharamshala prays for Tibetan self-immolators Palden and Jigme

Phayul, Wednesday, March 26, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, March 26: Tibetans in exile including Tibetan government officials gathered here for a mass prayer service held for the two monks who self immolated on the same day on March 16, 2014. Jigme Tenzin of Sonag monastery in Tsekhog County, died hours after his self immolation protest outside his monastery on March 16, and Lobsang Palden of Kirti monastery in Ngaba County, died on Friday, March 21.

Hundreds of Tibetans and supporters, including the Tibetan Prime Minister Lobsang Sangay, Tibetan Justice Commissioners, Tibetan ministers, Parliamentarians and school students attended the prayer service held at the Tsuglakhang, the main temple in McLeod Ganj.

The prayer service was presided over by Thومتok Rinpoche, the abbot of Namgyal monastery.

Addressing at the prayer service, Tibetan Prime Minister Dr Lobsang Sangay raised concern for the escalating rate of self-immolation protest and said, “Kashag (Tibetan cabinet) has repeatedly said that it is not just a number and we should not turn it into number. They are Tibetans just like us and have sacrificed their precious life for the cause of Tibet.”

He also offered prayers for Goshul Lobsang, a Tibetan political prisoner on parole who succumbed to torture injuries last week.

Since 2009, 129 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet to protest against Chinese occupation of Tibet and its hard-line policies.

Dolma

Age: 31

Occupation: nun

Date: 29 March 2014

Place of self-immolation: Bathang, Kham

Current status: unknown



Tibetan nun sets fire to herself outside monastery in first self-immolation in Bathang

International Campaign for Tibet, 31 March 2014

A Tibetan nun, reported to be 31-years-old, called Dolma set fire to herself outside a monastery on March 29, the first self-immolation in Bathang county, Sichuan (the Tibetan area of Kham).

When Tibetans who were circumambulating the Ba Choede monastery, a traditional religious practice, witnessed the self-immolation, they managed to extinguish the flames and take Dolma to hospital.

The Tibetan nun, Dolma, is from a large family; three of her relatives have been identified as reincarnate lamas, and her sister is also a nun. She is believed to have made religious offerings before setting fire to herself near the circumambulation (kora) route outside Ba Choede monastery in the county town of Bathang (Chinese: Batang) in Kardze (Chinese: Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Security was tightened in the monastery and county town, with internet connections blocked and mobile phone connections cut, according to the same Tibetan sources. Local people were not allowed access to Dolma in hospital. She is believed to have survived after receiving emergency medical treatment at the hospital, but her current condition is not known.

Three nuns from Dolma's nunnery have disappeared, believed to be detained, following the self-immolation, according to Tibetan sources.

Ba Choede monastery in Bathang belongs to the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism and was founded by the 5th Dalai Lama. A day after Dolma's self-immolation, butter-lamps were lit in the monastery to mark the passing of Bapa Phuntsog Wangyal, the leading writer, thinker and first Tibetan Communist who was born in Bathang and died in Beijing on March 30 at the age of 92.

Thinley Namgyal

Age: 32

Occupation:

Date: 15 April 2014

Place of self-immolation: Tawu, Kardze, Kham

Current status: deceased



Tibetan man in China sets self on fire: Reports

The Straits Times, 16 April 2014

BEIJING (AFP) - A Tibetan man in China burnt himself to death on Tuesday, overseas media and a rights group reported, the latest in a string of self-immolation protests in recent years.

Mr Thinley Namgyal, 32, died soon after he set himself alight in Kardze prefecture in Sichuan province, according to British-based advocacy group Free Tibet and the United States-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA).

Mr Namgyal, the youngest son of a semi-nomadic farming family, self-immolated “in protest against Chinese policy and rule” in Tibetan areas, RFA reported, citing a local resident.

It added that mobile phone service and other communication lines to Tawu county, where the incident took place, had since been cut off.

At least 125 Tibetans in China have set themselves alight since 2009, according to Free Tibet and RFA.

The latest incident follows the self-immolation last month of a Tibetan nun who set herself alight while performing a prayer ritual at a monastery in Kardze prefecture.

Free Tibet director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement that the self-immolations happen because China “continues to use force to deny them their basic human rights and their fundamental right to determine their own future as a nation”.

Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader-in-exile, of encouraging self-immolations to further a separatist agenda.

China also says its rule has brought social and economic benefits to Tibetans and ended what it claims were feudal abuses of the population.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate who lives in India, has described the self-immolations as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Rights groups call the protests a reaction to Beijing's tight control over Tibetans' rights, including the exercise of religion.

Tibetan man burns himself to death in eastern Tibet

By Tenzin Gaphel, *Tibet Express*, 16 April 2014

DHARAMSALA, April 16: A Tibetan man has burned himself to death in eastern Tibet in protest against continued Chinese rule in Tibet.

Thinley Namgyal, 32 set himself on fire and succumbed to his burns immediately around 12 pm (local time) on April 15 in Tawu County in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province in an apparent protest against repressive Chinese rule in Tibet, according to an exiled Tibetan with close contacts in the region.

Following his fiery protest, local Tibetans managed to carry his charred body to the nearby Gonthal monastery before Chinese police got wind of the incident.

The monastery later returned Thinley's body to his family. Thinley Namgyal was a native of Gen-ne Village in Khangsar Township in Tawu County.

With Thinley's self-immolation protest, the total number of self-immolation protests since Feb 2009 has now reached 130.

A 32-year-old Tibetan dies in a blaze to protest Chinese occupation

AsiaNews, 16 April 2014

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - Thinley Namgyal, a 32-year-old Tibetan man, set himself on fire yesterday to demand an end to China's occupation of Tibet.

After he succumbed to his injuries, his body was taken to the Gangthel Monastery and then returned to the family, this according to Tawu Lobsang Jinpa, a Tibetan exile with contacts in the area.

Thinley, who lived with his father Dulho and mother Pelha in Khangsar Township, Tawu County, Kardze region, in the traditional Tibetan province of Kham, set himself ablaze at noon (local time).

The regional chapters of the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Women's Association and Students for a Free Tibet (India) organised a candle light vigil to mourn him.

With his protest, he became the 131st Tibetan since 2009 who self-immolated in order to demand an end to Chinese rule in Tibet and the return of the Dalai

Lama to his homeland.

Tibetan Man Dies in Self-Immolation Protest in Kardze

RFA News, 2014-04-15

A Tibetan man burned himself to death Tuesday in Sichuan province's restive Kardze prefecture to protest Chinese rule, triggering a security alert and a clampdown on information flow, according to sources.

Thinley Namgyal, 32, self-immolated at noon in Khangsar township in Tawu (in Chinese, Daofu) county in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the sources said.

"Since the fire was so intense, it didn't take very long for his death," a local resident told RFA's Tibetan Service, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"He self-immolated in protest against Chinese policy and rule [in Tibetan populated areas]," another Tibetan resident said, also speaking anonymously. Tibetans who witnessed the burning protest immediately took Namgyal's body to a nearby monastery for prayers before Chinese police could arrive at the scene, the resident said.

The Gonthal monastery later handed over the body to the family of Namgyal, who left behind a mother and two older brothers.

Communication links cut off

Chinese authorities immediately stepped up security in the area and cut off mobile phone and other communication links, local residents said.

"Now it is very difficult to reach anyone in Tawu area," another resident said.

In Tawu county in July last year, Chinese forces opened fire on Tibetans and used tear gas to disperse about 1,000 monks and nuns who had gathered to celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday, injuring at least eight.

Namgyal's burning was the 131st Tibetan self-immolation in China since the fiery protests began in 2009 challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan areas and calling for the return from exile of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

On March 29, a 31-year-old Tibetan nun set herself on fire near the Ba Choede monastery in Bathang (Batang) county, also in Kardze prefecture

Following her protest, Chinese police rushed to Ba Choede and imposed "various restrictions" in the area, disrupting communication links and detaining several nuns who were close to her, sources had said.

“Tibetans continue to set themselves alight in Tibet because China continues to use force to deny them their basic human rights and their fundamental right to determine their own future as a nation,” London-based advocacy group Free Tibet’s director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement.

‘Unaccountable’

Noting that China has this week postponed a much-trumpeted human rights dialogue with Britain, she said “China may try to hold itself unaccountable for human rights abuses but those abuses lie behind every self-immolation.”

“The protests and deaths of Thinley Namgyal and the other Tibetans who have taken this step are a reminder to the global community that China must be held accountable.”

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing’s rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008. Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans whom they accuse of being linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

Tibetan arrested for photographing self immolation protest

Phayul, Saturday, April 19, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, APRIL 19: A relative of the latest Tibetan who died following a self immolation protest in Tibet’s Tawu region on April 15 has been arrested for taking pictures of the self immolator and sending it out, Lobsang Jinpa, a Tibetan exile said.

Rikchung, who owned a shop in Khangsar town where his relative Thinley Namgyal, 32, burned himself to death, was arrested as the Chinese authorities accused him of taking pictures of Thinlay’s protest and sending it to outside forces.

The local Chinese authorities forced Thinley’s family to cremate his body immediately, said a source.

China has arrested and sentenced several Tibetans for alleged connections with self immolation protests in various regions of Tibet.

Jinpa said the Chinese authorities shut all communication lines in the town to blackout all information on the latest self immolation by a Tibetan, 131st since 2009.

Thinley Namgyal set himself ablaze around 12 noon (local time) in Khangsar town, Tawu County of Kardze region, in the traditional Tibetan province of Kham. Thinley succumbed to his burns immediately. His body was taken to Gangthel monastery for prayers and was later handed over to his family.

Thinley lived with his father Dulho and mother Pelha in Khangsar township, Tawu County.

Lhamo Tashi

Age: 22

Occupation: student

Date: 17 September 2014

Place of self-immolation: Tsoe, Kanlho

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Student Burns Himself to Death in Protest

By Dan Levin, *The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 2014

BEIJING — A Tibetan student burned himself to death last week in protest of Chinese rule in the first self-immolation in five months, an international human rights organization reported on Monday.

The student, Lhamo Tashi, 22, set himself on fire in front of a police station in the western province of Gansu on Wednesday. Although family members requested his body, the police confiscated and cremated it, only returning his ashes two days later, according to a report by Free Tibet, an advocacy group based in London.

Radio Free Asia, which is financed by the United States government, said that news of the self-immolation had not spread until the weekend because of “communication clampdowns usually imposed by Chinese authorities” after such protests occur.

As he set himself alight, Mr. Tashi shouted slogans in front of a police station in Tsoe County, also known as Hezuo in Mandarin, before dying of his injuries, the news organization said, citing local sources. At least 132 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009 to protest Chinese rule over Tibetan areas and to call for the return of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader.

Tibetan student burns to death in first self-immolation since April

By James Griffiths, *South China Morning Post*, 22 September 2014

A 22-year-old Tibetan man has burned to death in China's Gansu province in what appears to be the first self-immolation in more than five months.

According to Radio Free Asia and pro-Tibetan organisations, student Lhamo Tashi set himself on fire on September 17 outside a police station in Hezuo county in Gansu's Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. He died on the spot, sources said.

There have been around 130 self-immolations in protest against Chinese rule over Tibet since 2009. More than 80 Tibetans self-immolated in 2012 during the height of the protests, while numbers declined last year and this year.

On April 15, a 32-year-old man burned himself to death in Daofu county, Sichuan province. Around a year earlier, the area had been the site of a shooting by Chinese security forces when they opened fire on a crowd of worshippers who were marking the 78th birthday of the Dalai Lama, injuring at least seven people.

The Dalai Lama, in June last year, warned that self-immolations were having little effect on China's policies in Tibet

while he urged Beijing to look harder at the causes of the protests.

"It's a sad thing that happens. Of course it's very, very sad," the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader told reporters during a visit to Australia. "In the meantime, I doubt how much effect [there is] from such drastic actions."

China has repeatedly denounced the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile for encouraging self-immolations. Authorities in Tibet, where foreign journalists are largely prevented from visiting, have tightened controls in a bid to stop the protests, arresting family members and friends of self-immolators.

In November, seven people, including three monks, were arrested in Qinghai province after a 20-year-old monk burned to death. This came months after around 70 people were detained in the province in the largest crackdown yet.

"Police will exert more efforts to thoroughly investigate the cases and seriously punish those who incite innocent people to commit self-immolation," provincial police chief Lu Binghai was quoted as saying in state media.

Tibetan Student Self-Immolates in Tsoe

VOA News, 21 September 2014

A 22 year old student named Lhamo Tashi set fire to himself outside a security office in Tsoe city at midnight on September 17.

Tashi's family who live in Drukdo village, Amchok township, were informed of their son's self-immolation by the security police who told them that he had died. However when family members travelled to Tsoe the next day and requested that their son's body be given to them, the police told them that Tashi had been cremated already and handed the family some ash which they told the family were that of their son.

Lhamo Tashi is the 132nd Tibetan to self-immolate inside Tibet since 2009. While it is unknown at present if Tashi left behind a testament or whether he spoke at the scene of his immolation, many of the previous Tibetans who had carried out self-immolation protests had called for Tibetan freedom and a Tibet where the Dalai Lama can return to.

Lhamo Tashi's father is Chopa Tsering and his mother's name is Dhukar Tso.

Tibetan protester dies after setting himself on fire

By Ed Adamczyk, *UPI*, 22 September 2014

TSOE CITY, China, Sept. 22 (UPI) -- A Tibetan student immolated himself in protest of Tibetan Chinese rule, the advocacy group Free Tibet reported.

The London-based organization, concerned with rights of Tibetans whose country was incorporated into China in 1950, said Lhamo Tashi, 22, stood before a police station in Tsoe City, shouted slogans and set fire to himself on Sept. 17. He died of injuries caused by the fire and his body was cremated by authorities, Free Tibet said.

Radio Free Asia, an agency of the U.S. government, said news of the incident was not immediately available due to "communications clampdowns usually imposed by the Chinese government."

Tashi was the seventh person to self-immolate in Tibet in 2014, and the first since April. At least 132 Tibetans have died by self-immolation as protest since 2009. Other protests, including large-scale demonstrations, have been typically met with violent responses by authorities, Free Tibet said.

Tibetan student immolates self in Tsoe

Phayul, Monday, September 22, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, September 22: A Tibetan student died after he set himself on fire outside a police station in Tsoe County in Kanlho prefecture last Wednesday to protest the Chinese government.

Lhamo Tashi, 22, shouted slogans before succumbing to his burns, according to sources. However, due to immediate restrictions placed on communication lines it is not known what Tashi had said in his slogans.

Tashi is the 132nd Tibetan to resort to self-immolation as a form of protest against China.

Sources say that his protest was timed with Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to India.

"Tashi's parents approached the local police station to claim his body but were refused. When they went the next day they were told their son had already been cremated. They were handed some ashes, which the police claimed were remains of their son," a Tibetan source said.

Tashi's parents are Choedpa Tsering and Dhukar Tso, residents of Bora town in Sangchu County in Labrang.

22-year-old student self-immolates in Tibet

The Hindustan Times, 23 September 2014

A Central Tibetan Official (CTA) has reported yet another self immolation in Tibet's Tsoe area.

CTA officials said Lhamo Tashi, 22, died after setting himself on fire outside a police station in Tsoe area in Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China's Gansu province) on September 17 to protest against the Chinese repressive rule over Tibet.

"Despite the repeated requests of the deceased family to have his body returned, it was cremated by the authorities and his ashes given to them on September 19," said the official quoting from a statement of London-based human rights group Free Tibet.

Meanwhile, the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, which is currently in session, has passed a unanimous resolution to express condolence and solidarity with the deceased and his family members.

“We are deeply saddened to learn about the death of Lhamo Tashi following his self-immolation protest against the Chinese government’s repressive policies in Tibet. We mourn and express solidarity with his family members,” exile Parliament Speaker Penpa Tsering said.

He said the incident had pushed the total number of self-immolation to 131, of which 113 died.

“The self-immolators have demanded freedom for Tibetans and the return of spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet,” he said.

CTA has repeatedly urged the Chinese government to end its political repression, religious persecution, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction in Tibet to address the issue of Tibet. It has consistently appealed to Tibetans to not to resort to drastic actions including self-immolation.

Tibetan Student Perishes in First Self-Immolation in Five Months

RFA News, 2014-09-21

A 22-year-old Tibetan student has burned himself to death in front of a police station in Gansu province in protest against Chinese rule —the first self-immolation in more than five months among disgruntled Tibetans in China, according to sources.

Lhamo Tashi set himself on fire last week, shouting slogans in front of the Kanlho (in Chinese, Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s police station in Tsoe (Hezuo) county before succumbing to his burns on the spot, the sources said.

Information of Tashi’s Sept. 17 fatal burning emerged only at the weekend, apparently due to communication clampdowns usually imposed by Chinese authorities following self-immolation protests.

Tashi’s burning protest occurred more than five months since the last reported self-immolation among Tibetans in China on April 15.

It brought the total number of self-immolations to 132 since the fiery protests began in 2009 challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan areas and calling for the return from exile of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

“Tashi self-immolated in front of the office of the police department of Kanlho Prefecture,” a local Tibetan told RFA’s Tibetan Service, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“He did it for Tibetan freedom and died in the self immolation,” the source said.

Chinese authorities seized Tashi's remains but returned them to his parents a day later, the source said.

"After learning about their son's self-immolation, they rushed to the site and demanded his body but the authorities refused to hand it over to the family. Only the next day, the family members were handed over some remains."

2008 protest

A second Tibetan source, who confirmed the self-immolation, said Tashi had been studying in Tsoe.

"He was among those who protested against Chinese rule in 2008," the source said, referring to a mass uprising which erupted in Tibet's capital Lhasa in March that year before spreading to other Tibetan-populated areas.

Tashi was detained then and subsequently released for participating in the protest, the source said.

The Central Tibetan Administration, the India-based Tibetan government in exile, says about 220 Tibetans died in the 2008 unrest and nearly 7,000 were detained in the subsequent region-wide crackdown. The Chinese government had put the death toll at 22.

The last reported self-immolation before Tashi's burning occurred in Sichuan province's restive Kardze prefecture on April 15.

Thinley Namgyal, 32, had self-immolated in Tawu (in Chinese, Daofu) county in Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture "in protest against Chinese policy and rule [in Tibetan populated areas]," a Tibetan resident had said. Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

138th Self Immolation in Protest of Chinese Rule in Tibet

By Day Blakely Donaldson, *The Speaker News Journal*,

Tibetan student Lhamo Tashi self immolated outside of a police office in Tsoe city, Kanlho TAP—the first self immolation in Tibet since April. Tashi is the seventh self immolation in Tibet this year, and is the 138th self immolation in and around Tibet since 2009, when the wave of Tibetan self immolations began in protest of Chinese rule over Tibet.

Tashi self immolated at midnight, September 17.

ScreenHunter_943 Sep. 22 12.51The news was reported Saturday by Jigme Ugen, president of the Tibetan National Congress.

Security police informed the family of Tashi of his death. The family reside in Drukdo village, Amchok township, Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Family members traveled to Tsoe to request the body of Tashi, but were told that the body had already been cremated. Some ashes were given to the family.

It is not currently known whether Tashi left a testament or said anything during his self immolation.

Tashi, 22, was a student in Tsoe.

Kunchok

Age: 42

Occupation:

Date: 17 September 2014

Place of self-immolation: Tsangkor, Golog

Current status: hospitalized



Tibetan immolates self in Golok

Phayul, Monday, October 06, 2014

A Tibetan man immolated himself near a police station in Gade County, Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, eastern Tibet on September 16, a day before another Tibetan set himself ablaze in Tsoe County, Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, according to the UK based Tibet Watch.

Kunchok, 42, set himself on fire on 16 September near a police station Tsangkor Sholma township, Gade County, before onlookers doused the flames and rushed him to hospital. He became the 133rd Tibetan to resort to self immolation as a form of protest against the Chinese government.

“News of his protest has just emerged as local Tibetans did not want to put him or those who assisted him at risk of arrest,” said Tibet Watch.

“I failed to accomplish my wish,” Kunchok kept saying after regaining consciousness at hospital.

A father of two, Kunchok has sustained serious burns and is currently undergoing treatment. His family are concerned that he will succumb to his burns.

Details of the hospital are being withheld to prevent him from being detained

by security forces, said the Tibetan Watch. “Most surviving self-immolators are detained incommunicado; those who die in custody or whose bodies are taken by the police are usually cremated by the authorities who return the ashes to the family, preventing them from conducting normal funeral services.”

Tibetan Man Self-Immolates In Front of Police Station in Qinghai

RFA News, 2014-10-04

A Tibetan man has burned himself in front of a police station in protest against Chinese rule in Qinghai province, sources said Saturday, in the second Tibetan self-immolation in less than a month.

Kunchok, 42, set himself on fire beside a police station in Gade (in Chinese, Gande) county in the Golog (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on Sept. 16 but Tibetans nearby managed to douse the flames and rushed him to a nearby hospital, the sources said.

Information of his burning in Tsang Khor town emerged only on Saturday, apparently due to communication clampdowns usually imposed by Chinese authorities following self-immolation protests, they said.

Kunchok, whose son is a monk and daughter a nun in a local monastery, “self-immolated in protest against Chinese policy in Tibet,” a Tibetan with contacts in Gade told RFA’s Tibetan Service. “He did it for the interest of the Tibetans.”

“He’s now in great pain,” the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. “While he’s being treated, he often breaks down in tears over his failure to die in the self-immolation. He regrets not accomplishing what he planned to do.”

The source said Kunchok’s chances of survival are “slim.”

Secret treatment

Another source, also with contacts in the area, said Tibetans who saw Kunchok on fire immediately went to put out the flames and rushed him to an undisclosed hospital in the provincial capital Xining, “where he is being treated secretly.”

“We cannot reveal other details since the relatives fear that those who helped him could land in trouble with the authorities,” the source said.

“The family members also fear that Kunchok could be taken away by the authorities if he survives,” the source said. “If he does not survive, the authorities would also not return the body to the family.”

A third source said Chinese authorities have beefed up security, installing

security cameras at vantage points in Gade county, following the self-immolation.

“It is very difficult to give you more details since we are constantly being watched with cameras installed at different places, including the front and rear of the monasteries in this area,” the source said.

Kunchok’s burning protest brought the total number of Tibetan self-immolations in China to 133 since the fiery protests began in 2009 challenging Chinese rule in Tibetan areas and calling for the return from exile of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Student victim

The last reported self-immolation burning protest was on Sept. 17 — one day after Kunchok’s self-immolation — when a 22-year-old Tibetan student burned himself to death in front of a police station in Gansu province in protest against Chinese rule.

Lhamo Tashi set himself on fire and shouted slogans in front of the Kanlho (in Chinese, Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s police station in Tsoe (Hezuo) county before succumbing to his burns on the spot, sources had told RFA on Sept. 21.

The authorities have tightened controls to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

Sangye Khar

Age: 34

Occupation:

Date: 16 December 2014

Place of self-immolation: Amchok, Kanlho,

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Man Dies After Self-Immolation in Protest of Chinese Rule

By Dan Levin, *The New York Times*, Dec. 17, 2014

BEIJING — A Tibetan man set himself on fire and died outside a police station in the western Chinese province of Gansu on Tuesday, becoming the 134th person to self-immolate in protest of Chinese rule over Tibetan areas, according to a report by Radio Free Asia, which is financed by the United States

government.

The man, Sangye Khar, 33, self-immolated in the mountain town of Sangchu, known as Xiahe in Chinese, home to the Labrang Monastery, one of the most important sites in Tibetan Buddhism and a major tourist attraction. The self-immolation, the third in a row to take place outside a police station, coincided with a major Tibetan religious festival.

Chinese security forces have flooded many parts of the Tibetan plateau to prevent self-immolations and other protests of Chinese rule. The Chinese authorities have set up a widespread web of controls to monitor the restive region with ubiquitous surveillance cameras, paid informers and plainclothes security agents at monasteries. The authorities frequently shut down the Internet after incidents of unrest.

Tibetan burns himself in protest over China's rule

The Telegraph, 17 December 2014

A Tibetan has died after setting himself on fire to protest at China's rule of the Himalayan region in the first self-immolation for three months.

Sangye Khar set himself alight outside a police station in Xiahe county in western China's Gansu province, the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and US-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA) both said.

The 33-year-old set fire to himself in Amuqu township on Tuesday morning, and died "in protest against Chinese policies in Tibetan areas", RFA said, citing anonymous local sources.

The protest took place as authorities were reported to have stepped up a security crackdown as Tibetans gathered to mark a major religious festival.

Tuesday's festival was the anniversary of the death of Tsongkhapa, who founded the Gelugpa or Yellow Hat school of Tibetan Buddhism in the 15th century.

Using the area's Tibetan name, RFA said authorities had "stepped up security in Amchok and clamped down on communications, including the Internet" in the wake of the self-immolation.

The ICT, meanwhile, said "the situation in the area is tense".

Calls to the police and local government in Xiahe by AFP were not answered.

There have been more than 130 such acts in Tibet and elsewhere since 2009, most of them fatal, both the ICT and RFA said.

Self-immolations peaked in the run-up to the ruling CPP's pivotal five-yearly

congress in November 2012, and have become less common in recent months.

The most recent such act was also outside a police station in a Tibetan-populated area of Gansu.

Student Lhamo Tashi died after setting himself on fire in front of a police station in Hezuo county in September, reports said.

The previous immolation was reported in April.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate who has lived in India since 1959 after a failed uprising in Tibet, has described the burnings as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Tibetan administration reports 134th self-immolation case

Hindustan Times, 23 December 2014

At a time when trend of self-immolation seemed to have been waning, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has reported yet another incident where in a 19-year-old girl died after setting herself ablaze “in an apparent protest against the Chinese government”.

The fiery protest, which took place at Meuruma Township in Nagba Country of Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is the second such incident within a week.

CTA, in a press release issued here, informed that the deceased, identified as Tsephe Kyi, set herself on fire on Monday to protest against the Chinese government's repressive measures in Tibetan areas.

“Chinese authorities arrived at the site of the self-immolation within minutes and seized her body, a source from the region was quoted as saying,” said a CTA official, citing sources in the occupied Tibet.

“Self-immolator girl's father and mother have reportedly been taken away by the police, but it is not clear whether they have been detained,” he added.

Tsephe is the 10th Tibetan to self-immolate this year. The last reported self-immolation was of Sangye Khar, who died after burning himself on December 16 at Amchok Town of Sangchu County in Gansu Province, added the official.

He also reiterated appeal by Sikyong (Tibetan PM-in-exile) Lobsang Sangay,

urging the Chinese authorities in Tibet to address the genuine grievances of the people to alleviate their sufferings.

At least 134 Tibetans have set themselves on fire inside Tibet since 2009. “CTA has consistently appealed to and discouraged Tibetans from drastic actions, including self-immolation, as a form of protest,” said the official

Tibetan Man Dies in Self-Immolation Protest in Front of Police Station

RFA News, 2014-12-16

A Tibetan man set himself on fire and died in Gansu province on Tuesday in the first self-immolation protest in three months against Beijing’s rule in Tibetan-populated areas in China, sources said.

Sangye Khar, 33, set himself ablaze between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. in front of a police station in Amchok township in Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a local source told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

Khar died “in protest against Chinese policies in Tibetan areas,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The last two Tibetan self-immolations also occurred near police stations. Authorities have stepped up security in Amchok and clamped down on communications, including the Internet.

“When I heard about the incident, I called my friends and went to see [Khar’s] condition, but the Chinese authorities had already taken his body away,” he said.

“Soon after this, the presence of security personnel increased in the area, and restrictions were imposed on the movements of the people in the area.”

Community of farmers

Chinese police tried to extinguish the flames on Khar’s burning body but apparently failed, a Tibetan living in exile and giving his name as Tamdin told RFA, citing contacts in the region.

“We could not confirm that he died at the scene, but I heard that the Chinese took his body to Labrang [monastery], where it was cremated,” he said.

Another local source confirmed the self-immolation, saying Khar was a resident of Amchok township’s Chung Nyuthang village.

“The members of his community are primarily farmers dependent on the cultivation of land,” said the source, who sent RFA Khar’s photo.

“His father’s name is Ranglo, and his mother’s name is Yudron.”

“All lines of communication are now blocked, and it is very difficult to get updates,” he said.

Burning numbers climb

Khar’s burning brings to 134 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans protesting Chinese rule since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, and is the first since September.

The last Tibetan self-immolation occurred on Sept. 17 when a 22-year-old student burned himself to death in front of a police station in Gansu province’s Tsoe (Hezuo) county in protest against Chinese rule.

Lhamo Tashi set himself on fire and shouted slogans before succumbing to his burns on the spot.

A day earlier, on Sept. 16, Konchok, 42, set himself on fire beside a police station in Qinghai province’s Gade (Gande) county in the Golog (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, but Tibetans nearby managed to douse the flames and rushed him to a nearby hospital.

News of his burning in Tsang Khor town emerged only in early October, apparently due to the communication clampdowns usually imposed by Chinese authorities following self-immolation protests, they said.

The authorities have tightened controls to check self-immolation, arresting and jailing Tibetans linked to the burnings. Some have been jailed for up to 15 years.

34-year-old Tibetan dies in self-immolation protest at Sangchu

www.tibet.net, December 17, 2014

DHARAMSHALA: A Tibetan man, Sangye Khar, aged 34, set himself on fire yesterday around 9 am (local time) in front of a police station in Amchok town, Sangchu county in Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. He died on the spot, according to media reports and human rights group.

Police arrived shortly after the self-immolation and forcibly removed his body. Sangye Khar was the father of two daughters. He was from Khyungri Thang village, reported London based rights group Free Tibet.

The Chinese police refused to hand over Sangye’s body to his family members despite strong protest from the local Tibetans, Radio Free Asia reported.

Security in Amchok town has been tightened and all the communication

channels are being restricted following the self-immolation protest, it said.

133 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government in Tibet since 2009. Most of the self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

On 14 November this year, an anonymous testimony by the survivor of a self-immolation protest reads: “Compared to other countries, we don’t have freedom of religious belief, freedom of speech, and our spiritual leader cannot return home. The restrictions are ongoing. I was unable to bear the suffering of living under Chinese aggression, so I thought about a self-immolation protest.”

The exile administration in Dharamshala has repeatedly appealed to Tibetans inside Tibet not to resort to drastic forms of protest including self-immolation.

The CTA released a White Paper titled “[Why Tibet is Burning...](#)” last year explaining the fundamental reasons behind the wave of self-immolations inside Tibet. The principle reasons listed in the 91-page report are political repression, Chinese communist leader’s views and policies on Tibet, and cultural assimilation, destruction of Tibetan Buddhism. Besides, social discrimination, strangling the Tibetan language, environment destruction, Tibetan Nomads and ending their way of life and economic marginalisation, population transfer and western China Development Programme are the other reasons given in the report.

Tsephel

Age: 20

Occupation:

Date: 22 December 2014

Place of self-immolation: Meuruma, Ngaba

Current status: deceased



Girl dies in self-immolation protest at Ngaba

www.tibet.net 22 December 2014

DHARAMSHALA: A 19-year-old Tibetan girl burned herself to death in an apparent protest against the Chinese government at Meuruma township in Ngaba county, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China’s Sichuan Province), media reports say.

Tsephe, 19, set herself on fire today to protest the Chinese government’s

repressive measures in Tibetan areas. Chinese authorities arrived at the site of the self-immolation within minutes and seized her body, a source from the region was quoted as saying.

Hailing from Chidortsang household in division four of the Meuruma pastoral area, Tsephe is the fourth of six children born to father Chutho Rinchen and mother Chenpa. Her 60 year old father and 50 year old mother have reportedly been taken away by police, but it is not clear whether they have been detained, according to Kanyag Tsering, a Kirti monastery monk with close contacts in the region.

Tsephe is the 10th Tibetan to self-immolate this year. The last reported self-immolation protest was of Sangye Khar who died after burning himself on 16 December at Amchok town, Sangchu county in nearby Gansu Province.

The Central Tibetan Administration led by Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay has repeatedly urged the Chinese authorities in Tibet to address the genuine grievances of the Tibetan people to alleviate their sufferings. It has said that the blame as well as the solution for the self-immolations lies with the Chinese government and has urged the Chinese government to end its political repression, religious persecution, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization and environmental destruction in Tibet which remain the main causes of the Tibetan self-immolation protests.

At least 134 Tibetans have set themselves on fire inside Tibet since 2009 to protest the Chinese government's repressive measures in Tibet. The Central Tibetan Administration has also consistently appealed to and discouraged Tibetans from drastic actions, including self-immolation, as a form of protest.

Twenty-year-old woman dies after committing self-immolation

By *Lion's Roar* Staff, December 22, 2014

<https://www.lionsroar.com/twenty-year-old-woman-dies-committing-self-immolation/>

The Central Tibetan Administration, based in Northern India, has reported that a twenty-year-old woman named Tsephel died this morning after committing self-immolation. Tsephel's death is the latest in a series of self-immolation spanning back to 2009. Most recently, a 34-year-old man named Sangyal Khar died last week. At a memorial service for Khar, an official from the Central Tibetan Administration said:

“Despite repeated appeals by the Central Tibetan Administration not to resort to drastic actions like self-immolation, at least 133 Tibetans including Sangye Khar have set themselves on fire in protest against the repressive policies of the Chinese government since 2009. Of these 133, 114 have died while the status or the physical condition of the rest remains unknown or critical.”

For more information on Tsephel’s death, visit the Central Tibetan Administration’s website. For more on Tibetan self-immolations, read Robert Thurman’s commentary “A Cry for Freedom,” and see our most recent coverage on the death of Sangyal Khar, last week, and the hospitalization of a man named Kunchok, in September.

Kalsang Yeshi

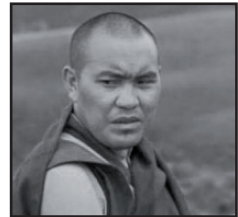
Age: 32

Occupation: monk

Date: 23 December 2014

Place of self-immolation: Tawu, Kardze, Kham

Current status: deceased



China: Monk Burns Himself to Death in a Political Protest

By Andrew Jacobs, *The New York Times*, Dec. 24, 2014

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/25/world/asia/china-monk-burns-himself-to-death-in-a-political-protest.html>

A Tibetan monk died Tuesday after setting himself on fire near his monastery in Sichuan Province, Tibetan exile and advocacy groups said Wednesday. It was the third fatal self-immolation in Tibetan parts of China in less than two weeks. The monk, Kalsang Yeshi, 37, took his life in front of a police station that had been set up to monitor activity at his monastery in Dawu County, in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the organization Free Tibet.

Two Tibetans Shot While Trying to Protect Self-Immolator

RFA News, 2014-12-24

Two Tibetans sustained gunshot wounds while attempting to protect a monk who had self-immolated in protest from authorities in southwestern China's Sichuan province, a source said Wednesday.

Kalsang Yeshe, 38, set himself ablaze on Tuesday outside the Tawu Nyitso monastery in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture's Tawu (Daofu) county, in the second self-immolation protest this week against Beijing's rule in Tibetan-populated areas of China.

Police fired warning shots to disperse a crowd that had gathered to protect Yeshe from authorities as the monk was engulfed in flames, wounding two Tibetans, a former resident of Tawu county named Tawu Tenzin told RFA's Tibetan Service.

Tenzin, who now lives in exile in India, said he had been informed of the shooting by a monk named Tsering—one of the two Tibetans that suffered a bullet wound while attempting to guard Yeshe.

The crowd dispersed after the shooting and police took Yeshe for medical treatment at Dartsedo hospital, but he died en route, sources told RFA.

Later, Yeshe's family tried to retrieve his body from authorities to bury him according to traditional Tibetan rites, but they were told that the monk had been cremated and his ashes discarded in a river in Dartsedo, Tenzin said.

"The relevant officials from the Chinese government did not honor the request of his family members and the abbot of Tawu Nyitso monastery to allow traditional burial rites for the deceased," he said.

Tenzin said that Yeshe held a Tibetan flag, and it was discovered that he placed a ceremonial scarf underneath the image of the Dalai Lama in his room with a caption reading "The six million Tibetans are waiting for you."

Yeshe, a resident of Thewa village in Tawu county's Kunor township, had previously studied at the Ganden Jangtse monastery in South India before returning to Tibet, where he began a campaign against illiteracy among the elderly and "taught Buddhism and the Tibetan language," a local source said.

"He was a well-respected monk," he said.

Prayer sessions

Thousands of nuns, monks and lay people have gathered at Tawu monastery

to hold mass prayer sessions for Yeshe for several days, Tawu Lobsang Jinpa, another former resident of Tawu county, told RFA.

“There was an immense outpouring of support and solidarity for the self-immolator,” he said.

Yeshe’s self-immolation followed a similar protest on Monday, in which a 20-year-old woman named Tsepe died after setting herself ablaze in Ngaba county’s Meruma town in Sichuan’s Ngaba (Aba) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

And on Dec. 16, Sangye Khar, 33, self-immolated in front of a police station in Gansu province’s Sangchu (Xiahe) county in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Both died to protest Chinese policies in Tibetan-populated areas, sources told RFA.

Chinese authorities have tightened controls in a bid to check self-immolation protests, arresting and jailing Tibetans linked to the burnings. Some have been imprisoned for up to 15 years.

Yeshe’s burning brings to 136 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans protesting Chinese rule since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, and is the third to take place this month.

Monk dies after setting himself afire in Tibet

LANS, Dharamsala, India, 24 December 2014

<https://www.tibetsun.com/news/2014/12/24/monk-dies-after-setting-himself-afire-in-tibet>

A Tibetan monk died after he set himself afire protesting against the Chinese government’s repressive policies in Tibet, the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) said Wednesday.

He was the third Tibetan to self-immolate in less than a fortnight, taking the self-immolation toll inside Tibet to 135 since 2009.

Kalsang Yeshi, 32, a monk of Nyatso monastery in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China’s Sichuan Province) set himself on fire Tuesday in front of a police station near his monastery, the CTA said.

“Yeshe raised slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans while burning,” said the CTA, quoting an eyewitness.

Despite the CTA's appeals, at least 135 Tibetans, including Yeshi, have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet.

Out of them, 116 have died while the status or physical condition of the rest continues to remain unknown.

Tibetans spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has lived in India since fleeing his homeland in 1959. The Tibetan administration-in-exile is based in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamshala

Tibetans exiles mourn Kalsang Yeshi's death, offer khatags

By Phuntsok Yangchen, *Phayul*, Thursday, December 25, 2014

DHARAMSHALA, December 25: Tibetans and supporters in Dharamshala today offered Tibetan ceremonial scarves (khatak), lit candles in solidarity with the latest Tibetan to die due to self immolation.

Around a hundred of Tibetans and supporters gathered at Martyrs Pillar at Tsuglakhang, the main temple in McLeod Ganj, to offer prayers and pay respects to Kalsang Yeshi, a 37 year old Tibetan monk of Nyitso Monastery.

"The world including Tibetan government in exile doesn't support self-immolation protests and appealed not to resort to self-immolation protest, yet as a last resort, Tibetans have opted to set themselves on fire as a means to protest against China's repressive policies in Tibet," said Lobsang Yeshi, a member of the Tibetan Parliament, in his address to the gathering.

"But the sad part is Chinese government has responded with more violence and repression because of which the self-immolation is continuing inside Tibet" Yeshi added.

Condemning the Chinese police opening fire on monks trying to stop the police from taking away Kalsang Yeshi's body, he said while shooting of an innocent man elsewhere in the world raises so much hue and cry and media attention, it calls on the world to do justice for Tibetans undergoing huge repression and suffering in Tibet.

On December 23, Kalsang Yeshi, a 37-year-old Tibetan monk of Nyitso Monastery set himself ablaze in front of the police post in the premises of the monastery in Tawu. The Police forcefully cremated Kalsang Yeshi's body in an electric crematorium and family members of the deceased were forced to throw the remains into a river at gunpoint.

Since 2009, 136 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in Tibet protesting against China's occupation of Tibet and its hard line policies.

The event was jointly organized by regional chapters of Tibetan Youth Congress and Tibetans Women's Association and Students for a Free Tibet, India.

Buddhist monk dies in self-Immolation protest in Eastern Tibet

The Tibet Post International, 23 DECEMBER 2014

Dharamshala: - Sources coming out of Tibet say a Tibetan Buddhist monk reportedly died on Tuesday after setting himself on fire in protest against Chinese hard-line policies toward Tibetan people.

"Kalsang Yeshe, a 38-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire in front of a police station in Kham Tawo, eastern Tibet at around 11:30 am local time," Yama Tsering, an exiled Tibetan monk living in South India told the Tibet Post International.

"Yeshe self-immolated in protest against China's repressive policies and shouted slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet," he said, citing anonymous local sources.

The current condition of the monk remains unconfirmed, but it is believed that he is severely injured and may not survive.

Chinese security forces have locked down most parts of the Tibetan plateau because of the wave of self-immolations and protests against Chinese hardline policies.

According to the sources, Chinese security forces arrived at the scene shortly after the protest. He died at the scene and his body was taken away by Chinese authorities.

"The Chinese authorities immediately blocked the Internet, mobile phone, and other communications immediately after the protest," he added.

Yeshe was a monk of Nyitso Monastery in Tawo County, Kham, eastern Tibet (Ch: Daoфу county, Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze, Sichuan province.)

This incident brought the total verified number of self-immolations in Tibet to 135 since February, 2009 and of them 116 were reportedly passed-away due to their severe injuries.

The Tibetan self-immolators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people. Most parts of Tibet have

suffered severe crackdowns and been under heightened restrictions and controls.

The Chinese government has blamed outside forces for the self-immolations, particularly His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration-regarded by China as a subversive.

But, Tibetans have denied such accusations, saying that the main cause of self-immolation is “Beijing’s hard-line policies, including political repression, economic marginalization, environmental destruction, cultural assimilation and denial of religious freedom.”

Chinese government says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but Tibetans say Tibet was virtually independent for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1950s.

Tibetan activist claims Facebook deleted post showing monk’s protest

By Rose Troup Buchanan, *The Independent*, Monday 29 December 2014

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/tibetan-activist-claims-facebook-deleted-post-showing-monks-protest-9948193.html>

A prominent Tibetan writer based in Beijing has claimed Facebook deleted her post of the self-immolation of a monk in a decision that may worry freedom of speech campaigners.

The online controversy comes shortly after creator of the social media giant Mark Zuckerberg made a heavily publicised visit to China and met with the Chinese internet censor Lu Wei.

Tsering Woesser, a prominent activist and writer for the rights of Tibet, claims that a post regarding the self-immolation of 38-year-old monk Kalsang Yeshi – who set fire to himself in protest of the Chinese government’s treatment of the contested region – had been removed from her Facebook page. The post included a link to a video of Mr Yeshi’s death.

Last week Ms Woesser condemned the decision to delete the post, writing on Facebook: “This ban, by deleting this, then banned, deleted, and proceed, then, and then, you know.”

She also compared the Facebook moderation team to a “little secretary” – a reference to an individual who censors material.

A Facebook message initially claimed the post had been deleted because it failed to meet community standards but the social media company yesterday provided a fuller statement to the New York Times.

The statement claimed that as some users' objection to graphic content meant the posts were deleted as the company was "working to give people additional control over the content they see."

"We do not currently have these tools available and as a result we have removed this content," the statement added.

After Facebook's response, Ms Woesser told the Epoch Times that: "I don't know why Facebook deleted the post... I don't know if it was or wasn't political censorship. For me, I've used Facebook six years, and this is the first time I've had a post deleted in such a manner."

Self-immolation has been used by Tibetan monks and activists over the years to protest against the Chinese government's treatment of their country.

Norchuk

Age: 47

Occupation:

Date: 5 March 2015

Place of self-immolation: Trotsuk, Ngaba

Current status: deceased



China: Dalai Lama Supporter Burns Herself in Protest

By Chris Buckley, *The New York Times*, March 9, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/10/world/asia/china-dalai-lama-supporter-burns-herself-in-protest.html>

A Tibetan woman who supported the exiled Dalai Lama set herself ablaze and died in a Tibetan part of southwest China, advocacy organizations abroad said Tuesday. Her self-immolation on Thursday was the first such episode reported in a Tibetan area this year, resuming a grim form of protest against Chinese rule that has spread since 2009. The woman, Norchuk, who was in her late 40s, set herself on fire in her home village in Ngaba County, a heavily Tibetan part of Sichuan Province that is next to the official Tibetan Autonomous Region, according to the exiled Central Tibetan Administration, which is based in northern India. Many Tibetans use only one name.

Tibetan woman self-immolates in China

By AFP, 9:00AM MARCH 10, 2015

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/latest/tibetan-woman-self-immolates-in-china/news-story/0948a8421d3d93d679e32ee2187afa74>

A Tibetan woman has burned herself to death days before the anniversary of a failed uprising against Chinese rule, in the first such incident this year.

The woman aged in her 40s, whose name was given only as Norchuk, set herself alight on Friday near Trotsuk township in Aba county in the southwestern province of Sichuan, the British-based Free Tibet campaign group and US-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA) both said.

It was the first self-immolation in Tibetan areas this year and came days before March 10, the anniversary of the failed uprising in 1959 that led Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee into exile in India.

Norchuk is the 137th Tibetan known to have set themselves on fire since 2008, RFA said at the weekend, and was affiliated with a monastery in the area.

Its Chinese-language report said she had one son and two daughters.

Her body was cremated by the local government, Free Tibet said late on Sunday, "preventing her family and community from carrying out traditional funeral ceremonies".

But an official with the Communist Party's office in Aba county on Monday denied the reports.

"The reports are wrong," she said, adding there had not been any self-immolations in the area in recent days.

Security in many Tibetan areas had been tightened recently, RFA said.

It cited locals as saying the move was aimed at intimidating Tibetans who wanted to celebrate religious observances during the Lunar New Year, and preventing protests on Tuesday's anniversary.

Pictures have emerged on social media of a heavy security presence at Kumbum monastery in Qinghai for the Monlam prayer festival last week, showing dense ranks of uniformed personnel in a courtyard.

Many Tibetans in China accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture, as the country's majority Han ethnic group increasingly moves into historically Tibetan areas.

Self-immolations peaked in the run-up to the ruling Communist Party's pivotal

five-yearly congress in November 2012, and have become less common in recent months.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace laureate, has described the burnings as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Nomad woman dead in 137th Tibet self-immolation since Feb '09

www.TibetanReview.net, 10 March 2015

A 40-year-old Tibetan woman was reported to have torched herself in protest against Chinese rule on Mar 6 in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province. Norchuk, a nomad from the county's Trotsuk Village, was said to have died.

She immolated in a hay barn in her village at 3:30AM, reported *Radio Free Asia* Mar 7, taking the total number of fiery protesters in Tibet since Feb 2009 to 137.

Chinese authorities were reported to have immediately cremated the woman's remains.

Norchuk was said to be associated with the local Dephu Monastery and to have taken a vow recently to turn vegetarian at a mass gathering of nomads from the area's villages. The Tibetan gathering reaffirmed a vow to adhere to virtuous behaviours in their daily lives.

Norchuk's self-immolation came as the Chinese authorities had begun strengthening security measures, including with reinforcement of security deployments in many Tibetan areas, including Ngaba County, ahead of the 56th anniversary Mar 10 of the Tibetan National Uprising.

Tibetan mother of three burns to death in protest against China in restive Ngaba County

By Tenzin Gaphel, *Tibet Express*, 9 March 2015

DHARAMSALA, Mar 9: In the first self-immolation of the year, a Tibetan mother of three has burned herself to death in protest against the Chinese government in restive Ngaba County in eastern Tibet's Amdo Province.

According to sources with contacts in the area, Norchuk, a 47-yr-old Tibetan woman hailing from Dhowa Village in Ngaba County's Trotsek Township set

herself on fire in protest against continued Chinese rule in Tibet on the night of Mar 5, following Chotrul Monlam (the Day of Miracles when Lord Buddha defeated six proponents of other doctrines in a display of miracles at Shravasti on the the 15th day of the first month of Tibetan lunar calendar) celebrations and died on the spot.

Her body was cremated early morning by fellow Tibetan villagers before Chinese authorities could get hold of her body. Heavy restrictions have been imposed in the area following the incident.

Norchuk's self-immolation protest comes amid reports of heightened restrictions and deployment of troops in the Tibetan areas aimed at preventing protests on Mar 10, the 56th anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising of 1959, following which the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama escaped into exile in India.

Born to father Tsedak and mother Youdon, Norchuk has left behind three children from her husband Palzel.

Norchuk became the 136th known Tibetan from inside Tibet to have staged self-immolation protest since February 2009.

Separately, on Mar 8, Gedun Phuntsok, an 18-yr-old old monk of Kirti monastery in Ngaba County carried out a lone protest on the main street of Ngaba Township.

Carrying a portrait of the Dalai Lama adorned with a yellow khatak, Gedun called for the return of His to Tibet, equality and freedom for Tibetans in Tibet.

Within minutes into his solitary protest, Chinese authorities arrested him and took him away. His current whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

Born to father Tagya and mother Rigo, Gedun hails from Ngaba County's Cha Township.

In the evening of Mar 8, Tibetans in Dharamsala held a candle light march here in Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala to express solidarity with Norchuk and Gedun Phuntsok. The march was jointly organized by Students for a Free Tibet-India, Regional Tibetan Youth Congress and Regional Tibetan Women's Association.

Tibetan Woman Burns Herself to Death in Protest Over Chinese Policies

RFA News, 2015-03-07

A 47-year old woman living in a Tibetan county in western China's Sichuan province burned herself to death late Thursday night in a protest against Chinese

policies in Tibetan areas, becoming the 137th known case of self-immolation by Tibetans since the fiery protests began in 2009, sources told RFA's Tibetan service.

The Tibetan woman, Norchuk, set herself ablaze in a hay barn in her village of Trotsuk in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county in the Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. She was a constituent of Tephu monastery and had recently taken a vow to become a lifelong vegetarian, the sources said.

Norchuk's remains were cremated next day by members of her village to prevent them from being taken by authorities, sources said.

She is survived by her husband and by one son and two daughters.

Norchuk's death came amid a heightened security presence in many Tibetan areas that locals say is aimed both at intimidating Tibetans now celebrating religious observances during the Lunar New Year and at preventing protests on the coming March 10 anniversary of a failed 1959 Tibetan revolt against Chinese rule.

Before the Feb. 18 Losar (New Year) holiday, large numbers of Chinese security forces were deployed to Tibetan-populated areas of Sichuan and Qinghai provinces in a bid to deter anti-China protests. The measures included checkpoints examining vehicles on major roads and police equipped with fire extinguishers and have fire trucks standing by to respond to self-immolations.

Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled Tibet into exile in India in the midst of the March 10 uprising, and Beijing has repeatedly accused exiled Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, of stoking dissent against its rule ever since.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Chinese rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008. The self-immolations were committed to show opposition to Beijing's rule and call for the Dalai Lama's return.

Tibetan woman dies after immolating self in Ngaba

Phayul, Sunday, March 08, 2015

A Tibetan woman has died after setting herself ablaze on Friday in Ngaba in protest against Chinese policies in Tibet.

Norchuk, a 47 year old Tibetan nomad from Trotsuk village in Ngaba, became the 137th Tibetan to take up self immolation as a form of protest against Chinese rule since 2009.

Affiliated to Dephu monastery, she recently vowed to turn vegetarian at a mass gathering of nomads from different villages to commit themselves to virtuous behavior.

It is not known if Norchuk raised any slogans during her protest. Local Chinese authorities immediately cremated the body.

The self immolation by Norchuk comes at a time when China steps up security measures to contain any expression of political dissent ahead of the 56th Tibetan National Uprising Day on March 10.

Sources say Chinese security forces have camped in huge numbers in various counties and Tibetan inhabited areas.

The same source said that the intensification of security measures in Tibetan areas had begun even before the Tibetan New Year, and the celebration were marred by the fear of repression even during the Tibetan New Year.

Yeshe Khando

Age: 47

Occupation:

Date: 8 April 2015

Place of self-immolation: Kardze, Kham

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Nun Calling for End to China Rule and Dalai Lama's Return Sets Self on Fire

By Edward Wong, *The New York Times*, April 11, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/12/world/asia/nun-sets-herself-on-fire-to-protest-chinese-rule-in-tibet.html>

BEIJING — A nun set herself on fire in the past week in a Tibetan area of western China to protest Chinese rule and to call for the return of the Dalai Lama from exile, according to two pro-Tibet advocacy groups.

The nun, Yeshe Khando, is believed to have died because of the intensity of the fire. The death could not be confirmed because the police took her away after dousing the flames with fire extinguishers, said the groups, which had spoken with people in the area where the self-immolation occurred on Wednesday.

Yeshi Khando, who was in her 40s and was from Nganggang Nunnery, set herself ablaze near a monastery in the Kardze area of Sichuan Province, known in Chinese as Ganzi. She was the second woman to set herself on fire this year and the 138th Tibetan to do so since 2009 in Tibetan regions ruled by China, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, an advocacy group based in Washington.

The protesters acted largely out of anger and frustration at what they call the Chinese occupation of their homeland, according to the groups, which are based outside China.

The group said on Friday that the nun had taken part in many peaceful protests since 2008, when [uprisings against Chinese rule](#) took place across the Tibetan plateau. Local and central officials of the Chinese Communist Party then imposed a wide security clampdown across the plateau, and that has continued, especially in parts of Sichuan Province, since the self-immolations began in 2009.

The party chief of the Tibet Autonomous Region, which is what China calls the vast central Tibetan plateau west of the Tibetan areas of Sichuan, said this month that monasteries and nunneries had to teach loyalty to the party.

On Wednesday, People's Daily, the official party newspaper, published an article by the party chief, Chen Quanguo, saying the party would work to ensure that "model harmonious monasteries" and "patriotic, law-abiding monks and nuns" are the norm in Tibet, according to Agence France-Presse. Mr. Chen wrote that all monasteries and nunneries must display the Chinese flag and have telephone service, newspapers and reading rooms, and that more propaganda activities would be held so that monks and nuns could "educate themselves in patriotism."

Party officials have been vocal about exerting greater control over the spiritual life of Tibet. Last month, officials at an annual political conclave in Beijing said that the 14th Dalai Lama, who is 79 and lives in exile in India, must reincarnate and that [the ultimate authority over the process](#) was in the hands of the party and the central Chinese government. The Dalai Lama, however, has said he may be the last one or his successor may be found outside Chinese-ruled Tibet.

Chinese officials maintain that the Tibetans who have set themselves on fire are mentally unstable or have been manipulated by India's "Dalai clique."

Free Tibet, a London-based advocacy group, said the nun walked around Kardze Monastery on Wednesday and set herself on fire at 9 a.m. near the Kardze County police station. The group said that while she was on fire, she shouted the slogan "Let His Holiness return to Tibet" and others.

“While many Tibetans are turning to other forms of protest, Yeshe Khando’s action shows us that some still feel self-immolation is the only way to express the depth of their grievance,” Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren, director of Free Tibet, said in a written statement. “Once again, we hear calls for Tibetan freedom and for the country to be reunited with its spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.”

Rights groups: Tibetan nun sets herself on fire

By *AP News*, 12th April 2015

<https://asiancorrespondent.com/2015/04/rights-groups-tibetan-nun-sets-herself-on-fire/>

BEIJING (AP) — Overseas Tibetan rights groups say a nun has set herself on fire to protest Beijing’s control over the region in the latest in dozens of self-immolations by Tibetans in recent years.

London-based Free Tibet said Friday that Yeshe Khando circled a monastery and then self-immolated while calling out slogans including “Tibet needs freedom.”

The Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet also reported the immolation, but used a slightly different spelling for the nun’s name.

The groups says security personnel and police used extinguishers to put out the flames and took Yeshe Khando away, and that local sources believed she died.

A woman reached at the Ganzi county government denied that any self-immolation happened on Wednesday and hung up. Calls to the county police office rang unanswered.

Nun becomes 138th Tibetan to self-immolate to protest Chinese rule

www.TibetanReview.net, 12 April 12 2015

A 47-year-old Tibetan Buddhist nun is believed to have died after she set herself on fire in Karze (Chinese: Ganzi) county-town, Sichuan Province, on Apr 8 in protest against Chinese rule. Yeshe Khando, of Chogri Ngangang Nunnery from neighbouring Draggo (Luhuo) County, was reported to have shouted prayers wishing long-life for Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and called for his return home. She had also called for freedom for Tibetan people and unity among them as she burned and collapsed to the ground.

The incident was reports to have occurred at around 09:00 am near the local police station and detention centre which were both close to Karze Monastery.

She completed a circumambulation of the Karze Monastery before setting herself on fire, *Radio Free Asia* (Washington) Apr 10 quoted a local source as saying. Chinese police arrived on the scene shortly later and took her away.

Although she was reported to have burned intensely, it was not clear whether she actually died. The police were reported to have summoned the nun's family the next day to tell them she had died while refusing to hand over her body to them.

Yeshe Khando is the 138th Tibetan to have self-immolated in Chinese ruled Tibet since Feb 2009.

Nun self-immolates in Tibet while appealing for return of Dalai Lama
AFP, AP, By Kwok Man-kit Published: 11 April 2015

A nun set herself on fire while crying out for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet in the latest in a series of self-immolations by Tibetans protesting against Beijing's control over the region, overseas rights groups said.

Yeshe Khando walked around Kardze monastery and then set herself alight on Wednesday near the Ganzi county police station in Sichuan, the British-based Free Tibet group, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and US-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA) said.

The 47-year-old nun "called for the return of the Dalai Lama and also for his long life", RFA reported, citing anonymous sources. "She also called for freedom for Tibet."

RFA said that those present did not believe that she survived. Her body was quickly removed by security forces and her family was summoned by the police on Thursday, Free Tibet said.

Police and local officials refused to comment on the incident.

Veteran China watcher Johnny Lau Yui-siu said uncertainty over the Dalai Lama's return had been depressing his followers in Tibet, which was leading to aggressive responses such as immolation.

Without any breakthroughs on greater Tibetan autonomy, the frustration would continue, he said.

But Lau said an individual immolation case would not lead to similar incidents. "In Tibet, the radicals are still in the minority," he said.

Last week, Tibet's Communist Party secretary Chen Quanguo ordered Tibetan monasteries to display Chinese flags and to vow to assess Buddhist monks and

nuns for their “patriotism”.

There have been more than 130 cases of Tibetans setting themselves on fire in the country since 2009, most of them fatal, both the ICT and RFA said. Self-immolations peaked in the run-up to the Communist Party’s five-yearly congress in November 2012, but have become less common since then.

Beijing condemns the acts and blames them on the Dalai Lama, saying he uses them to further a separatist agenda.

The Dalai Lama has described the self-immolations as acts of desperation that he is powerless to stop.

Tibetan nun sets herself ablaze in Kardze

Phayul, Friday, April 10, 2015

DHARAMSHALA, April 10: A Tibetan nun has set herself ablaze in Kardze County on Wednesday taking the total number of self immolation by Tibetans since 2009 to 138, reported the Tibet Times.

Yeshe Khando, 42, shouted slogans calling for the return of the exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama to Tibet, freedom in Tibet and the Dalai Lama’s long life as she doused herself in gasoline and set fire to her body, according to a Tibetan exile named Lobsang Tenzin.

Within minutes into her fiery protest, police on patrol arrived with fire extinguishers and doused the fire, eye witnesses have told exile sources.

Family members of Khando were summoned to the police station but were neither handed over her body nor given any update on her present condition.

There is no confirmed information about whether she survived the self immolation. However, eye witnesses have said it was unlikely that she would be alive going by the burns she sustained before being taken away by the police.

Yeshe Khando is a nun of Jhomo Monastery in Kardze. She is a native of Draksur village, Drango County. She was lovingly called Yeyang by fellow nuns and her family.

A Tibetan woman has died after setting herself ablaze on Friday in Ngaba in protest against Chinese policies in Tibet.

Two days before the March Tenth Tibetan uprising anniversary last month, a 47 year old Tibetan woman named Norchuk died after immolating herself.

Tibetan Nun Yeshi Khando Died in Self-immolation (updated)

www.tibet.net, April 20, 2015

DHARAMSHALA: Yeshi Khando, a Tibetan nun self-immolated on 8 April whose state remained unknown has now been confirmed of death according to a reliable source.

Yeshi Khando, also known as Yeyang, was a 47-year-old daughter of father Sherab and mother Sonam Dolma, who hailed from Drangsur village in Tsonggo township, Drango County, Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province). She burned herself near Kubum-Shap police station after taking a circumambulation of Kardze monastery at around 09:00 am.

During her self-immolation protest, she raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans. She also shouted prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and called for unity amongst the Tibetan people.

Chinese security forces arrived shortly after the incident and seized her body. It was reported that the family might get the deceased's ashes after a few days.

Yeshi Khando had been on retreat since few years and was known to be calm and composed, yet always took keen interest in the Tibetan freedom struggle.

Nun sets herself on fire in Tibet in protest against Beijing's control over region

ANI, Washington, 12 April 2015

A nun in Tibet has set herself on fire in an act of self-immolation protesting Beijing's control over the region and crying out for the Dalai Lama to return to the country, said overseas rights groups.

According to Fox News, Yeshi Khando, 47, of Ngangang Nunnery circled Kardze Monastery in Sichuan province self-immolated herself on Wednesday near the police station while shouting slogans including "Tibet needs freedom," said London-based Free Tibet.

In a reference to the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader who has lived for decades in exile in India, she called out "Let His Holiness Return to Tibet" as she was on fire, said the group.

The Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet also reported

the immolation, but used a slightly different spelling for the nun's name.

Tibetan monks and nuns are among the most active opponents of Chinese rule in the region and face some of the harshest restrictions on their activities.

Ney Kyab / Nyi Kyab

Age: 45

Occupation:

Date: 16 April 2015

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Dies After Setting Himself on Fire in Protest

By Chris Buckley, *The New York Times*, April 17, 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/18/world/asia/tibetan-dies-after-setting-himself-on-fire-in-protest.html>

HONG KONG — A man set himself on fire in a heavily Tibetan region of southwest China this week, leaving behind a makeshift shrine that included a photo of the Dalai Lama, international groups reported on Friday. He was the second Tibetan to set himself on fire in a protest in the last two weeks and the 139th within China since the practice began among Tibetans in February 2009.

The man, Nyi Kyab, 45, was a former Buddhist monk and died on Thursday in Ngaba County in Sichuan Province, said Free Tibet, an organization that advocates the self-determination of Tibet. He left behind seven children, said Free Tibet and other groups, citing information from exiled Buddhist monks.

“He had set up an altar on the outside wall of his home, carrying family photographs and pictures of the exiled Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, the most senior figures of Tibetan Buddhism,” said Free Tibet.

As fire engulfed Nyi Kyab, he called for the Dalai Lama to be allowed back from exile and for the Chinese government to free the Panchen Lama, the second-ranking lama. In 1995, the Chinese government took a boy into custody who had been recognized by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama, and appointed its own choice, whom many Tibetans reject.

Ngaba County, called Aba County in Chinese, is one of the Tibetan areas of

China troubled by tension and protest over the Chinese government's policies, especially controls on Tibetan Buddhism and the campaign against the Dalai Lama and his demands for Tibetan self-determination. The Chinese government laid out those positions in a summary of claims published this week.

"Investigations by China's public security organs into incidents of self-immolation revealed clearly that they are being manipulated and instigated at the highest level by the Dalai group," the Chinese summary said.

The Dalai Lama and his supporters adamantly denied any role in the protests.

Last week, a Tibetan Buddhist nun set herself on fire in a Tibetan area of Sichuan Province to protest Chinese rule and to call for the return of the Dalai Lama, who fled into exile in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet.

Second Self-immolation in Tibet this Month

www.tibet.net, April 17, 2015

DHARAMSHALA: According to a reliable source, Ney Kyab, a Tibetan man set himself ablaze to death on Thursday morning, 16 April. He was the second Tibetan to self-immolate this month, becoming the 138th Tibetan since 2009 to self-immolate in protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies and intensive grip over Tibet.

Ney Kyab, 45, also known as Damkar, was father to seven children and son of deceased parents Naymo and Kartema. He was originally from Adué Yultso, Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county in the Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Before committing his fiery protest, Kyab paid a pilgrimage to Kriti monastery. He placed photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama along with the photos of his seven children on the altar, decorated with Tibetan religious offerings.

During the self-immolation, he called out for the return of the exiled spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama and release of the 11th Panchen Lama.

The 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was abducted along with his family by the Chinese authorities three days after he was recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama on 14 May 1995. Their whereabouts and well-being remain unknown since then.

To honour the act of the self-immolators, last year he initiated a campaign not to indulge oneself in disputes amongst the Tibetans and called for unity. He was highly recognised by the local people.

Tibetan father of seven dies after self-immolation protest in restive Ngaba county

By Tenzin Gaphel, *Tibet Express*, 20 April 2015

DHARAMSALA, Apr 20: Ney Kyab, a 45-yr-old Tibetan father of seven children has died after setting himself on fire on Apr 16 in restive Ngaba County in eastern Tibet.

Before setting himself alight, Ney Kyab, also known as Dhamkar had placed portraits of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the 10th Panchen Lama along with photographs of his seven children on a makeshift altar set up outside his house and made decorated them with flowers and religious offerings.

Though the slogans raised by Ney Kyab could not be independently confirmed as he staged his fiery protest in the early hours of Apr 16, several Tibetan media in exile have reported that while he was engulfed in flames, he called for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be allowed to return to Tibet and release of the 11th Pachen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima who was abducted as a boy by Chinese authorities few days after he was recognized as the reincarnation of the late 10th Panchen Lama by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in May 1995. Ney Kyab succumbed to his burn injuries.

Chinese police arrived at the protest site, took his charred body to a nearby police station and refused to return the body to his family members. Police also detained the victim's brother Ney Gang and brother-in-law Tsering Samdup for further interrogation.

Ney Kyab, a native of Gyadhe Village in Adhue Township in Ngaba County was a former monk of Adhue monastery. Born to father Ney Mo and mother Kardema, Ney Kyab was presented with the Peace Award by an association of 42 monasteries in Ngaba for taking a vow not to indulge in violence and fights with fellow Tibetans, and for promoting world peace and unity among fellow Tibetans. He was known for initiating discussions under the pseudonym Khawai Dhondup on instant messaging application, Wechat on world peace, unity among Tibetans and following the advice of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Ney Kyab became the third Tibetan to have self-immolated in 2015 and the second this month. His self-immolation has pushed the total number of such protests from inside Tibet to 138 since February 2009.

While requesting Tibetans to refrain from drastic measures, including self-immolation, the Central Tibetan Administration (earlier known as Tibetan

Government-in-Exile) based here in Dharamsala has repeatedly urged the Chinese government to address the grievances of the Tibetan people. It said the wave of self-immolation protests by Tibetans inside Tibet was a result of unfavourable and repressive policies carried out in Tibet.

Chinese government, on the other hand maintains that the protests were “instigated” by the Tibetan spiritual leader and his followers in exile.

Tenzin Gyatso

Age: 35

Occupation:

Date: 20 May 2015

Place of self-immolation: Tawu, Kardze, Kham

Current status: deceased



Tawu Tibetan self-immolates after China attacked Dalai Lama commemoration

www. TibetanReview.net, May21, 2015

The number of self-immolations in Tibet since Feb 2009 by Tibetans protesting against Chinese rule has touched 140 with Tenzin Gyatso, a 35-year-old father of four, setting himself ablaze in Tawu (Chinese: Daofu) County of Kardze (Ganzi) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on May 20. The incident occurred at around 8:00 pm near the government buildings of the county’s Khangsar Township, said several online Tibetan and other media reports.

Chinese police arrived on the scene very soon and took the man away. Four girls – Tashi Dolma, Tsering, Choetso, and Rigzin Lhamo – were also taken away following a tussle for custody of the burned man, reported *Radio Free Asia* (Washington) May 22. Police informed the man’s family in the afternoon of the next day that he had succumbed to his burns.

Tenzin Gyatso’s self-immolation followed weeks of harassment and intimidation of the local Tibetans after the arrival of a new deputy governor in the county, the report said. He was reported to have launched a crackdown on Tibetans suspected of planning to organize alleged ‘separatist activities’, including celebrations to mark the 80th birthday of Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The report quoted a local source as saying the new deputy governor of the

county ordered Tibetans to sign undertakings not to hold celebrations, beating and forcibly shaving the heads of those who refused to sign. He also held parades by Chinese security forces to intimidate the local Tibetans.

Tenzin Gyatso was said to be upset that Chinese security forces had been sent to the township few days earlier to prevent Tibetans from holding celebrations marking the 80th birthday of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, according to *Radio Free Asia* (Washington) May 21.

According to *VoaTibetanEnglish.com* May 21, Tibetans in Tawu County had gathered a few days before the incident to organize a political and educational awareness programme on Tibetan identity and culture as a tribute to the Dalai Lama ahead of his 80th birthday in July. Chinese authorities were reported to have objected to the event and sent in police and paramilitary police who at once set out to beat the Tibetans. Some who objected to the unprovoked brutal attack by the Chinese were taken away. Tibetans made repeated appeals for their release, but without success, leaving many of them very disappointed.

Following the self-immolation incident, Chinese security forces were reported to have carried out searches; interrogated, harassed and beat up some, and taken away several Tibetans for what they said were disapproving looks on their faces.

As happens after every such incident, the Chinese rushed extra security personnel to the township and imposed restrictions on the movement and communication access of the residents.

Tenzin Gyatso is the fourth Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet this year and the sixth in Tawu County overall. He was preceded in Tawu by monk Tsewang Norbu on Aug 15, 2011; nun Palden Chotso on Nov 3, 2011; Wanchen Dolma on Jun 11, 2013; Trinlay Namgyal on Apr 15, 2014, and monk Kalsang Yeshe on Dec 23, 2014.

Father of Four Sets Self on Fire in Tawu, dies (update)

www.tibet.net, May 21, 2015

DHARAMSHALA: Tenzin Gyatso, a father of four children in his mid thirties, died after setting himself on fire around 8:00 p.m on 20 May in an apparent protest against the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet.

The fiery protest took place in Khangsar township of Tawu (Ch: Daofu) County, Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (incorporated into China's Sichuan Province).

The self-immolation is believed to be an expression of protest by Gyatso against a massive deployment of security forces in Tawu County, where Tibetans have been planning to celebrate the upcoming 80th birthday of the Dalai Lama.

“He staged his protest near a bridge close to government buildings in Khangsar,” a source reportedly told media persons in exile. “While he was burning, security personnel stationed in the area rushed to put out the fire and took him away,” he said.

It is currently unclear as to whether Tenzin Gyatso has survived the self-immolation. Gyatso has a wife Sonam Dolma and four young children.

Following the self-immolation protest, additional numbers of security personnel were deployed in Khangsar, and restrictions on movement and communications have been imposed in the area, reports say.

Since 2009, at least 139 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in protest against the Chinese government’s repressive policies in Tibet. Most of the self-immolators have called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Father of Four Self-Immolates in Kham Tawu

VOA News, 21 May 2015

A Tibetan man set himself on fire in an apparent protest against the persistent crackdown by Chinese security forces in the Tibetan county of Tawu, located in today’s Sichuan Province.

35 year old Tenzin Gyatso, a father of four, carried out his self-immolation protest outside a government meeting building in Khangsar town at approximately 8pm local time. Sources say that the police arrived within minutes and took him away in a badly burnt state.

His whereabouts and condition are unknown at present. In several past incidences when a protester was seized by security forces while still alive, their families were denied access to their loved ones and then informed the following day that the person had died and been cremated during the night. This practice by the Chinese authorities has been deeply hurtful to the families and communities of the protester as it both creates suspicion on the nature of the death, and deprives families from being able to carry out proper religious rites that are an important part of Tibetan cultural practice. Such harsh responses from the Chinese authorities in the aftermath of self-immolation protests have largely been viewed by Tibetans as having exacerbated existing distrust and discontent

that Tibetans feel towards Chinese policies and actions, which they see as being the cause of Tibetan unrest and protest in the first place.

According to a VOA source, people in Tawu county had recently marked the Dalai Lama's upcoming 80th birthday by organizing a peaceful awareness event on Tibetan identity and culture which was broken up a large number of armed police and paramilitary forces who carried out beatings and detentions without any apparent provocations or reasons given. The county had been in a tense state since the police action and numerous appeals made by local Tibetans for the release of the detained individuals had gone unanswered. Sources in the exile Tibetan community speculate that the heightened sense of injustice and frustration felt by Tibetans in the region may have been a catalyst for Tenzin Gyatso's self-immolation.

His wife Sonam Dolma, and his four children; Topten, Thupten, Tsering Tsomo, and Tsewang Gyatso, have not received any information of Gyato's current condition to date.

Gyatso's self-immolation brings the total number of known self-immolations in the same county to six since 2011. There have been over 140 such protests in Tibet and Tibetan areas since 2009, which have prompted both the United States and the United Nations to urge China to address.

The US State Department has stated that, "The United States wants to see these kinds of tragic acts of self-immolation come to an end. And we continue to both publicly and privately to urge the Chinese government at all levels to address policies in Tibet, in Tibetan areas, that have created tensions and that threaten the distinct religious, cultural and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people." The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay urged Beijing to address the long-standing Tibetan grievances that have led to an escalation in protests and the self-immolations.

Man immolates self in Tawu County

Phayul, Thursday, May 21, 2015

DHARAMSHALA, May 21: A Tibetan man from Khangsar township in Tawu County, eastern Tibet, has set himself ablaze, becoming the 140th Tibetan to self immolate to protest against Chinese government authorities since 2009.

Tenzin Gyatso, 35, set himself afire on Wednesday evening (8PM local time) in protest against massive deployment of Chinese security forces in Tawu County

where Tibetans have been planning to celebrate the 80th birthday of the exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama .

Sources said Gyatso carried out the fiery protest outside the venue of the meeting of governmental officials. Policemen arrived at the site immediately and took away the charred remains of Gyatso. Due to heavy restriction on communication it is not known if he is alive or dead.

Chinese authorities in the county are weary of protests that stem from huge gatherings of Tibetans. Officials from various government departments have carried out various campaigns to “politically reeducate” the Tibetans.

Gyatso is a father of four and married to Sonam Dolma.

The last person to self-immolate in Tawu is Kalsang Yeshe. Yeshe died after setting ablaze on Dec 22 in front of a police post in the premises of the monastery.

The Tibetan government in exile maintains that the self-immolations “represent a new threshold of Tibetan despair and resentment” and attributes the current crisis in Tibet to China’s policies of “political and religious repression, economic marginalization, social discrimination, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction in Tibet.” However, China blames the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama for instigating the self-immolation protests inside Tibet.

Sangye Tso

Age: 36

Occupation:

Date: 27 May 2015

Place of self-immolation: Chone, Kanlho

Current status: deceased



Tibetan mother-of-two stages self-immolation protest against China

South China Morning Post, Kyodo, 28 May, 2015

A Tibetan woman set fire to herself in a protest against Chinese repression in northwestern Gansu province in the second such protest this month, according to a Tibetan rights watchdog and reports on Thursday.

The US-based International Campaign for Tibet said Sangye Tso, a 36-year-old mother of two, staged the protest outside a Chinese government building in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on Wednesday and is believed to have

died.

Tibetan sources in exile were quoted as saying that the government building is a local symbol of Chinese oppression.

Armed police raided the homes of her family and detained some of her relatives, the sources said.

Last week, Tenzin Gyatso, a 25-year-old father of four, set himself on fire and died near a government building in Daofu county of the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in a protest against the deployment of Chinese forces in the area to put off celebrations of the 80th birthday of exiled Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama, Tibetan news portal Phayul reported.

Including Sangye, 141 Tibetans are known to have protested against Chinese repression through immolation since 2009. Among them, 115 have died.

The Tibetans call for the return from exile of the Dalai Lama, who is vilified by China as a “separatist” for seeking autonomy for the Tibetan people.

China has blamed the Dalai Lama “clique” for orchestrating the string of self-immolation protests and rejected Tibetans’ claims of repression.

Tibetan Mother Self-Immolates in China

VOA News, May 27, 2015

A Tibetan mother of two set herself on fire Wednesday to protest China’s repressive policies towards Tibetans.

Sangye Tso, 36, self-immolated in front of a Chinese security and re-education building located within the compound of Choparshing monastery in the Chinese province of Gansu.

Sources say police arrived within minutes of the incident and took her away. It is unclear if Sangye Tso was alive when she was taken into custody.

In recent cases of self-immolation, the protesters have been taken away still alive, with the authorities informing their families the next day that their loved ones had died and been cremated during the night. Tibetans view this practice as a form of punishment since it robs the family of the opportunity to cremate their loved ones according to Tibetan traditions.

There have been more than 140 such acts in Tibetan areas since 2009, but the protests have been less frequent in recent months, following the imposition of fines and other penalties for families and others with close ties to self-immolators.

Mother of 2 dead as Tibet self-immolations cross 140

www.TibetanReview.net, 29 May 2015

A mother of two has died on May 27 in the second protest self-immolation in Chinese ruled Tibet this month, taking the total of such gruesome protesters there since Feb 2009 to 141. The latest incident took place outside a police complex built by the Chinese in a monastery compound in Chone County of Kanlho Prefecture, Gansu Province. Teachings were going on for Saga Dawa Buddhist festival, said International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) May 27.

Sangye Tso, a 36-year-old mother of two, torched herself around 4am in front of a Chinese security and re-education building located in the compound of Tashi Choeorling Monastery in Choparshing Village, Dorkok Township, said ICT and VOA May 27.

Various online media and other reports said the woman either burned to death or died in custody of the Chinese police who quickly took her, or her remains, away after the incident.

Following the incident, Chinese police and other officials visited the home of the deceased to conduct an investigation, reported Radio Free Asia (Washington) May 27. ICT cited local sources as saying some of the relatives of the deceased were detained by the paramilitary People's Armed Police Force.

She is survived by her husband Tamdin Wangyal, son Tsering Dhondub and daughter Khatso. A message sent on social media indicated that family and friends were concerned about Tso after she left a message prior to her self-immolation, speaking about the current situation in Tibet, said the ICT statement.

As happens after every such incident, China rushed security forces to the area, cut off communication links, and imposed tight restrictions on the movement of the local residents, rendering the obtaining of any further information impossible.

This was the first protest self-immolation incident in Chone. The area has seen protests by Tibetans during the 2008 Tibetan uprising and it led to each of the 400 monks of Choeorling Monastery being fined 5,000 yuan by the authorities, said the voatibetanenglish.com report. It added that three of its monks were jailed for 15 years each while some lay people were also believed to be still in jail for their involvement in the 2008 protests.

Before Sangye Tso, Tenzin Gyatso, a 35-year-old father of four, had set himself on fire and died on May 20 in Khangsar Township of Tawu (Daofu) County in Karze (Ganzi) Prefecture, Sichuan province.

Two Tibetan Monks Linked to Self-Immolation Are Sentenced in a Secret Trial

RFA News, 2016-09-20

Two Tibetan monks linked to a 2015 self-immolation protest in northwestern China's Gansu province have been handed prison terms of a year-and-a-half each in a secret trial, Tibetan sources say.

Jinpa Gyatso and Kelsang Monlam, both monks at the Labrang monastery, were sentenced on Sept. 12 by a court in Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county, a Tibetan living in the area told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"They were suspected of involvement in the self-immolation of Sangye Tso on May 27, 2015," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Jinpa was detained in June 2015 in Sangchu county's main town, and Monlam was taken from his room in handcuffs the same month," the source said. "Their parents and relatives were not informed of the charges made against them."

Two other monks were taken into custody at about the same time, but were released after being held and questioned for several days, he said. "Jinpa Gyatso comes from Bora town in Sangchu county, and Monlam comes from Chone [Zhuoni] county," he said.

Sangye Tso, aged about 36, set herself ablaze outside Chone county police headquarters in the early hours of May 27, 2015 in a challenge to Chinese rule in Tibetan areas, sources in exile told RFA in earlier reports, citing local contacts.

Tso, whose charred body was quickly removed from the protest site by authorities, was survived by her husband Tamdrin Wangyal and by a son named Tsering Dondrub and a daughter named Khatso, sources said.

Information, images shared

Separately, the Dharamsala, India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy confirmed the sentences, saying that Gyatso, aged about 39, and Monlam, 37, had been convicted of "sharing online information and images" related to Tso's protest.

"Both Jinpa and Kelsang are being held at Menkar Prison in Sangchu County," TCHRD said.

Sporadic demonstrations challenging Beijing's rule have continued in Tibetan-populated areas of China since widespread protests swept the region in 2008.

A total of 145 Tibetans living in China have now set themselves ablaze in self-

immolations since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009, with most protests featuring calls for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama's return from India, where he has lived since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

Sonam Topgyal

Age: 26

Occupation: monk

Date: 9 July 2015

Place of self-immolation: Kyegudo, Yulshul, Kham

Current status: deceased



The last message:

To the leaders of the Chinese Government and particularly to the local heads of the minorities; I am the twenty-seven-year-old son of Tashitsang of Nangchen, Yulshul in Tso.ngon region. Currently, I am a monk studying at Dzongsar Institute.

As people within the country and outside are aware, the Chinese government does not look at the true and actual situation of the minorities but practices only harsh and repressive policies on them. At a time when the government is carrying out policies to stamp out our religion, tradition and culture, and destroy our natural environment, there is absolutely no freedom of expression for the people, and there is no channel to talk about our situation and file our complaints.

Furthermore, every time the people try to report truth about their situation and file any complaint, instead of providing solutions, the authorities retaliate with more crackdowns and arrests. Through various deceptive regulations, the government also prevents monks and nuns from joining religious institutions. In a nutshell, they are carrying policies to completely wipe out the minorities.

Our chief goal is for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to be able to return to the Potala Palace. I sacrifice my life to prove to the world and especially the people of China and the Chinese authorities that we have absolutely no power or channels to talk about injustices being done to us.

My Tibetans brothers and sisters of the same blood, please do not remain aloof as if you have seen or heard nothing. Be united, be strong and work hard for our just struggle so we win in the end.

Written on 1 July 2015 just as the sun was rising: Sonam Topgyal'

(Translated from Tibetan by Bhuchung D Sonam)

Tibetan monk sets self on fire in Kyegundo

By Tenzin Gaphel, *Tibet Express*, 10 July 2015

Sonam Topgyal, a 26-yr-old Tibetan Buddhist monk has set himself on fire in eastern Tibet in an apparent protest against China's repressive rule in Tibet.

Sonam Tobgyal staged his protest through self-immolation around 6pm (local time) on Jul 9 at the main square in Kyegundo in Yushul Prefecture in traditional Tibetan Province of Kham.

Out of three pictures received from Tibet, two of them show Sonam burning in flames near what looks like a flagpole with several onlookers nearby with mobile phones in hands and another one shows Chinese police condoning of the area.

"Chinese police arrived within minutes at the protest site and took him away, probably to a hospital," said a Tibetan source.

Sonam Topgyal's condition and whereabouts remain unknown and due to the restrictions placed on communication channels such phone and internet lines in the area, details about the incident could not be ascertained immediately.

Sonam Topgyal became the sixth Tibetan to have self-immolated this year against Chinese rule in Tibet and the 142nd known Tibetan to have self-immolated inside Tibet since February 2009 when Tapey, a monk of Kirti monastery set himself on fire in eastern Tibet.

The latest self-immolation protest comes a day after the United States House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution calling on Chinese government to address the critical human rights situation in Tibet and to hold 'substantive dialogue, without preconditions, in order to address Tibetan grievances and secure a negotiated agreement for the Tibetan people'.

Buddhist monk sets himself alight in public square in Tibet – reports

By Vicky Wong, *Hong Kong Free Press*, 14 July 2015

Photos have emerged of a Buddhist monk reportedly setting himself alight in a public square in Tibet.

Twenty-six year-old Sonam Topgyal "self-immolated" at around 6pm on Thursday July 9 at Gesar Square in Kyegudo in Yulshul County, Eastern Tibet, according to Radio Free Asia, which is backed by the US government. His action was an apparent protest against the Chinese government's stance on Tibet.

According to the International Campaign for Tibet, an NGO which monitors

human rights issues in the region, the incident is the sixth burning to have taken place this year. The total number of self-immolations by Tibetans in China since 2009 has now reached 142, according to the NGO.

Several news outlets reported that Topgyal's self-immolation led to an immediate security clampdown as communications in the area were disrupted.

Topgyal was reported to have been taken away by security forces following his protest. Some news outlets reported that he was taken to a hospital but his condition and whereabouts remain unknown. Tsering Woesser, a prominent Tibetan activist, claimed on Facebook last week that Topgyal had died.

Radio Free Asia reported that Topgyal was the son of a well-known local businessman called Nangchen Tashi. Tashi is unpopular with the Chinese authorities due to his support for Tibetan language and culture.

According to Voice of America, tensions have been brewing in the Kyegudo area since an earthquake struck the region in 2010, killing thousands of people and destroying much of the town. The website goes on to say that the earthquake prompted land grabs as developers struck deals with the local authorities. Tibetans were said to have been removed from plots that they have owned for generations.

Radio Free Asia reported that Tashi's home and business were unscathed during the earthquake but the family home was demolished by Chinese authorities in 2012 as part of a road-widening scheme. At the time, the family – including Topgyal – were briefly detained and Tashi went missing for a week. He was reportedly tortured by police.

Self-immolations by Tibetans have been recorded since 2009 when a young monk self-immolated in a marketplace in Ngawa City in Sichuan. Last week, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution urging China to improve human rights in the autonomous region and called for substantive dialogue between Beijing and the Dalai Lama.

Qinghai, relatives of lama who self-immolated are arrested for asking for his body

AsiaNews, 16 July 2015

Xining (AsiaNews) - Chinese authorities have arrested the parents and siblings of the Tibetan Monk who died last week from burns in an act of self-immolation, on 9 July in Kyengudo, in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Yulshul to

protest against the Chinese government.

A Tibetan source speaking to *Radio Free Asia* says Sonam Topgyal - the name of the member, whose identity was unknown on the day of the facts - died July 10 in a hospital in Xining, capital of Qinghai Province, where he was transported by the Chinese police.

When the family of the deceased requested the return of his body for burial, the Chinese authorities refused to make and arrested his parents and five siblings. Nangchen Tashi, the monks father, is a local businessman who is very unpopular with the Chinese government for his support for the Tibetan language and culture.

After the self-immolation, which took place in the main square of Kyegudo, police ordered restrictive measures throughout the city and disrupted communications. As of 9 July, anyone who wants to refuel in the city must obtain a permit from the Local Government.

Latest Tibetan Self-Immolator Slams China's Policies in Written Final Message

RFA News, 2015-07-17

Beijing's policies in Tibetan-populated areas of China are rapidly destroying Tibet's religion and culture and are harming the region's environment, according to a final testament written by a Tibetan monk before his death in a fiery protest early this month in Qinghai.

Writing in a document left behind in a prayer book, and later discovered in his living quarters by his family, self-immolator Sonam Topgyal slams China's "brutal and repressive policy aimed at eradicating and exterminating [Tibet's] religion, customs, and cultural tradition."

"The Tibetan people have no freedom of expression. There is nowhere we can go to lodge our complaints," says the document, which was written on June 1 "at sunrise" and addressed to "the leaders of the People's Republic of China in general, and to the Chinese leaders of the [Tibetan] ethnic minority in particular."

China's policies "are also resulting in environmental destruction" in Tibetan areas, the document says.

Topgyal, 27, set himself ablaze at about 6:00 p.m. on July 9 in the central square of Kyegudo in the Yulshu (in Chinese, Yushu) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, prompting an immediate security clampdown, including a disruption of communications in the area, sources told RFA in earlier reports.

He died next day in a hospital in the Qinghai provincial capital Xining.

‘Testimony to the world’

Following their release on July 13 after briefly being held by authorities, Topgyal’s family members went to clean his living quarters, Konchog Dondrub, a Yulshul native now living in India, told RFA’s Tibetan Service on Thursday.

“There, they found a one-page written will tucked inside his prayer book,” Dondrub said, citing contacts in the region.

The authorities routinely impose restrictions on Tibetan religious and cultural practices, says the document, a copy of which was recently obtained by RFA.

“And Tibetans who petition for the welfare of their people are met with repression and arrest,” the document says.

“The Chinese have never shown any consideration of the [Tibetan] people’s welfare or wishes by addressing their concerns.”

“I had to sacrifice my life to bear testimony to the world, and particularly to the Chinese government and people, that we have no freedom to express our grievances or tell the truth,” Topgyal wrote.

“I appeal to my Tibetan brothers and sisters, who have the same lineage and blood, to muster the power of unity and harmony by working toward resolving Tibetan issues in a concerted effort.”

Topgyal’s self-immolation brings to 142 the total number of burnings by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama began in 2009.

Tashi Kyi

Age: 55

Occupation: housewife

Date: 27 August 2015

Place of self-immolation: Sangchu, Kanlho

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Woman Self-Immolates in Protest Burning in China’s Gansu

RFA News, 2015-08-28

A Tibetan woman died early Friday, a day after she set herself ablaze in northwest China’s Gansu province in an apparent protest against the demolition of her home by police and officials, sources inside and outside the region said.

Those who witnessed Tashi Kyi, a resident of Ngulra village, Sangkok town, Sangchu (in Chinese, Xiahe) county in Kanlho (Gannan) prefecture, self-immolating tried to save her by putting out the fire, said a Tibetan source, who declined to be named.

“She passed away around 3 a.m. Friday,” he told RFA. “Chinese security officials arrived in the morning and took away her body by force.”

On Thursday before the incident occurred, more than 150 Chinese police and government officials had raided a Tibetan house believed to be Kyi’s in Ngulra and completely demolished the structure, the source said.

The London-based Free Tibet said the woman set herself on fire after 150 police and officials began demolishing houses in Ngulra with bulldozers.

“A number of the house owners protested, with some physically hanging on to the demolition equipment,” Free Tibet said in a statement. “Ngulra residents believe Tashi Kyi’s self-immolation was motivated by witnessing the destruction of her village.”

The statement quoted one unnamed source in the village as saying officials said the houses were being demolished because they did not have valid permits.

A Tibetan source, who lives in Europe but maintains contact with area residents, told RFA that locals confirmed that authorities who raided the houses claimed their owners lacked proper documents.

“This was one of the reasons that Tashi Kyi set herself on fire and died in protest,” he said.

Others told him that China’s overall policy of suppression in Tibet could have been the main reason for Kyi’s actions, he said.

Kyi’s self-immolation brings to 143 the total number of burnings by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama began in 2009.

Mother of four dies after setting herself on fire against village demolitions

AsiaNews, 31 August 2015

Sangkok (AsiaNews / Agencies) - Tashi Kyi, a Tibetan woman of 55, set herself on fire in protest against the demolition of homes in her village by the Chinese police. The event took place last Thursday (August 27) in the village of Ngulra in the town of Sangkok, County Sangchu (Xiahe in Chinese), in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Gannan (Gansu Province).

The woman was rescued by residents of the village, who tried to extinguish the flames, but she died the next day at 3 am (local time) from injuries. A Tibetan source told Radio Free Asia that at dawn police officials forcibly took her body, despite the resistance of her family who asked to be able to celebrate her burial.

According to the source, on the afternoon of August 27, more than 150 officers raided the village of Ngulra and began demolishing the homes of residents with bulldozers, saying that the owners were not in possession of valid permits. The site Free Tibet reports that “several residents protested by clinging on to the bulldozers” and that Kyi “decided to self-immolate against the destruction of her village.”

This is the seventh self-immolation of Tibetan dissidents since the beginning of the year, the 143th since the 2008 protests in the Tibetan province of Lhasa. On that occasion, the fighting flared on the anniversary of the violently repressed Lhasa uprising against Beijing - March 1959 - that cost the lives of about 220 people.

The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) reports the memory of her nephew (a Buddhist monk), who explains how the woman was a “generous Buddhist and devoted to her family, she was living in fairly good economic conditions in a three floor building near the Labrang Monastery in Tashikyil “. She leaves four children (three of whom are monks), a husband and father of 80. The inhabitants of “the village remember her for her kindness and courage – he continues. She also visited India twice to receive a blessing from the Dalai Lama. “

Meanwhile in India, the fourth edition of Dharamshala International Film Festival will be held from 5 to 8 September. The program also includes the screening in the documentary film “Ta Lung” by Japanese director Kaoru Ikeya on self-immolations by Tibetan monks and dissidents.

Tibetan mother of five self-immolates in Chinese ruled Sangchu

Tibet Review, 31 August 2015

(TibetanReview.net) – A 55-year-old mother of five has died in Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) County of Kanlho (Gannan) Prefecture, Gansu Province, hours after she set herself on fire on Aug 27 night, according to a number of online reports Aug 28. While the reason for the self-immolation by Tashi Kyi, a resident of Ngulra village, Sangkhog town, is unclear yet, the immediate provocation

appears to be China's forced demolition of a Tibetan home, or homes, earlier in the day.

Tashi Kyi died around 3:00 am and Chinese police came took away her body by force at daybreak.

More than 150 Chinese officials and police were reported to have arrived in the village – which was a “New Socialist Village” set up for forced settlement of former Tibetan nomads – with bulldozers to carry out the demolition, claiming the owners lacked proper documents. A number of Tibetans were reported to have hung on to the bulldozers in vain attempts to stop the demolition. There were reported to have been clashes, with an unknown number of Tibetans being taken away.

While one report (voatibetanenglish.com, Aug 28) said the authorities demolished one home to stake an official claim to it, others said several homes were destroyed.

The woman was economically well-off, owing a three-storied building near Labrang Tashi Kyil Monastery, apart from her new socialist village home where she carried out the self-immolation, according to Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Aug 29. She was said to be a highly religious person and to have visited India twice for pilgrimage, including in 2012 when she attended the Kalachakra teaching by the Dalai Lama.

Tashi Kyi's self immolation is the 7th in Tibet this year and 143rd across the Tibetan Plateau since Feb 2009.

Mother of Five Carries Out Self-Immolation Protest in Tibetan Area

VOA News, 28 August 2015

A Tibetan woman from the Amdo Labrang area (Chinese: Xiahe) carried out an apparent self-immolation protest on the night of August 27, 2015.

55 year old Tashi Kyi, a mother of five from Ngura Village succumbed to her burns around 3am this morning. Ngura is a Tibetan nomadic settlement located in today's Sanchu county, Gannan Prefecture, Gansu Province.

Sources say that Chinese security forces arrived at her home in the morning and forcibly took her body away.

While the reasons for her protest are not clear at present, sources told VOA that a possible catalyst could have been an incident that occurred on the 27th, when over 150 officials and security personnel arrived in Ngura village to claim

official rights on a house and demolished the property. When Tibetans in the village protested, security forces beat the owner of the house and took him into detention.

As a sign that Tashi Kyi's actions are being seen by area Tibetans as a protest against ongoing state oppression, people in the region are said to be lighting lamps at their home altars as a show of solidarity.

There have been over 142 known self-immolation protests in Tibet and Tibetan areas since 2009, which have prompted the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations to urge China to address the situation and to cease policies and actions that exacerbate tensions in Tibet.

Tibetan woman dies of self immolation in Sangchu County

Phayul, Friday, August 28

DHARAMSHALA, August 28: A Tibetan woman has died after setting herself on fire in protest against Chinese rule late Thursday night in Sankhog township in Sangchu County, Kanlho Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, reported the Tibet Times.

Tashi Kyi, a Tibetan woman around 55 years old from Ngura village, Sankhog township, set herself ablaze late last night before local Tibetans tried to extinguish the flames on her body. She breathed her last around 3AM (local time), sources told Tibet Times.

Chinese police arrived this morning at her home and forcibly took her body away despite Tibetans' appeal to let the family perform the last rites.

There is currently no information whether she had shouted any slogans while carrying out the fiery protest.

Kyi is the 7th Tibetan to resort to self immolation as a form of protest this year alone and 143rd since 2009.

According to Voice of America's Tibetan service, local Tibetans say "an incident that occurred during the day of 27th, when over 150 officials and security personnels arrived in Ngura village to claim rights on one of their houses, and destroyed its properties for official use" might have sparked off Kyi's protest. The police have arrested the owner of the house after beating him up. "Tibetans in the region also believe Chinese oppression of Tibetans to be the cause of Kyi's sacrifice, and have lighted butter lamps to show solidarity," said VOA.

Kalsang Wangdu

Age: 18

Occupation: monk

Date: 29 February 2016

Place of self-immolation: Kardze, Kham

Current status: deceased



First self-immolation of year reported in Tibetan region

Associated Press, The Japan Times, 2 MAR 2016

BEIJING - A report says a Tibetan Buddhist monk has set himself on fire and died in a protest against Chinese rule, in the first such action of its kind this year.

U.S.-government funded Radio Free Asia said Kalsang Wangdu self-immolated on Monday afternoon near the Retsokha monastery in western Sichuan province.

RFA said the monk called out for Tibetan independence while he burned.

Tibetan exile sources say at least 114 monks and laypeople have self-immolated over the past five years, most of whom have died.

Information from the isolated region is hard to obtain and local officials are reportedly under orders to remain silent about immolations. An officer who answered the phone Wednesday at Kardze police headquarters and gave his surname as Li said no such incident had been reported.

Yet another Tibetan dies after setting himself on fire to protest China

By Lindsey Bever, *Washington Post*, March 4, 2016

Sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering, a Tibetan student in India who set himself on fire earlier this week to protest the Chinese occupation in Tibet, has died from his injuries at a hospital in New Delhi, according to local news reports.

The teen told his mother he wanted to “do something for his country” moments before he self-immolated Monday in the northern city of Dehradun, according to the Indian Express. His mother tried to save him, she told the newspaper, but she could not.

Dorjee was transported to Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi, where he died Thursday night, hospital spokeswoman Poonam Dhanda told the New York Times.

For decades, Tibetans have protested China’s rule in Tibet — upset over

political, environmental and religious issues and worried that their culture will be forgotten.

The first self-immolation in Tibet motivated by a desire for change is thought to have occurred in April 1998 during a hunger strike in Delhi, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, a human rights organization based in D.C.

Since then, it has counted more than 140 Tibetans who have died in the same way.

Earlier this week, another Tibetan died after self-immolation.

On Monday, 18-year-old Tibetan monk Kalsang Wangdu died when he lit his own body on fire in the Chinese province of Sichuan, according to Radio Free Asia.

A source told RFA “he called out for Tibet’s complete independence” while he burned.

Dorjee’s mother, Nyima Yangzom, told the Indian Express that her son, too, had been talking about “doing something” for Tibet.

“Once, he called me from his hostel and said he would set himself on fire,” she told the newspaper. “I rebuked him and said if he wanted to do something for his country, he should do so through his studies.

“I warned him that if he tried to do anything stupid, even I would set myself on fire.”

On Monday morning while Dorjee was visiting his uncle in Dehradun, witnesses said, he called out for freedom for his homeland, doused himself in gasoline and set himself ablaze, according to the Indian Express.

His mother suffered minor burns trying to put out his flames.

After Dorjee reached the hospital, doctors said he was burned on over 95 percent of his body, his mother told the Indian Express.

“Apart from his face,” she told the newspaper, “he has burn injuries all over the body.”

Human rights groups supporting the community in exile have since pointed to Dorjee’s story as an example of the plight of his people.

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton brought further attention to it, holding up his picture Tuesday in Minnesota, where she spoke with the president of the Tibetan National Congress, an advocacy organization.

Before Dorjee died from his injuries, he spoke this week from his hospital bed, according to reports.

“I did discuss my intentions with my parents, who told me they would kill

themselves if I did this,” he said in a video, according to Radio Free Asia. But, he added, he had “the will to do something for the Tibetan cause.”

He said he thought “I could sacrifice this body for the Tibetan cause,” according to the news service.

“I want His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live long,” he said, “and for Tibet to achieve its independence.

Tibetan Monk Burns to Death in Kardze Protest

RFA News, 2016-03-01

A Tibetan monk set himself ablaze and died on Monday in southwestern China’s Sichuan province in an apparent challenge to Beijing’s rule in the first such protest in a Tibetan area of China this year, a source in the region told RFA’s Tibetan Service. Kalsang Wangdu, a monk of the Maretsokha Aryaling monastery, self-immolated at around 4:00 p.m. on Feb. 29 near his monastery in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s Nyagrong county, RFA’s source said, contacting RFA on social media and speaking on condition of anonymity.

“[While he burned], he called out for Tibet’s complete independence,” the source said, adding that witnesses to Wangdu’s protest “intervened,” intending to take him to Sichuan’s provincial capital for treatment.

“However, he died on the way before reaching Chengdu,” he said, adding, “His father’s name is Sotra, and his mother’s name is Urgyen Dolma.”

Wangdu’s self-immolation could not be immediately confirmed, and authorities were not available for comment. But his action would bring to 144 the total number of burnings by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests calling for Tibetan freedom and the return of exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama began in 2009.

Tibetans living in Kardze are known for their strong sense of Tibetan national identity and frequently stage protests alone or in groups opposing rule by Beijing.

Student also burns

Meanwhile, a young Tibetan student living in India set himself on fire on Monday to protest China’s rule in Tibetan areas after telling his parents he hoped to do something “for the cause of Tibet,” a Tibetan source in exile told RFA.

Dorje Tsering, 16, set himself ablaze near a housing complex for elderly Tibetans in Dehra Dun at about 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 29, RFA’s source, housing

complex staff member Lobsang Tsultrim, said.

“He was severely injured in the fire, and was quickly moved to the Safdurjung hospital in Delhi,” Tsultrim said.

“He is reported to have suffered burns over 95 percent of his body,” he said. Tsering had previously hinted at his coming protest, asking his parents if they would be happy if he was able to do something for Tibet, Tsultrim said.

“Yesterday, he did exactly what he said he would do,” he added. “I did discuss my intentions with my parents, who told me they would kill themselves if I did this,” Tsering said from his hospital bed, speaking in a video.

“[But] I have the will to do something for the Tibetan cause and thought that I could sacrifice this body for the Tibetan cause,” he said.

“I want His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live long and for Tibet to achieve its independence,” he said.

Tsering’s protest “was a sign of how deep and sustained opposition to Chinese rule remains [even] among Tibetans outside Tibet,” London-based Free Tibet director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said in a statement Tuesday.

“Whether inside or outside the country, young Tibetans feel the sense of injustice and are driven to act because of it,” she said.

Two Tibetans set themselves on fire: reports

AFP, Hong Kong Free Press, 2 March 2016

Two Tibetans — a monk in China and a teenager in India — set themselves on fire on the same day to protest Beijing’s ironclad control of the Himalayan region, a rights group and reports said Wednesday.

Kalsang Wangdu self-immolated in front of his monastery in a Tibetan area of Sichuan province on Monday, reported Radio Free Asia (RFA), which is funded by the US government.

London-based campaign group Free Tibet confirmed his death.

The monk’s action was the first such protest in China this year, and brought the total number in the country to 144, RFA said.

As he burned, “he called out for Tibet’s complete independence”, it quoted an anonymous source in the area as saying.

Police in Xinlong county, where the incident took place, could not be reached for comment Wednesday, and a woman at its religious affairs bureau said only that her department was “not very clear” on the incident.

Beijing says its troops “peacefully liberated” Tibet in 1951 and insists it has since brought economic development to a previously backward region where serfs were exploited.

But many Tibetans accuse the central government of religious repression and eroding their culture, and its natural resources are increasingly being exploited in ways that benefit China’s ethnic majority Han.

Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire.

Also on Monday, 16-year-old Dorje Tsering set himself on fire in the northern Indian city of Dehradun, RFA and Free Tibet said.

He survived with burns to 95 percent of his body and was hospitalised in Delhi.

“I have had a strong determination to do something for Tibet since my childhood,” him saying in a video on his hospital bed, according to Free Tibet.

“I thought that there was nothing else I could do other than self-immolation, because if there is self-immolation, people get shocked, thinking that he set himself on fire for his country,” he went on, speaking through an oxygen mask and with his face swollen.

“It seems the oil put on my body was not enough for it to burn completely,” he added.

Free Tibet cited his father as saying that it was a heart-breaking incident but he was proud of his son.

The teenager is the eighth Tibetan to mount such a protest outside China, the group added.

Its director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said the boy’s actions should “shame the political leaders who put more value on friendship with China than justice for Tibet”.

“They should all watch this, and imagine if it was their child,” she added.

Dalai Lama, followers inciting self-immolations by Tibetans: Reports

PTI, Updated: Mar 07, 2016, 11.51 AM IST

BEIJING: The twin immolations by Tibetan youth last week, including one in India, protesting against Chinese rule in Tibet were “instigated” by the Dalai Lama and his followers, a media report here said today.

“Over 100 self-immolation attempts by Tibetans in China since then, most of which killed young monks, were proved to have been masterminded and

instigated by the so-called ‘spiritual leader’ and his followers. Their stereotype is to incite self-immolations, make an issue of them and solicit international support through media and political figures,” an article in state-run Global Times said. “Self-immolation is only conducted by a slim number of extremists who are used by separatists. Any attempt to split the country is not only doomed to fail, it is also not the desire of the majority of Tibetan people,” it said.

A 16-year-old Tibetan student Dorjee Tsering set himself ablaze in Dehradun last week and died later.

Around the same time, 18-year-old young Tibetan monk Kalsang Wangdu also immolated himself and died in Sichuan province.

“Both cases were soon spread by Tibetan separatist groups, and picked up by Western media. It’s common to see self-immolation cases hyped in March as part of the agenda by Tibetan separatists,” the article said marking the first time official media reported such incidents.

Overseas Tibetan groups say nearly 130 Tibetans self-immolated in recent years calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and to protest against Chinese rule.

“Facts have revealed that the Dalai Lama, misperceived as a peace-loving monk in the West, planned the Lhasa riot on March 14, 2008 that killed 18 innocent people,” Global Times articles said referring to revolts by Tibetan monks.

The twin immolations also coincided with the commencement of China’s annual parliament season that kicked off last week.

The National People’s Congress (NPC) and advisory body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) meet annually for a fortnight to clear legislative business.

“One day after Tsering set himself on fire, pictures featuring Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, holding up a black-and-white photo of Tsering and speaking with the president of the Tibetan National Congress, an advocacy group, were spread on Twitter,” the Global Times article said.

“Encouraging suicide is by no means part of Tibetan Buddhism. If the Dalai Lama is a true religious dignitary, he shouldn’t have meddled in politics. Regrettably, the fact is that he has never shied away from politics,” it said.

“The region, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, has become prosperous and enjoyed ethnic unity after the toppling of the feudal serfdom under theocratic rule,” the article said.

It also referred to the Tibetan delegates at the NPC wearing Chinese flags and the busts of five Chinese leaders from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, which they

said is a spontaneous act to show gratitude to the leadership.

Kalsang Zhoigar, one of the delegates, told reporters that Tibet lifted 100,000 people out of poverty in 2015, and that the Tibetan people have benefited most from the country's poverty alleviation funds.

First self-immolation of year reported in Tibetan region

By Christopher Bodeen, *The Jakarta Post*, Beijing, 2 March 2016

A Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire and died in a protest against Chinese rule, in the first such action of its kind this year, a U.S. government-funded radio station said Wednesday.

Kalsang Wangdu self-immolated Monday afternoon near the Retsokha monastery in western Sichuan province's traditionally Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Kardze, Radio Free Asia reported. It said the monk called out for Tibetan independence while he burned, then died on the way to a hospital in the provincial capital of Chengdu.

Tibetan exile sources say at least 114 monks and laypeople have self-immolated over the past five years, with most of them dying. Radio Free Asia puts the number of self-immolations at 144 since 2009.

Information from the region, which is largely cut off from the rest of the province by security checkpoints, is extremely hard to obtain, and local officials are reportedly under orders to remain silent about self-immolations. An officer who answered the phone Wednesday at Kardze police headquarters and gave his surname as Li said no such incident had been reported.

"We are now in a period of preserving stability. If such a thing happens, we will make it known to the public," Li said by telephone.

Radio Free Asia and other groups also reported that a 16-year-old Tibetan living in India set himself on fire on Monday as a protest, but that he survived.

The protests are seen as an extreme expression of the anger and frustration felt by many Tibetans living under heavy-handed Chinese rule. Many protesters also call for the return of the Tibetans' exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 amid an abortive uprising against Chinese forces who had occupied the Himalayan region a decade earlier.

Tibetan monks and nuns are among the most active opponents of Chinese rule in the region and the strongest proponents of Tibet's independent identity, prompting the authorities to subject them to some of the harshest and most

intrusive restrictions.

Patriotism

Last year, Tibet's Communist Party chief, Chen Quanguo, demanded that Buddhist monasteries display the national flag as part of efforts to shore up Chinese patriotism.

Beijing blames the Dalai Lama and others for inciting the immolations and says it has made vast investments to develop the region's economy and improve quality of life. The Dalai Lama says he is against all violence.

The previous self-immolation, of a Buddhist nun also in Kardze, took place in November. The woman, who reportedly cried out "Tibet needs freedom" and "Let His Holiness (the Dalai Lama) return to Tibet," was believed to have died.

With the Dalai Lama now 80 years old, Beijing is increasingly focusing its attention on Tibetan Buddhism's second-ranking figure, the Panchen Lama, whom it has carefully groomed since he was a young boy.

China has rejected the Dalai Lama's choice for the next Panchen, a 6-year-old who hasn't been seen since, replacing him with its own selection, now 26-year-old Gyaican Norbu. The young man resides largely in Beijing and is a member of the official government advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, which holds its annual session starting Thursday.

In a meeting with the Panchen on Tuesday, the ruling Communist Party's top official for outreach to nonparty groups urged him to "keep in mind the exhortations of (President and party leader) Xi Jinping," state media reported.

"Continue the inherited traditions of Panchen loving the party and the faith, consciously make contributions toward safeguarding national unification and the unity of all ethnic groups," head of the United Front Work Department Sun Chunlan was quoted as telling him.

The Panchen responded by saying he would "bear in mind (Xi's) earnest instructions," the report said.

Tibetan separatists use self-immolations for political ends

By Yu Ning, *The Global Times*, 2016, 3,7

A 16-year-old Tibetan student, Dorjee Tsering, set himself ablaze and died later last week in Dehradun, India. Almost the same time saw an 18-year-old young Tibetan monk, Kalsang Wangdu, who also self-immolated and died in Sichuan Province.

Both cases were soon spread by Tibetan separatist groups, and picked up by Western media. It's common to see self-immolation cases hyped in March as part of the agenda by Tibetan separatists.

Facts have revealed that the Dalai Lama, misperceived as a peace-loving monk in the West, planned the Lhasa riot on March 14, 2008 that killed 18 innocent people.

Over 100 self-immolation attempts by Tibetans in China since then, most of which killed young monks, were proved to have been masterminded and instigated by the so-called "spiritual leader" and his followers. Their stereotype is to incite self-immolations, make an issue of them and solicit international support through media and political figures.

One day after Tsering set himself on fire, pictures featuring Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, holding up a black-and-white photo of Tsering and speaking with the president of the Tibetan National Congress, an advocacy group, were spread on Twitter.

Encouraging suicide is by no means part of Tibetan Buddhism. If the Dalai Lama is a true religious dignitary, he shouldn't have meddled in politics. Regrettably, the fact is that he has never shied away from politics.

The "middle way" approach that the Dalai Lama group trumpets in fact aims at setting up a "state within a state" which denies the governance of the central government over Tibet. However, the past 60-plus years have witnessed the Tibetan people living an increasingly abundant life on the road they chose.

The region, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, has become prosperous and enjoyed ethnic unity after the toppling of the feudal serfdom under theocratic rule.

At the ongoing two sessions, most delegates from Tibet present at the conferences wore pins with a Chinese flag and the busts of five Chinese leaders from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, which they said is a spontaneous act to show gratitude to the leadership.

Kalsang Zhoigar, one of the delegates, told reporters that Tibet lifted 100,000 people out of poverty in 2015, and that the Tibetan people have benefited most from the country's poverty alleviation funds.

Self-immolation is only conducted by a slim number of extremists who are used by separatists. Any attempt to split the country is not only doomed to fail, it is also not the desire of the majority of Tibetan people.

Uncle claims nephew died of motorbike fire, not self immolation

By Tenzin Sangmo, *Phayul*, Tuesday, 11 December 2018

DHARAMSHALA, DEC. 9: A video claiming to be that of an uncle of a Tibetan youth who died reportedly by setting himself ablaze on November 4 has surfaced, indicating that the youth, Dhorbe, died of burns caused by motorbike accident, and not by self immolation.

However, the authenticity of the claims made by the man, Jampal Drakpa, could not be independently verified. The date of recording the video, which Phayul received on Dec. 9 is also not known.

The Tibetan youth hailed from the village of Jakorma in the Choejema area of Ngaba County. His father Chopa, and mother Trinle Kyi had passed years ago and was living with his uncle Jampal Drakpa.

In a two-part video, the man seated on a couch claims that Dhorbe, whose death the media reported as the 163rd case of self-immolation was his nephew who he had sent for an errand had died an “accidental death.”

Exile media reported in early November that Dhorbo reportedly self-immolated in the Ngaba County on November 4, 2018, while calling for the long life of exiled Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama and for his return to Tibet.

The man in the video who appears to be in his 50s says the rickety bike that Dhorbo was riding caught fire after a distance of about a kilometer, after which Dhorbo dragged it for some distance.

The man claims that when people found him, Dhorbo wasn’t able to respond to their questions but that he responded when approached by him. “They tried to ask him but he couldn’t answer. People assumed that it was political and a case of self-immolation”, he added.

The man continues, “When I rushed to the scene and asked him, Dhorbo managed to tell me that the bike caught fire. Upon looking around, I found that the bike all incinerated with only the frame left of it.”

Dhorbo subsequently died around 12:00 AM on his way to the district hospital, according to the man.

Chinese authorities’ pressure on his uncle to contradict reports of self immolation can not be immediately ruled out as there have been cases in the past of family members and relatives of self immolators being sentenced or threatened.

The family members of Kalsang Wangdu, 18 year old monk of Retsokha Aryaling Monastery, who set himself ablaze near his monastery in Nyagrang, a

town in Eastern Tibet, in March 2016 were pressurized by the Chinese officials to say that Kalsang died in a house fire.

In December 2016, the family members of a Tibetan man named Tashi Rabten who died following a self immolation in Machu were arrested and tortured by Chinese authorities into signing a document accepting that Tashi burned himself due to household problems and not for Tibet.

In March 2013, two monks of Bido Monastery in Kangtsa region of Tsongon, eastern Tibet, Tsundue, 27 and Gedun Tsultrim, in his 30s, were sentenced to three years in prison for organizing prayer meeting for Wangchen Norbu, a Tibetan who died in November 2012 after immolating himself.

In December 2012, the father and grandfather of a Tibetan self-immolator named Gonpo Tsering were arrested by the Chinese authorities who had found out that the two had spoken clandestinely to reporters from the French daily *Le Monde*.

Dorjee Tsering

Age: 16

Occupation: student

Date: 29 February 2016

Place of self-immolation: Doegu-Yugyalling Tibetan Settlement in Herbertpur, Mussoorie, Uttrakhand, India

Current status: deceased



Tibetan in India Dies Days After Setting Himself on Fire to Protest China

By Nida Najar, *The New York Times*, March 4, 201

NEW DELHI — A 16-year-old Tibetan student living in India has died three days after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese rule in Tibet, a hospital official said on Friday.

The student, Dorjee Tsering, had self-immolated on Monday in Dehradun, India, while shouting “Free Tibet,” according to an advocacy group based in London. He was rushed to New Delhi and treated at Safdarjung Hospital, where he died on Thursday night, said Poonam Dhanda, a spokeswoman for the hospital. Burns had covered 95 percent of his body, Ms. Dhanda said.

Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, held up a picture of Mr. Dorjee on Tuesday while in Minnesota speaking with the president of the Tibetan National Congress, an advocacy group.

Mr. Dorjee was the second Tibetan this week to die after self-immolation. On Monday, an 18-year-old Tibetan monk, Kalsang Wangdu, set himself afire in the Chinese province of Sichuan, the first such episode in a Tibetan area of China since August. Since 2009, more than 140 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibetan regions of China to protest Beijing's rule.

Teenaged Tibetan boy from Dehradun self immolates

By Tenzin Dharpo, *Phayul*, Tuesday, March 01, 2016

DHARAMSHALA, March 1: In a shocking incident, a Tibetan boy aged 15 has self immolated in Herbertpur town near Dehradun, repeatedly shouting "Tibet is a free country" while engulfed in flames.

Dorjee Tsering set himself ablaze around 8:30 am yesterday (Feb. 29) at the Home for elderly in Doegu- Yugyalling Tibetan settlement in Herbertpur. He is currently undergoing critical treatment in the ICU ward of Safdurjung Hospital in New Delhi.

In a video circulating on social media sites, the boy barely conscious and badly burnt speaks of his intentions. "The reason I resort to burning myself like a choemey (Butter lamp) is because Tibet was occupied by China since 1959 and I have always felt like I needed to do something for the Tibetan cause. Yesterday, I felt as if burning myself up was the only resort left for me," Dorjee says.

"This act I think will evoke shock from anyone who hears of it. People will think that a boy has burned himself for his country and it will create awareness. Countries like England, America and Africa (African nations) will know of Tibet and support for us will strengthen. Free Tibet and I pray that His Holiness lives for many thousand years."

Speaking to media, the boy's mother said that she saw her son running and shouting while engulfed in flames and she dragged him underneath the tap to extinguish the flame. Bod-Kyi-Bus-Bab (Tibet times) reported her saying, "Last September, while talking on the phone he asked me if setting himself ablaze for the Tibetan cause would make me proud? I berated him to abandon such thoughts. I told him that there are many other ways to serve Tibet. I even threatened him to abandon such thoughts or else I would kill myself before. He

later apologized and assured me he would not do such a thing. He had later asked his father the same thing. We never thought that a boy that young would actually do such a thing, we thought it was a spur of the moment thought and did not take it that seriously.”

At the hospital, he asked me to not look at his face,” said the bereaved yet proud mother of Dorjee.

Dorjee Tsering’s family hails from Manali and is currently a tenth standard student at Tibetan Homes Foundation in Mussoorie. He is the youngest among his five siblings.

Dorjee is said to be critical with 95% burns.

Teenage Tibetan in India dies after self-immolation

The Aljazeera, 4 Mar 2016

A 16-year-old Tibetan living in India has died in a New Delhi hospital three days after he set himself on fire in a protest against Chinese rule, a hospital official said.

The Tibetan suffered 98 percent burns and died late on Thursday, said Pankaj, an official at New Delhi’s government-run Safdarjung hospital. Pankaj uses one name.

The Tibetan set himself on fire on Monday in the northern Indian city of Dehradun and was brought to New Delhi for treatment.

The Indian Express newspaper named the teenager as Dorjee Tsering, and quoted his mother as saying her son had often talked about «doing something» for their homeland.

The death marked the second such protest this year, seen as an extreme expression of the anger and frustration felt by many Tibetans living under heavy-handed Chinese rule.

A Tibetan Buddhist monk self-immolated and died on Monday near the Retsokha monastery in western Sichuan province’s traditional Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Kardze, Radio Free Asia reported.

It said the monk called out for Tibetan independence while he burned, then died on the way to a hospital in the provincial capital of Chengdu.

Tibetan exile sources say at least 114 monks and laypeople have self-immolated over the past five years, with most of them dying.

Radio Free Asia puts the number of self-immolations at 144 since 2009.

Tibetan monks and nuns are among the most active opponents of Chinese rule in the region and the strongest proponents of Tibet's independent identity, prompting the authorities to subject them to harsh and intrusive restrictions.

Beijing blames the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama and others for inciting the immolations and says it has made vast investments to develop the region's economy and improve quality of life.

The Dalai Lama says he is against all violence. He fled Tibet to India in 1959 amid an abortive uprising against Chinese forces who had occupied the Himalayan region a decade earlier.

He has been living in the northern Indian town of Dharamsala since then.

Unnoticed, a Tibetan teenager died in India after self-immolating for his homeland

By Shelly Walia, *The Quartz*, 7 March 2016

Last week, as India watched student leader Kanhaiya Kumar's momentous speech on *azaadi* (freedom), a 16-year-old Tibetan boy sacrificed his life to bring attention to his homeland's plight.

On Feb. 29, shouting "Free Tibet", Dorjee Tsering set himself afire in Dehradun, the capital of the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand. Tsering had come visiting his grandparents who stayed 35 kilometres from Mussoorie's Tibetan Children's Village school where he studied. He died at New Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital on March 3 after sustaining 95% burns.

Born in India, Tsering had never seen Tibet. But growing up in a close-knit Tibetan community, he had a clear understanding of the plight of his people.

"Even the youngest of children know about the crisis in Tibet, even if they have lived in India all their life. They know Tibet is not free, and it has no rights. They chant 'azaadi chaiye' (we want freedom) on the streets, and everywhere," Samten Dolma, Tsering's elder sister, told Quartz. "All kids say that but my brother sacrificed his body for the nation."

In a video shot from his hospital bed before he died, Tsering explained his decision through an oxygen mask:

I have had a strong determination to do something for Tibet since childhood. So, I thought there was nothing else I could do other than self-immolation. Because if there is self-immolation, people get shocked... When they are shocked, countries like the United Kingdom, America and Africa begin to pay

attention to Tibetans. When they pay attention, then they will support Tibetans. That will be helpful for us. It seems the oil put on my body was not enough for it to burn completely.

Tsering's parents sell sweaters in Manali, a tourist town in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh. He was the youngest of their five children. "We are not into anything like politics. We come from a very simple family," Dolma said. But the "self-determination" to do something for Tibet had been brewing within Tsering for many years.

"India is our second mother. But you are here. Or you are there. You are still a Tibetan," Dolma said.

For decades, Tibetans have protested Chinese rule in Tibet, which Beijing claims as part of its sovereign territory. The Central Tibetan Administration, or the Tibetan government-in-exile—based in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh—claims that the Chinese are occupying their land unlawfully. Their Dharamsala base was established after the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, fled to India following a revolt in March 1959.

Since 2009, some 143 Tibetans have self-immolated—five of these in India—to protest China's control of their homeland, according to the Central Tibetan Administration data. Of these, 118 were men and 25 women. As many as 124 of them died.

In March 2012, 27-year-old Jampa Yeshe set himself ablaze in New Delhi while protesting against the then Chinese president Hu Jintao's visit to India.

Lobsang Yangzom, a Tibetan student in New Delhi, said, "Tsering decided to burn himself to bring the much-needed attention to the Tibetan cause. We appreciate his courage. But we don't encourage other young Tibetans to self-immolate."

Yangzom was among the 15 Tibetan students from JNU who visited Tsering and his bereaved family at New Delhi's Safdarjung hospital. They first got to know about the self-immolation through Facebook. She took a khata, a traditional white scarf, for his parents. The scarf is a symbol of compassion in Buddhism.

On March 6, Tsering's last rites were performed at Dharamsala.

Before dying, Tsering explained that he felt sorry for his parents, but he did not regret what he had done. "Tibet must get freedom as soon as possible and long live his holiness," he said. "Victory for Tibet."

Tibetan Buddhist who self-immolated in India dies of his wounds

By Vishal Arora, *The Washington Post*, March 4, 2016

NEW DELHI — A 16-year-old Tibetan Buddhist refugee living in India, the exiled home of the Dalai Lama, died of self-immolation, days before the 57th anniversary of the “Tibetan Uprising Day” to protest Chinese rule.

The teen, Dorjee Tsering, died Friday (March 4) in a hospital in New Delhi, where he was treated for burns covering 95 percent of his body.

He had set himself on fire in the northern Indian town of Dehradun on Monday, the same day an 18-year-old Tibetan monk, Kalsang Wangdu, also self-immolated, and died, in Sichuan Province in Tibet.

Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the Tibetan government in exile in the Himalayan town of Dharamsala in India, called the deaths “sobering.”

March 10 marks the anniversary of the failed 1959 uprising by Tibetans against Chinese rule, after which the Dalai Lama and his retinue fled Tibet and crossed into India for refuge.

Tsering told *The Tibet Post* from his hospital bed: “I want His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live long and for Tibet to achieve its independence.”

A refugee from Tibet, Tsering added: “I thought that there was nothing else I could do other than self-immolation, because if there is self-immolation, people get shocked.”

The India-based Tibetan Youth Congress called Dorjee’s death an act of “sacrifice for Tibet’s freedom and Independence.”

Since 2009, at least 144 Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, have self-immolated to protest Chinese “occupation,” according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

China calls the self-immolations a “separatist agenda” and blames them on “incitement” by the Dalai Lama, who retired as the political head of the Tibetan exile movement in 2011 and delegated that role to the elected office of the prime minister of the government in exile.

Tibetan Schoolboy Who Set Himself Alight Dies

VOA News, March 04, 2016 1:04 PM

A Tibetan schoolboy living in India has died four days after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese rule, according to hospital officials in New Delhi.

Dorje Tsering, 16, died from a cardiac arrest late on Thursday at the hospital where he was taken after setting himself ablaze at a housing settlement for Tibetan refugees in the northern city of Dehradun on Monday.

As he lay dying, his face disfigured by scarring and breathing with the aid of machines, a person at his bedside began recording footage of Tsering. In the unsourced video, translated by VOA's Tibetan Service, Tsering identifies himself as a student at Tibetan Homes school in Mussoorie.

Tibetan Schoolboy Who Set Himself Alight Offers Final Statement

"And what to say now," he says, momentarily trailing off, his eyelids nearly swollen shut. "On February 29, 2016, I set fire to my body like a vigil lamp. The reason why I set myself ablaze is, in 1959, the Chinese invaded Tibet. Because they took away Tibet, I have ardently always wanted to do something for Tibet since I was very small. Yesterday, I felt that things [in Tibet] were helpless unless I self-immolate myself... and, now, to explain what self-immolation can do is, people are shocked

"They say he burned himself... for his country," he continues in a halting voice muffled by an oxygen mask. "Now when they think like that, what can happen is England, USA, Africa, everywhere alike around the world, will pay attention to Tibet. When they pay attention, they will support Tibet and we, Tibetans, will get help.

"Lastly, victory to Tibet and May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live long for eons and eons," he says.

Hospital spokeswoman Poonam Dhanda told AFP that Tsering, who died around 9 p.m. local time (3:30 p.m. UTC), was the eighth Tibetan to mount such a protest outside China.

His death came after an 18-year-old Tibetan monk in China self-immolated on Monday to protest Beijing's ironclad control of the Himalayan region.

VOA's sister-agency Radio Free Asia called the monk's protest the first of its kind in China this year, bring the total number in the country to 144.

Scores of Tibetans living in-exile in India's northern hill town of Dharamsala on Wednesday held a candlelight vigil in solidarity with both of the Tibetan activists. The exile Tibetan government issued a statement urging young people to find other constructive ways to express their feelings and work for Tibet.

The Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje, a leading young Lama who is the head of a Tibetan Buddhist sect, also issued a statement calling upon Tibetans to stop sacrificing themselves in protest.

“Within Tibetan society, people will applaud them for a few days, saying ‘He’s a hero,’ ‘She’s a heroine,’ or ‘That is incredible.’ But that does not help,” he said. “It is important to deeply consider the physical pain of those who set themselves on fire and the mental suffering of the relatives they leave behind, as well as whether this will help or harm Tibet, immediately, within a short while, or in the long term.

“The Tibetan land is vast, but the Tibetan people are few in number,” he added. “Therefore it is critical that every individual Tibetan remain alive in order to preserve the land and people ... For the sake of our homeland’s future, to relieve the hardships of our people, we should treasure each single breath we take.

Tibetan mother: Enough self-immolations, life is sacred

AsiaNews, 8 March 2016

Dharamsala (AsiaNews) - Young Tibetans “have many ways to serve their country and the Dalai Lama, our great spiritual leader. You have to study, you have to work for our country. But do not self-immolate! I appeal to you all: stay alive. I am a simple housewife and do not know much of the world, but it was important for me to tell you this”: These were the words with which a mother, Tsering Dorjee, brought to an end the funeral service for her son, a young man of 16 who set himself on fire last February 29 to protest against the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

The boy died after three days of agony. From a hospital in Delhi, where he had been hospitalized after the protest, his body was transported to Dharamsala for the funeral. This is where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile live, a kind of “foreign capital” for the Buddhist diaspora. His mother, Nyima Yangkyi, appeared devastated in front of hundreds of young people gathered for the funeral, whom she told: “really listen to our spiritual leaders, listen to his wishes. Have good intentions and stay alive”.

Recounting the final days of her child’s life, she recalled how he had to be moved to three different hospitals due to the lack of health facilities: “The last transfer took us almost an hour. He asked for water, but above all he wanted to be covered. He did not want me to look him in that state. I told him that soon they would give him the painkillers, and he said to me: ‘You know I’m strong, right? I’m fine, just do not look at me. It was heartbreaking”.

Tenzing Jigme, president of the Tibetan Youth Congress, was united with the

woman's appeal: "The death of Dorjee Tsering is an immeasurable sacrifice. It is very hard to tell people what to do and what not to do, especially to those living in Tibet who undergo daily repression. However, I too appeal to our young people to consider other ways to contribute to the cause of Tibet. Your lives are precious".

The death of the young man brings to 145 the number of victims who have self-immolated since 2009 in protest against Chinese policy in the region. For his part, the Dalai Lama has repeatedly urged his followers not to sacrifice their lives but to "find other forms of protest." However, Beijing accuses the religious leaders of fomenting these acts "for his personal gain."

Tibetan Boy Burns Himself In India For Free Tibet

Tawang Times, 1 March 2016

In a very shocking and heart aching report, a Tibetan school boy aged around 16 studying in 10th standard has burned himself yesterday to protest for the cause of Tibet from India.

The incident took place yesterday around 8:30 in the morning.

Dorjee Tsering, a student of Tibetan Homes School in Mussoorie resorted to self-immolation and he has been taken to Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi while the body has reported of 95% burnt injury.

He doused his body near an Old People's Home where he went to visit his grandfather with his mother in the Dehradun District of Uttarakhand in India.

Witnesses have told that Tsering burned himself without anybody's notice and he was running with the slogan of 'Free Tibet' while his body was in full flame.

Dorjee Tsering is the youngest son of five children to Mr. Thupten and Mrs. Nyima Yangzom who belong to Manali in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.

Delhi: He told me he wanted to do something for Tibet, then set himself on fire, says Mother

By Abhishek Angad, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 2 March 2016

Dorjee Tsering, a 16-year-old resident of Manali, allegedly set himself on fire Monday, minutes after telling his mother that he wanted to "do something for his country", Tibet.

The incident took place while Tsering and his family were visiting his uncle in

Dehradun. On Monday morning, outside his uncle's residence, Tsering raised slogans demanding freedom for Tibet, before allegedly pouring petrol on himself and setting himself on fire.

Tsering's mother Nyima Yangzom, who tried to help her son and put off the fire, also suffered minor burn injuries.

Tsering was rushed to the nearby hospital and later referred to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi.

According to his family, it took the ambulance six hours to reach Delhi.

"Doctors said he has suffered 95 per cent burns. Apart from his face, he has burn injuries all over the body," said his mother Yangzom, 59, as she sat outside the burns ward of Safdarjung Hospital, her hands wrapped in bandage.

Yangzom said that since August last year, her son had repeatedly talked about "doing something" for their homeland.

"Once, he called me from his hostel and said he would set himself on fire. I rebuked him and said if he wanted to do something for his country, he should do so through his studies. I warned him that if he tried to do anything stupid, even I would set myself on fire," she said.

A few days ago, her son told her that he would "disappear after February", said Yangzom. "I had no idea he would do something like this," she said.

In the minutes after the incident, while frantically trying to save her son, Yangzom had pushed him under a water tap. "At least his face was not burnt," she said.

At Safdarjung Hospital, Tsering reportedly told his family, "I wanted to do something for my country and I figured that I can't do much through studies"

Tibetan in India dies days after setting himself on fire to protest China

The New York Times, India Today, 5 March 2016

NEW DELHI — A 16-year-old Tibetan student living in India has died three days after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese rule in Tibet, a hospital official said Friday (March 4).

The student, Mr Dorjee Tsering, had self-immolated Monday in Dehradun, India, while shouting "Free Tibet", according to an advocacy group based in London. He was rushed to New Delhi and treated at Safdarjung Hospital, where he died Thursday night, said Ms Poonam Dhanda, a spokeswoman for the hospital. Burns had covered 95 percent of his body, Ms Dhanda said.

Ms Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential candidate, held up a picture of Dorjee on Tuesday while in Minnesota speaking with the president of the Tibetan National Congress, an advocacy group.

Mr Dorjee was the second Tibetan this week to die after self-immolation. On Monday, an 18-year-old Tibetan monk, Mr Kalsang Wangdu, set himself afire in the Chinese province of Sichuan, the first such episode in a Tibetan area of China since August. Since 2009, more than 140 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibetan regions of China to protest Beijing's rule. THE

Tibetan teenager dies after self-immolation attempt

PTI, New Delhi, 4 March 2016

A sixteen-year-old Tibetan who had allegedly set himself afire during a protest against Chinese rule, passed away at Safdarjung hospital here.

Dorjee Tsering had suffered 98 per cent burns and was being treated in the ICU at the department of burns, plastics and maxillofacial surgery of Safdarjung Hospital, a senior doctor said.

He had set himself on fire on Monday in Dehradun. He was rushed to a nearby hospital and later referred to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi.

Hundreds attend Dorjee Tsering's cremation in Dharamshala

By Tenzin Dharpo, *Phayul*, Sunday, March 06, 2016

DHARAMSHALA, March 6: The funeral procession and last rites for the Tibetan teenager drew more than a thousand Tibetans here in Dharamshala. The emotional last journey of the 16 year old to the cremation spot was led by his bereaved family.

The venue for the prayer session and ceremony to pay the last respects to the deceased at Lhagyalri seemed apt as the marble busts of Pawo Thupten Ngodup and Pawo Jampel Yeshe and the photos of each of the self immolators beginning from Tapey were at the background overlooking the proceedings.

The bereaved father spoke in pauses recounting the details of the incident and thanked all the people who helped and came forward to show solidarity towards his family during the difficult time. The TYC President Tenzin Jigme and Vice President Tamdang Hrichoe spoke against the lack of support by international organizations like United Nations and international governments and also the

lack of action by the Tibetans.

“But most of all, I am angry with myself and us Tibetans. We need to become a movement of action, not reaction. We all need to contribute to our cause in our own capacities so that the issue of Tibet can be resolved. And when we do that, we will do justice to the sacrifice of Dorjee Tsering, Kalsang Wangdue and all the Tibetans who gave their lives for our country. We want to send a clear message to the Chinese government that we will continue to fight for our country till our last breath,” said TYC President.

Member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile, Acharya Yeshe Phuntsok told Phayul, “The words of the 16 year old boy calling for unity among Tibetans and to follow the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a weighty message. It serves a reminder for Tibetans of all ages. This incident has attracted a lot of feelings from the Tibetans but that feeling mustn’t be vanished like the rainbow. It should not just be a source of anecdotes but should be felt by each and be applied in their lives and towards the fulfillment of the ultimate Tibetan cause collectively.”

The story of a Tibetan boy’s death that you didn’t hear about

By Sumegha Gulati, *Scroll*, 10 March 2016

A little over a week before the 56th Tibetan Uprising Day, a 16-year-old self-immolated in Uttarakhand. Why did he take his life, and why didn’t we hear about it?

On February 29, a 16-year-old Tibetan boy, Dorjee Tsering, immolated himself close to his grandfather’s house in Uttarakhand, shouting slogans of “Long live Dalai Lama” and “Free Tibet”. The same day, in the Chinese province of Sichuan, an 18-year-old Tibetan monk, Kalsang Wangdu, set himself on fire while calling for “Tibet’s complete independence”.

Neither death got the attention it deserved in the Indian media. They happened at a time when the country was transfixed by the row at the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the right-wing’s attempts to portray it as a citadel of anti-nationalism.

Among the thousands of Tibetans living in exile though, the deaths didn’t go unnoticed. For them the deaths were grim reminders of their nation’s plight ahead of the 56th Tibetan Uprising Day on March 10.

“Every Tibetan child – whether born in India, Tibet, United States or anywhere in the world – knows what is happening,” said Dorjee Tsering’s 26-year-old sister

Samten Dolma. “China says Tibet is its part, but Tibet belongs to Tibetan people. The occupation and its reality are not hidden from the children. They are aware of the critical state we are in.”

‘For the nation’

Originally from Tibet’s U-Tsang province, Tsering’s family is settled in the resort town of Manali in Himachal Pradesh, where it runs a small business of selling pullovers. The family, Dolma says, is really simple and never took any interest in politics. Which is why nobody can explain how Tsering became so “impassioned” and “took such an extreme step”.

Recalling the events in the lead-in to February 29, Dolma says the entire family had gathered in Herbertpur, a nagar panchayat at an hour’s distance from Dehradun. Tsering’s grandfather, who is suffering from cancer, was in a critical state and everyone had come down to look after him.

“It was also the time of the Tibetan New Year,” said Dolma, “so we thought the entire family should be together. We had been there for 2-3 days.” Tsering, a 10th grader studying at the Tibetan Homes Foundation School near Lha Gyari Temple in Mussoorie, was there too.

On February 29, Dolma had stepped out for some work when she got a call from one of her younger sisters. She could hear inconsolable weeping. “I thought maybe my grandfather’s health had deteriorated. But as soon as I heard what Dorjee had done, I rushed back.”

As Dolma describes it, Tsering went to Lakkhanwala near their grandfather’s house and set himself on fire, while shouting “Long Live Dalai Lama” and “Free Tibet”. Their mother fell unconscious at the sight. “The burning flesh was dripping from his skin, but he did not shout or cry in pain,” said Dolma. “It was a miracle that he walked the few steps leading to my grandfather’s house.”

People gathered there tried to douse the flames with blankets and water. “Not once did he say he was in pain,” said Dolma. “When mother regained consciousness, Dorjee kept apologising. He said: ‘I never did this to hurt you. I had to do this for my nation. I am sorry for hurting you.’”

Tsering was rushed to a local hospital and then to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. In a video recorded at the hospital, Dorjee said he had a “strong determination” since his childhood to do something for Tibet. The website of the advocacy group Free Tibet translated his words thus:

“There was nothing else I could do other than self-immolation. Because if there

is self-immolation, people get shocked... When they are shocked, countries like the United Kingdom, America and Africa begin to pay attention to Tibetans. When they pay attention, then they will support Tibetans. That will be helpful for us. It seems the oil put on my body was not enough for it to burn completely.”

Tsering succumbed to the 95% burns three days later. His last rites were carried out in Dharamshala – the seat of His Holiness Dalai Lama – according to Buddhist customs, and the funeral was attended by hundreds of Tibetans.

“He just came as a story in our lives and left as a legend for the nation,” Dolma said, her voice cracking up. “A hero was born in our family.”

Highlighting their struggle

Since 2009, nearly 150 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibet and elsewhere to protest against the Chinese reign over their homeland. While the Tibetan government-in-exile, based in Dharamshala, says that China is occupying Tibet illegally, Beijing claims the land is a part of its sovereign territory.

Tenzin Jigme of the Tibetan Youth Congress, which organised Tsering’s cremation, says it is difficult to tell what went on in the minds of the Tibetans who self-immolated to express their ire at Beijing.

“Dorjee was just 16. He had his whole life in front of him but he decided to cut it short for six million Tibetans. We are extremely sad for his demise but proud of his sacrifice. Dorjee, before he died, was calling for the long life of Dalai Lama, calling for independence of Tibet. When he was in hospital, he spoke of the illegal occupation of Tibet by China. These were his thoughts in his last moments.”

According to Jigme, some Tibetans are getting driven over the edge after hearing the torture stories from inside Tibet – “it is [the] culmination of everything”. “The way forward is for [the] Chinese government to understand what Tibetan people really want,” said Jigme. “We are not in a position to tell Tibetans, especially those living under Chinese rule, those who are facing torture in their everyday lives, to not protest. They want to highlight their struggles.”

Jigme urged India, which has been the home of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama since his escape in 1959, to take a tougher stand on Tibet. “India’s security lies in Tibetan independence,” he maintained. “Tibet and India have a long history of friendship. Moreover, the water issues of China are what Indian government and rest of South East Asia need to be cautious about.”

A heartbroken father

Dorjee Tseten, an activist with the group Students for Free Tibet, says that both Kalsang and Dorjee were clear in their message: “Free Tibet and let His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] return home”. “It is really unfortunate for us as life is precious,” said Tseten. “But 57 years’ occupation has forced these young boys to take their own lives. They want to achieve a breakthrough with their sacrifice. It is also to force the international community, which has unfortunately been silent all this while, into taking action Chinese government.”

Kunga Gyatso, a 38-year-old monk from Namgyal monastery in Dharamshala, agrees. He says Buddhism prohibits taking any life, “but when young boys and girls hear of their own country and the deteriorating situation in Tibet, it is depressing”. “Half of our relatives and family is still in Tibet,” the monk said “We have not seen them for decades. Occasional phone calls or messages are the only source of communication. When we see pictures and or hear of news reports of torture and killings in Tibet, it is disheartening. Then one feels disturbed. We feel we are out of options.”

A 32-year-old Tibetan journalist had a different take. Referring to self-immolation as useless, he said, “You are fighting an opponent. 100-150 people have self-immolated. But the Chinese have not been slightly bothered about it. The world has forgotten the issue, nobody is talking about it.”

Meanwhile, as people weigh the drastic act, Dorjee Tsering’s family is confronting the loss. On March 6, his father Thupten Tashi was quoted on the website of the the Tibetan government-in-exile as saying: “I urge the young Tibetans not to self-immolate. I urge you to fulfill His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s wishes and contribute to the struggle through your education.”

Sonam Tso

Age: 50

Occupation: housewife

Date: 23 March 2016

Place of self-immolation: Dzorge, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



News emerge of self immolation by Tibetan woman in Zoegé

By Tenzin Monlam, *Phayul*, 7 May 2016

An elderly Tibetan woman and a mother of five from Dotsa village in Zoegé County has reportedly self-immolated herself and died on March 23 in Ngaba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture to protest Chinese rule in Tibet. Due to severe clampdown on communication with the outside world, the news of Sonam Tso's protest arrived in the free world a bit late.

Sonam Tso, in her 50s, had reportedly set herself on fire near Dzoegé's Sera Monastery, sources say, confirming that the restriction on communication has led to the news arriving late.

"A young monk heard her call out for the return of the Dalai Lama and for freedom for Tibet as she burned," an RFA source said on condition of anonymity.

The source also added Tso's husband and the monk tried to put out the fire. Tsultrim, Tso's monk uncle brought her inside the monastery. She was later put into a vehicle to be taken to a hospital, but she died before leaving the monastery.

The local Police detained Tsultrim for eight days for discussing the incident with other people. He was also forced to delete the photos he had taken of Tso's protest.

The source also said that her husband Kalsang Gyaltzen was called in for questioning three times after the incident.

This is the second case of self-immolation inside Tibet this year after Kalsang Wangdu, a monk of Retsokha Aryaling Monastery self-immolated on February 29 in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.

Similarly, Dorjee Tsering (16) set himself on fire in Herbertpur town near Dehradun on February 29 and was taken to Safdarjung Hospital for treatment but passed away after three days on March 3.

Mother of five dies in self-immolation for Tibet

AsiaNews, 05/09/2016

Sonam Tso, a mother of five children, set herself on fire in county Dzoegé to protest against Chinese rule in Tibet. Her self-immolation is the second in the region since early 2016, and brings to 145 the total number of those who set themselves on fire against the presence of Beijing in Tibet.

Sonam died on March 23, but the news only emerged on May 7 due to restrictions imposed by the communist authorities on communication channels to and from the plateau region. The protest took place near the Sera monastery. Sonam was with her husband, Kalsang Gyaltsen, and was walking near the place of worship.

At one point, she asked her husband to leave her alone for a moment: she walked away and set herself on fire, demanding the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet. A monk who saw her called for help: her husband and another monk - Tsultrim, Sonam's uncle - put out the flames and rushed her to the hospital. But the woman was already dead before leaving the monastery.

Immediately after the self-immolation, the police arrest Tsultrim on charges of "sharing information" about

Sonam Tso's act. The Monk was released eight days after his arrest, but his phone and documents were seized. Even the victim's husband was questioned several times by police.

This brings death toll to 145 people since 2009 in protest against Chinese policy in the region. For his part, the Dalai Lama has repeatedly urged his followers not to sacrifice their lives but to "find other forms of protest." However, Beijing accuses the religious leaders of fomenting these acts "for his personal gain."

Mother of five died in 145th known Tibet self-immolation protests

Tibetan Review, 8 May, 2016

A belated report caused by China's clampdown on communication channels and tight restrictions on the local people says a Tibetan mother of five died after she carried out a protest self-immolation near a monastery in Dzoegé (Chinese: Ruo'ergai) County of Ngaba (Aba) Prefecture, Sichuan Province, on Mar 23.

Sonam Tso, believed to be in her 50s, told her husband, Kelsang Gyatso, who was walking with her on the circuit path running around Dzoegé's Sera Monastery, to go keep going while she proceeded to a nearby prayer-wheel room,

promising to catch up with him later, said Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) May 7. However, the woman, who belonged to Dotsa Village in the county's Akyi Township, then set herself alight.

"A young monk heard her call out for the return of the Dalai Lama (Tibet's exiled spiritual leader) and for freedom for Tibet as she burned," the Tibetan Service of *Radio Free Asia* Jun 6 quoted a local source as saying.

The young monk and Tso's husband, alerted by the monk's shout that a self-immolation had taken place, rushed to put out the flames. An elderly monk named Tsultrim, Tso's uncle, then took her inside the monastery. She was later put in a vehicle to hospital but died while still in the monastery compound.

Following the incident, Chinese police detained Tso's uncle for eight days for discussing the incident with other people. They forced him to delete the photos he had taken of Tso's protest. Tso's husband was also reported to have been called in for questioning three times.

Besides her husband, Tso is said to be survived by two sons and three daughters.

Tso's action, which came after nearly a month since a young monk burned himself and died in the province's Kardze (Ganzi) Prefecture, brings to 145 the number of known such self-immolations across Chinese ruled Tibet since 2009.

TCHRD said Sonam Tso had left a message before her self-immolation, but its contents remain unknown.

Tashi Rabten

Age: 24

Date: 18 March 2017

Place of self-immolation: Nyarong, Kham

Current status: unknown (?)



Tibetan self-immolates in China: rights group

By *AFP*, Beijing, Updated: 10 December 2016

Tibetan self-immolates in China, Tibetan self-immolates, vidoe of Tibetan self-immolating, World news, Internaitional news, World news China, China and religion, China and Tibet, China human right violantions, China buddhist, China Buddhist rights, latest news

"Having lost a father and a husband, Tashi Rabten's family now find themselves

in detention. The cruelty of this system knows no bounds,” Free Tibet said in a statement.

A man has self-immolated in protest against China’s presence in Tibet while calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, a rights group said on Saturday, the first Tibetan to set themselves on fire since March. Horrific video footage online showed the man, aged in his thirties and named by The International Campaign for Tibet as Tashi Rabten, walking down the road in northwest China’s Maqu region with his entire body engulfed in flames while a passerby recited prayers.

According to the Tibetan government in exile based in India, Rabten is the 145th Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009. Local authorities, who collected his charred remains, could not be reached for comment.

Rabten’s wife, two of his children and several other family members were placed in detention by local police after they went to claim the body, according to rights group Free Tibet.

“Having lost a father and a husband, Tashi Rabten’s family now find themselves in detention. The cruelty of this system knows no bounds,” Free Tibet said in a statement.

“The only crime they have committed is to be the family of someone who has embarrassed China by once again reminding the world that their occupation and these human rights abuses cause Tibetans real pain. And sometimes this pain pushes Tibetans to make the ultimate sacrifice,” it added.

Beijing says its troops “peacefully liberated” Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the central government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled into exile after a failed uprising in 1959. Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire.

According to The International Campaign for Tibet, Tashi Rabten, a former monk, had a cousin who self-immolated in the exact same street in 2012. In March this year two Tibetans, a monk in China and a teenager in India, set themselves on fire to protest Beijing’s control of the Himalayan region.

Tibetan Self-Immolator Was Husband, Father of Three

RFA News, 2016-12-09

A Tibetan man who set himself on fire and died on Thursday in northwestern China’s Gansu province has been identified as a husband and father of three who

was opposed to Beijing's rule in Tibetan areas of China, Tibetan sources say.

Tashi Rabten, 33, set himself ablaze on Dec. 8 at about 7:00 p.m. local time on a road leading from the Machu (in Chinese, Maqu) county center to the Machu Bridge, local sources said following the protest.

Detailed information on Rabten's identity and condition were not immediately available.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a Tibetan living in the area told RFA on Friday that witnesses to the protest heard Rabten "call out for freedom for Tibet and for the return of [exiled spiritual leader] the Dalai Lama." "He also called out for the release of the [detained] Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima," RFA's source said.

Following the protest, Chinese police and security officers quickly came to Rabten's home in Mema township's Terchu village to question family members, a second local source said.

"They demanded that his family should say that the self-immolation had no connection with Chinese government policies, and had been carried out instead because of problems at home," the source said.

Rabten's wife and a 15-year-old daughter were then taken away by police, he said. "Some of his other relatives were also detained when they approached authorities to ask for the return of his body," he said.

Rabten's family is now being watched at home under police guard, and Chinese armed police are patrolling Terchu village in an atmosphere of "heightened security," one source said.

Rabten's protest brings the toll to 146 since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009. Most protests feature demands for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from India, where he has lived since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

3 Tibetans Arrested on Suspicion of Circulating Self-immolation Video

VOA News, 16 December 2016

Tibetans in exile say Chinese police in Malho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu arrested three Tibetans suspected of having internationally distributed footage of a self-immolation protest that took place in Machu on December 8.

The Dharamsala-based Central Executive Committee of Dhomay (CECD), an organization that represents Tibet's province of Dhomey, or Amdo region, told

VOA that the three were detained December 9.

“There is no doubt about the three Tibetans being arrested, but at the moment we don’t have their names,” said Trison, a CECD spokesperson who, like many Tibetans, goes by one name only.

Footage of Tashi Rabten’s fatal self-immolation December 8 circulated on Tibetan social media barely an hour after the protest took place.

According to Trison, who is from Machu County, Tashi’s family members, including his father and 15-year-old son, were detained overnight and released the next day. Chinese officials cremated Tashi’s body but later returned his ashes to the family, according to latest reports received by CECD on Tuesday.

The arrest occurred as China began to intensify efforts to restrict online information sharing. Last month, China’s legislature approved a cybersecurity law that rights groups have criticized as a tool for tightening political control.

Tibetans suspected of having links to self-immolators protesting Chinese domination of Tibet are often subject to arbitrary arrests and detention.

By conservative estimates, the latest self-immolation, Tibet’s 145th since 2009, has reportedly prompted calls for the return of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who has been living in exile since 1959.

Tashi’s cousin, Tsering Kyi, self-immolated in 2012 in the same place where Tashi was doused in gasoline and set on fire.

Chinese police beat, tortured family members of Tibetan self-immolator; 9 held, including 3 for taking pictures

Tibetan Review, 16 December 2016

Chinese police in Machu (Chinese: Maqu) County of Sichuan Province had detained eight Tibetans, including relatives and family members of Tashi Rabten, a 33-year-old father of three who had carried out a protest self-immolation and died on Dec 8, when they asked for the return of his body for the purpose of performing the last rites. Three other Tibetans accused of sending out video images of the self-immolation have also been detained.

The group of eight detained Tibetans included the deceased’s widow Bhopey, 35; his daughter Tashi Dolma, 16; and his son Tashi Dhondup, 13, a monk. They were held back when they visited the police station later in the evening of Dec 8 to seek the return of the deceased’s remains, said Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Right and Democracy Dec 14.

After being held for several hours, daughter Tashi Dolma was released with five others. Tashi Dhondup was released later after his monastery signed a surety for him. However, Bhopey continued to be detained and subjected to intense interrogation and intimidation. The police wanted her to say that a domestic trouble led to her husband's self-immolation and they also wanted to know about his contacts before the incident. She was finally forced to sign a document that supported a false Chinese story about the self-immolation before being released on Dec 9.

Radio Free Asia (Washington) Dec 13 cited its local source as saying the mother and daughter were beaten and tortured when they refused to go by the Chinese story that Tashi Rabten self-immolated due to trouble in the family. "Many who met Tashi Rabten's wife and daughters after their release saw marks of physical abuse on their bodies," the report quoted the source as saying.

The source has also said Chinese authorities raided the deceased's home, "looking everywhere and taking photos as they searched".

The reports added that three other Tibetans were held on Dec 9 on suspicion that they had taken still and video pictures of the self-immolation and sent them out. The centre named them as Bhenkho, Tenpa and Dorjee. Also detained was a woman named Tsezin Lhamo who could be seen and heard in one of the video clips praying in the name of Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, as she witnessed the protest self-immolation.

The *Radio Free Asia* report also quoted its source as saying "four of her family members were detained with her, but were later released," while Tsezin Lhamo herself continued to be detained.

The Chinese never returned the deceased's body to his family but only his ashes after cremating it. A funeral service was then held at Tsendrok Monastery located in the deceased's hometown of Trokho Meyma Township and to which his son belongs.

3 Tibetans arrested for circulating self-immolation video as suicide note surfaces

By [Catherine Lai](#), *Hong Kong Free Press*, 14 December 2016

Three Tibetans suspected of distributing footage of a self-immolation protest in China's Gansu province last week have been arrested, a Tibetan group said.

The Central Executive Committee of Dhomay (CECD), an organisation based

in India that represents the Tibetan province of Dhomey, told US-backed Voice of America that the three were detained last Friday, the day after the protest.

“There is no doubt about the three Tibetans being arrested, but at the moment we don’t have their names,” a spokesperson told VOA.

Footage of former monk Tashi Rabten’s self-immolation reportedly emerged on Tibetan social media websites about an hour after the protest.

‘Not afraid of death’

On Tuesday, a note written by the protester on the day of his death was posted by UK-based NGO Free Tibet. It was written in Chinese and appears to have been written with the help of a friend, the NGO said.

“We are destined to self-immolate in protest for being kept apart from our own faith and nation,” it said.

The note also mentioned the peaceful nature of the Tibetans’ protest and speaks out against violence committed by Chinese authorities during Tibetan uprisings in 1958 and 2008 and the destruction of monasteries in Tibetan regions.

“I want people to understand that we Tibetans are not afraid of death but, for the sake of a peaceful solution, I can only choose the method of self-immolation to warn people that us Tibetans need the care of others, need to live on our own land like real people.”

He ended the letter with: “Long live Tibetans! Long live the Dalai Lama!”

The CECD spokesperson told VOA that the monk’s family members, including his father and 15-year-old son, were detained overnight and released the next day. Chinese officials cremated Tashi Rabten’s body and returned his ashes to his family, according to CECD.

In 2012 Tsering Kyi, Tashi Rabten’s cousin, died after she self-immolated. She was 20 years old at the time

Tibetan man arrested for links to self immolation

By Tenzin Dharpo, *Phayul*, Monday 26 December 2016

DHARAMSHALA, Dec. 26: A Tibetan man in his twenties has been reportedly detained by Chinese authorities from Tsoe County, Gansu Province in connection with the latest self-immolation by Tashi Rabten on Dec. 8 earlier this month.

Jamyang Choephel, about 25, was detained on Dec. 11 by Chinese security personnel from Ngok Gyalmo Monastery located in Ngok Phar-ngo village in Gyalmogon Township in Tsoe County, according to rights group, Tibetan Center

for Human Rights and Democracy. Jamyang is currently held incommunicado at Machu County Detention Centre in Machu County. Since his detention occurred just two days after the self immolation case, TCHRD suspects that his detention is related to the same.

Tenzin Dawa, research officer at TCHRD mentioned, “It is a standard practice for the Chinese authorities to launch a crackdown whenever there is a self-immolation protest. Family members, relatives and friends connected to the self-immolator are liable to get detained and questioned.”

Following the self immolation of Tashi Rabten, a total of 12 Tibetans including family members of the deceased as well as those suspected of recording videos of the self immolation were detained by Chinese authorities.

Tibetan Doctor Linked to Self-Immolation is Freed After Beatings, Torture RFA News, 2017-01-25

A Tibetan doctor held by police for over a month in China’s Gansu province over suspected links to a self-immolation protest was released last week after suffering beatings and torture in detention, a Tibetan source says.

Khedrup, aged around 50, was taken into custody on Dec. 14 by police in Machu (in Chinese, Maqu) county in Gansu’s Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, a resident of the area told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“He was held for over a month in Machu county, and during that time was interrogated and tortured, suffering beatings and other mistreatment at the hands of the police,” RFA’s source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Police suspected Khedrup of sending photos and video clips of the Dec. 8, 2016 self-immolation protest of Machu resident Tashi Rabten to international media, the source said.

“But the authorities could not produce any evidence of his crime, and he was therefore released on Jan. 21, 2017,” he said.

Before his release, authorities warned Khedrup, the resident doctor at Machu’s Mura monastery, not to discuss with “outsiders” any details of what had happened to him while in detention, the source said.

“They said they would be closely watching his daily movements and activities, and warned him that he could be arrested again.”

Police did not return Khedrup’s mobile phone or other belongings taken from at the time he was detained, he said.

Call for freedom

Tashi Rabten, 33, set himself ablaze on Dec. 8 at about 7:00 p.m. local time on a road leading from the Machu county center to the Machu Bridge, local sources said following the protest.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a Tibetan living in the area told RFA next day that witnesses to the protest heard Rabten call out for “freedom for Tibet and for the return of [exiled spiritual leader] the Dalai Lama.”

“He also called out for the release of the [detained] Panchen Lama, Gendun Choekyi Nyima,” RFA’s source said.

Chinese police later beat and tortured Rabten’s wife and daughters after taking them into custody for questioning, local sources said.

The abuse followed authorities’ demand that the three sign a document declaring that Rabten had set himself ablaze not in protest of Chinese policies, but because of problems at home, one source said.

Karma Ngedon Gyatso

Age: 36

Occupation: monk

Date: 5 August 2016

Place of self-immolation: Kathmandu, Nepal

Current status: deceased



Tibetan Monk Self-Immolates and Dies in Nepal

RFA News, 2013-08-06

A Tibetan monk burned himself and died in Nepal Tuesday to protest against Beijing’s rule in Tibet—the third Tibetan self-immolation in the small Himalayan nation, according to sources.

Karma Ngedon Gyatso, 39, lit butter lamps and recited prayers before setting himself ablaze at the Boudhanath Stupa, a famous place for Buddhist pilgrims in Kathmandu, where many Tibetan exiles live, the sources said.

He was taken away in critical condition to the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu where he was pronounced dead, the sources said, adding that scores of police converged at the shrine to beef up security. Gyatso, from Damshung county in Tibet, “set himself ablaze at the prostration

site inside the sacred Boudhanath Stupa,” a source told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“I saw the Nepali police taking him away in a wooden stretcher,” a second source said.

Police have summoned local Tibetan community leaders for an “inquiry” over the self-immolation death, sources said.

Based on a document Gyatso’s father is Jamyang Tashi and his mother is Uygen. He had gone to India from Tibet before arriving in Nepal.

Fifth self-immolation among Tibetan exiles

The self-immolation is the third so far in Nepal and the fifth among Tibetan exiles. A total of 121 Tibetans in China have so far burned themselves in protest against Beijing’s rule in Tibetan populated areas and demanded the return of Tibet’s spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, who is living in exile in India.

Two earlier self-immolations occurred at the Boudhanath Stupa temple.

In February, a 25-year old Tibetan monk Drongchen Tsering set fire to himself and died. His body was secretly cremated in Kathmandu late at night at the instruction of the Nepalese authorities without any other religious rituals, despite appeals from the Tibetans to have monks to offer prayers.

The first Tibetan self-immolation in Nepal was reported in November 2011 when a monk identified as Bhutok wrapped a Tibetan flag around himself, doused himself in kerosene while shouting slogans calling for a free Tibet and then set himself alight. Buddhist pilgrims at the stupa managed to quickly put out the flames and he survived.

About 20,000 Tibetan refugees have fled Chinese rule to live in Nepal. Beijing is becoming more aggressive in urging Kathmandu to restrict their activities and to help control the movement of Tibetans in both directions across the countries’ shared border.

Nepali government snatches the body of a monk who set himself on fire

by Kalpit Parajuli, *The AsianNews*, 16 August 2016

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and various groups of activists have slammed the Nepali government for snatching the body of a Tibetan monk who set himself on fire to criticise Chinese oppression.

The monk, Nyidon Karma Gyatso, self-immolated himself on 5 August. His family and the Tibetan Buddhist community want his body for formal burial, but

the government continues to refuse.

“We are deeply concerned about Nepal’s defiance of laws and international obligations,” said in a statement Sam Zarifi, Asia Director for the ICJ.

After his self-immolation, near a stupa, Gyatso was taken to Tribhuvan University hospital, but could not be saved.

Since then, the government has kept the body from the family for final rites and placed it under military guard.

A few days ago, acting on behalf of the family, the Tibetan Refugee Welfare Office requested Karma Nyidon Gyatso’s body be handed over, without success.

According to the ICJ, the refusal to hand over the monk’s remains for funeral arrangements contravenes Nepal’s own laws, which guarantee the right to religion, including the right to practice and perform one’s culture.

“We fear that taking back the dead body to Tibet may escalate violence and anti-China movements,” said Madav Prasad Poudel, government spokesman and minister of Information.

“We can’t provoke anti-China movement in Tibet” because China is “a good neighbour,” he explained.

With the rise to power of Nepal’s Communist and Maoists parties after the abolition of the monarchy in 2008, the country’s new rulers pursued closer relations with China at the expense of its historic ally, India.

In exchange for economic aid, Beijing demanded the closure of Nepal’s borders with Tibet and a crackdown against any expression of anti-Chinese feelings.

Pema Gyaltsen

Age: 24

Occupation: farmer

Date: 18 March 2017

Place of self-immolation: Nyarong, Kham

Current status: unknown (?)



Latest self-immolation protest by a Tibetan reported in Tibet

www.tibet.net, March 19, 2017

Dharamshala: A 24-year old Tibetan man named Pema Gyaltsen (also known as Pegyal) self-immolated at around 4pm local time, on March 18, 2017, near Tsoga

monastery in Nyagrong, Kham, eastern Tibet.

Sources have said “he called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and for freedom in Tibet at the time of self-immolation.”

The police reportedly arrived at the scene and immediately took away his charred body.

A minute-long video has emerged out of Nyagrong today, which shows a huge police presence at the self-immolation site.

It is reported that Pema Gyaltsen, an unmarried farmer is the lone breadwinner for his family of six-parents and four siblings.

Two sources from the Tibetan exile community said Gyaltsen was taken to a hospital in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan. One source said he later died, but the other said his contacts in the region believed he was still alive in hospital.

A Tibetan exile source with contacts in the town said “around ten close relatives of Pema Gyaltsen from Nyagrong went to Kandze county police station to see self-immolator Pema Gyaltsen. But the Chinese beat them severely and detained them for the entire night, and forced them to stand up the whole night.”

There is a dearth of information flowing out of Nyagrong because of the communications crackdown and block on the use of WeChat in the region.

Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay responded to the self-immolations saying, “I am saddened by the self-immolation. Another young Tibetan has sacrificed his life for the just cause of Tibet. It is a reminder that repression is continuing in Tibet under the Chinese rule and it is time the Chinese Government must heed to the calls of Tibetans in Tibet who long for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. China must address the genuine aspirations of people in Tibet.”

This is the second case of self-immolation in Nyarong after the self-immolation death of 18-year-old Kalsang Wangdu in 2016.

Pema Gyaltsen is the 146th Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet and first in 2017.

Young Farmer Stages First Tibetan Self-Immolation of 2017

RFA News, 2017-03-19

A 24-year-old Tibetan man set himself on fire Saturday in a protest against Chinese rule in the Himalayan region, the first reported self-immolation of 2017, sources told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

Pema Gyaltsen, from Nyagrong county in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, set himself on fire around 4 p.m., and police swiftly removed his

charred body from the scene, Tibetan sources told RFA.

Two sources from the Tibetan exile community said Gyaltsen, an unmarried farmer, was taken to a hospital in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan. One source said the man later died, but the other said his contacts in the region believed he was still alive in hospital.

In a one-minute video clip that was circulating on Tibetan social media, Chinese police are seen dispersing Tibetan onlookers from a scene of commotion, with women crying. Sources told RFA that authorities blocked the popular smartphone application WeChat following the self-immolation.

“In the evening around ten close relatives of Pema from Nyagrong went to Kardze county police station to see self-immolator Pema. But the Chinese beat them severely and detained and forced them to stand up the whole night,” a Tibetan exile source with contacts in the town told RFA.

“Today some of them could barely walk from the beating, but they were released under the guarantee of a Nyagrong official,” the source added.

“He called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and said there is no freedom in Tibet at the time of self-immolation,” another source told RFA.

Gyaltsen was the eldest of five children of his father Wangyal and mother Yullha, and “the main breadwinner of his family and had not attended any school,” the second source added.

The Kardze police station did not answer repeated calls by RFA seeking details of the incident.

Saturday’s protest brings to 147 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009. The previous known self-immolation was on Dec. 8, when Tashi Rabten, 33, a husband and father of three, set himself on fire and died in Gansu province.

Gyaltsen’s protest was the second case of self-immolation in Nyagrong, following the death of 18-year-old Kalsang Wangdu in March 2016.

Most protests feature demands for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from India, where he has lived since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

24-year-old Tibetan sets himself on fire in Sichuan province – reports

by Catherine Lai, *Hong Kong Free Press*, 20 March 2017

A 24-year-old Tibetan man has himself on fire on Saturday in a Tibetan region

of Sichuan province, China, according to US-backed Radio Free Asia (RFA) and London-based NGO Free Tibet.

Citing Tibetans in exile, RFA reported that Pema Gyaltsen, a young farmer, self-immolated at around 4pm in the Xinlong county of the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture near a monastery. The report was corroborated by Free Tibet.

Two sources told RFA that he was taken to a hospital in Chengdu, Sichuan. One said he later died, but the other said his local contacts told him they believed he was still alive. Local police quickly removed his charred body from the scene, they said.

“He called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and said there is no freedom in Tibet at the time of self-immolation,” one source said. The Dalai Lama – the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet – is viewed as a dangerous separatist by Chinese authorities, though he says he only seeks greater autonomy for Tibet.

Another source with local contacts said police beat the close relatives of Pema Gyaltsen and detained them when they went to the Kardze county police station to see him.

A video circulating on social media and re-posted by Free Tibet taken from a window overlooking a street appeared to show Chinese police dispersing onlookers.

Local authorities blocked Chinese messaging app WeChat following the incident, RFA’s sources said.

Self immolations are a common form of protest against Chinese rule. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, 146 Tibetans have self-immolated since February 2009. Pema Gyaltsen’s protest puts the number at 147. It was the second case of self-immolation in Xinlong, after the death of an 18-year-old monk in March 2016.

Police arrest hundreds of Tibetans in the wake of Pema Gyaltsen’s self-immolation in Kardze

By Christopher Sharma, *AsiaNews*, 21 March 2017

Kathmandu (AsiaNews) – Nearly 200 Tibetans in Kardze (Ch: Ganzi), in the Tibetan part of Sichuan, were arrested following the self-immolation of Pema Gyaltsen, a 24-year-old Tibetan farmer.

The young man set himself on fire last Saturday calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and for his homeland's freedom.

His action attracted the attention of many people, sparking the intervention of the police, who cleared the area and took into custody supporters and bystanders.

The authorities took Gyaltsen, but his conditions remain unclear at a Chengdu hospital.

"Nearly 200 Tibetans who attempted to support Gyaltsen in his protest by raising cries in solidarity were taken away," a source said, adding, "Police also confiscated the mobile phones of many of those who were detained."

Freedom for the Tibetan people and the return of the Dalai Lama from India are the main causes of protests. The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism fled his homeland following China's bloody crackdown of Tibet's 1959 uprising.

At present, more than 2,000 Tibetan refugees live in Nepal for fear Chinese repression. In fact, "Chinese suppression is not just limited in Tibet. It has great influence in Nepal," said Gyalbo Lama, a Tibetan refugee living in Nepal.

Meanwhile, China has formally warned India against allowing the Dalai Lama to visit Bihar, which borders China, where the spiritual leader is expected to speak at a Buddhist International Seminar.

"India is asking for trouble, worsening the bilateral relations and impeding normal bilateral discussion," a Chinese official said.

Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Gopal Baglay said the government's position is clear and consistent, and that it cannot ban the spiritual leader from carrying out his activities.

Protests in favour of Tibet's freedom and the Dalai Lama's return occurred in China as well. Last week, police in Ngaba County (Sichuan) proceeded to arrest a Tibetan monk and a woman in separate incidents. Both were protesting in favour of Tibet's freedom.

In the first case, Lobsang Dargye, a monk from Kirti monastery in Ngaba, began shouting slogans on the main street in the country seat, but was quickly overpowered by police and taken away, a local source said.

The incident took place last week, a few days after 10 March, anniversary of the 1959 uprising, in the presence of a large contingent of security forces.

On 10 March 1959, anger boiled over in Tibet against Chinese repression almost ten years after Beijing invaded the Himalayan nation. An estimated 87,000 people are said to have died in the uprising.

In recent years, fearing protests, Chinese authorities deployed extra security forces before and after the anniversary. Security measures in Ngaba are expected to last until 25 March, a source told Radio Free Asia.

Around 200 Tibetans arrested following latest self-immolation in Nyagrong

By Tenzin Monlam, *Phayul*, Tuesday 21 March 2017

Nearly 200 Tibetans have been arrested by the Chinese police following the latest self-immolation protest by 24-year-old Pema Gyaltsen last week in Nyarong in traditional Tibetan province of Kham (Ch: Sichuan), sources told RFA. “Nearly 200 Tibetans who attempted to support Gyaltsen in his protest by raising cries in solidarity were taken away,” a source said.

The source added that the Police have confiscated the mobile phones of those who were detained. No information on their whereabouts reached outside Tibet.

Gyaltsen, a farmer, self-immolated in Nyarong County in Kardze prefecture at around 4:00 p.m. (local time) on March 18 and his current condition and whereabouts are unclear. However, some unverified sources say that he is currently in a critical condition at a hospital in Kardze. The family members have also requested the authorities to allow him to be transferred to Chengdu.

“His family asked the authorities to allow them to take him to Chengdu, but they refused because of concerns over custody issues,” the source said adding that he was alive on March 19, when he was taken to the hospital in Kardze.

According to another source, his family members were detained for a night and beaten after they approached the authorities for permission to visit.

Pema’s self immolation makes it the second self immolation protest by a Tibetan in Nyagrong. Last year, 18-year-old Kalsang Wangdu, a monk of Retsokha Aryaling monastery, self-immolated in a protest near his monastery in Nyagrong.

Tibetan Protesters Detained Following Self Immolation

China Cheat Sheets, *The Medium*, 27 March 2017

Bystanders near the scene in Tibet where Pema Gyaltsen performed a self-immolation protest have been detained and have had their possessions confiscated, according to Tibet Watch. The 24-year-old farmer was protesting near a scene of bystanders before Chinese authorities detained them. Some of them were beaten, according to reports.

Although a number have since been released, it is not known how many are still in custody. The crowd had approached local authorities to question Pema's arrest. Locals have reported they assumed the crowd was arrested for security reasons and would undergo interrogation.

Pema was taken to a hospital following arrest.

In central London yesterday, dozens gathered outside the Chinese Embassy to stage a vigil in solidarity with Pema Gyaltzen. Many also chanted traditional Tibetan prayers.

Self-immolation has become a common site among Tibetans protesting what they see as Chinese aggression attacking Tibetan culture.

Wangchuk Tsetan

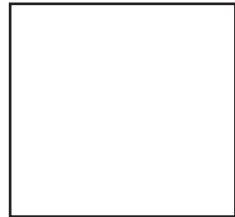
Age: 30

Occupation:

Date: 15 April 2017

Place of self-immolation: Nyarong, Kham

Current status: unknown (?)



Local Tibetans Summoned After Latest Self-immolation

VOA News, 18 April 2017

Residents of a Tibetan town have been summoned to meetings by Chinese authorities after the latest incident of self-immolation, according to a former resident of the area now living in India.

The victim, identified as 30-year-old Wangchuk Tseten, set himself on fire Saturday on a busy street in a central area of Kardze, the capital of Kardze Prefecture. Witnesses told their contacts in India that Chinese police put out the fire within two minutes and carried the man away. There has been no official indication whether he died or survived.

“One person I spoke with was surprised that the news had already reached outside Tibet, but he didn’t want to talk about it,” the exiled Tibetan, who asked not to be identified, said Tuesday. He said other residents also were reluctant to discuss the incident.

A video circulated through Tibetan social media on Saturday shows Chinese security officers spraying fire extinguishers over a person on ground and

keeping a crowd away. A body can be seen under a dusty cloud produced by fire extinguishers and, barely distinguishable, his feet can be seen to make a small movement.

The exiled Tibetan, who maintains close contact with residents of the area, said Tseten is a father of three children and lives in Zhido Township (also known as Asey Gyechak), in Nyagrang County, also in Kardze Prefecture.

The former resident told VOA the victim self-immolated in the same location that 24-year old Pema Gyaltsen - also from Nyagrang County - set himself afire last month.

Authorities have since imposed tough restrictions on Nyagrang residents seeking to travel to Kardze, the man said. "They need three different permits, one from village leader, one from township and one from county, in order to travel to Kardze," he said.

On Monday, the political leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile condemned the Chinese government for failing to address the "grievances" that have prompted a wave of Tibetan self-immolations beginning in 2009.

"It is time the Chinese government heed to the calls of Tibetans in Tibet who long for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet," said Lobsang Sangay, according to the [website](#) of the government in exile, based in Dharamsala, India.

Update on the Latest Self-immolation Protest in Tibet

www.tibet.net, April 18, 2017

DHARAMSHALA: The latest Tibetan self-immolater has been identified as Wangchuk Tseten, according to sources inside Tibet quoted by Tibetan media. Wangchuk Tseten, a 30 year old father of three from Asey Gyechak nomadic region in Ngagrang county, Kardze (incorporated into China's Sichuan province) set himself on fire on 15 April 2017.

According to informed sources, his body was completely burned after the self-immolation and Chinese police took it to an undisclosed location. His current physical condition is unknown. However, eyewitness accounts describe survival as a rare possibility. Wangchuk Tseten is survived by his three children and an aged mother.

After the self-immolation, Chinese police reportedly summoned a meeting of residents of the three regions of Asey, Lumo Ru and Horma where the authorities

reaffirmed its previous order of compulsory possession of 3-4 different papers wherever people go. Besides, people living in those three regions were all detained for two days from 16th through 17th of April.

Despite the Central Tibetan Administration's repeated appeals, at least 147 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009. Most of the self-immolators have called for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

Responding to the self-immolation, Tibetan Political Leader Sikyong Dr. Lobsang Sangay said, "Last month on March 18, Pema Gyaltsen, a 24 year old Tibetan farmer self-immolated in Kardze. Three years ago on this date, Thinley Namgyal, a 32 year old Tibetan self-immolated in Kardze. Such sacrifices by Tibetans in Tibet evidences that repression in Tibet under the Chinese rule are making lives unliveable. Therefore it is time the Chinese Government heed to the calls of Tibetans in Tibet who long for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. China must address the legitimate grievances of people in Tibet."

5 Tibetans arrested in Kardze after self immolation by Tibetan

By Tenzin Dharpo, *Phayul*, Wednesday, April 19, 2017

DHARAMSHALA, APR. 19: The situation in Kham Kardze in eastern Tibet following the self immolation of a Tibetan man has turned for the worse with Chinese authorities arresting five Tibetans for taking video of the self immolation and possibly killing another in detention.

On April 15, earlier last week, a Tibetan man, later identified to be 39 year old Wangchuk Tsetan, self immolated in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. The father of four hailed from the neighboring Nyarong County in Kardze Prefecture. Confirmed reports suggest Wangchuk had died, succumbing to the burns. A video clip of Chinese police reaching the spot and extinguishing the flames were seen in a widely circulated video on social media sites.

According to Voice of Tibet, three Tibetans who hail from Nyarong County were arrested for possessing the mobile phone of the deceased self immolator. The three identified as Kunchok Gyaltsen, Nyima and Tsering Gyatso were arrested and severely beaten according to a source cited by VOT. Although two of them have been released by the authorities, one is still being held and subjected

to torture, the same source said. The report also suggested that the three Tibetans had communicated just moments before the self immolation with Wangchuk; who told the three that he was in Kardze and that they should recover his mobile phone from an elderly lady.

Another source said a Tibetan man named Kunchok Tsering, 39, may have died in detention after he had severely been beaten for taking a video clip of the self immolation. It is although unclear if the video in question is the same as the one circulated on the Internet.

Also, there are reports that two other Tibetans were arrested from Kardze. However, due to the choke- down on all communication lines and clamp down in the region, no further information is currently available.

In August, 2016, Chinese authorities released a new manual in Ngaba, considered to be the epicenter of the self immolation protests, including stringent orders prohibiting self-immolations, solo protest and dissemination of news outside Tibet. It gives strict directive to the monks to follow the said rules or be deemed a 'separatist' and penalized.

The same manual also indicated that those who are indirectly involved with the self immolation protest or a solo protest will also be punished as co-conspirators. The measures, many in exile say, are aimed to curb the forms of protests by Tibetans. With Wangchuk Tsetan's self immolation, the toll has reached a staggering 148 since 2009.

Tibetan monk arrested under suspicion of disseminating news of self-immolation

By Tenzin Monlam, *Phayul*, Tuesday 9 May 2017

DHARAMSHALA, May 9: A Tibetan monk has been arrested by the Chinese authorities under suspicion of sending information about a recent self-immolation to outside Tibet, reported Radio Free Asia.

Gonpo of Oephung Monastery of Nyagrong County in Kardze prefecture was apprehended at around 5 p.m. (local time) on May 4. A source from the region told RFA, "He was taken away on suspicion of disseminating information (on local protests) to outside contacts. There has been no word about his condition or place of detention since he was taken away."

On April 15, a man identified as Wangchuk Tsetan, 39, set himself ablaze in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province in protest against

Chinese rule in Tibet.

No further information is available on the 43-year-old monk, known for his ‘patriotism’, due to the clampdown on Internet and telephonic communication in the region following the self-immolation.

Wangchuk Tsetan, a father of four, self immolated after consuming and pouring kerosene oil over his body, leaving behind his children, parents and three brothers.

Following his protest, Chinese police arrested five Tibetans for taking video of the self-immolation.

A month before Wangchuk’s self-immolation, Nyagrong witnessed another self-immolation by 24-year-old farmer Pema Gyaltzen on March 18. Over 200 Tibetans were arrested who came to his support and also raised cries in solidarity.

The month of March, April and May have each seen a self-immolation with latest one by a 16-year-old called Chagdor Kyab from Bora Township, in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Chagdor Kyab was 149th Tibetan to self-immolate in Tibet since 2009.

Chakdor Kyab

Age: 16

Occupation: student

Date: 2 May 2017

Place of self-immolation: Sangchu, Kanlho

Current status: unknown (?)



Tibetan Teenager Stages Self-Immolation Protest in Gansu

RFA New, 2017-05-07

A 16-year-old student in a Tibetan region of Gansu staged a self-immolation protest on May 2 against Chinese rule, RFA’s Tibetan service has learned.

A source inside Tibet said Chagdor Kyab from Bora Township, in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Amdo, set himself on fire near Bora monastery, a branch of Labrang Tashikyil monastery.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Chagdor Kyab, a student from a farming family, shouted “Tibet wants freedom” and “Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama come back to Tibet” while he burned.

While his body was on fire the teenager tried to run towards the Chinese government offices of Bora Township but he fell down before reaching the offices. Chinese police and military swiftly arrived at the scene and extinguished the flames and took away the body, the source told RFA.

It was not clear on Saturday whether Chagdor Kyab was alive or dead. The source in Tibet identified his mother as Dolma Tso and his father as Zoepa, farmers from Dardo in Bora Township.

Following the self-immolation, the local Chinese authorities imposed tight restrictions in the area which made it difficult to obtain further information.

Since 2009 four Tibetans from Bora have self-immolated, and the May 2 protest brought to 149 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009. Of these, 125 are known to have died.

Jamyang Losel

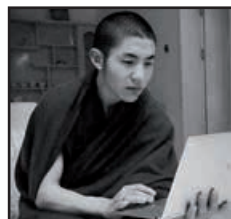
Age: 24

Occupation: monk

Date: 18 May 2017

Place of self-immolation: Chentsa, Malho

Current status: deceased



Another Monk Self-immolates in Tibet

By Tenzin Dharpo, *Phayul*, Saturday, May 20, 2017

DHARAMSHALA, MAY 20: A 22-year-old Tibetan monk has reportedly died after he self-immolated yesterday evening to protest against Chinese rule in Tibet.

Jamyang Losel set himself ablaze at around 5 a.m. on 19 May near the People's Hospital in Kangtsa County in Tsojang Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Amdo (Ch. Qinghai) Province according to Radio Free Asia.

"Losel's body was taken away by the police, and when his family members went to the police station to claim his remains, the police refused to comply with their request. He did not survive his protest," RFA's anonymous source said.

The monk hailed from Dong Gya village and belonged to Gyerteng Monastery in Nangra town situated at about 30 kilometers south of Kangtsa County.

Earlier this month, a 16-year-old Tibetan youth, Chagdor Kyab, from Bora Township, in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Amdo, set himself on

fire near Bora Monastery shouting ‘Tibet wants freedom’ and ‘Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama come back to Tibet’.

The self-immolation by Jamyang Losel takes the number of Tibetan self-immolators to 150.

The spate of self-immolation that began in 2009 has become an unprecedented act of resistance in Tibet under China. The overwhelming majority of the self-immolators demanded freedom for Tibet and return of the exiled spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland.

Despite international outcry, China has resorted to using crude, and often brutal, measures against the fiery protests. The Chinese authorities have criminalizing self-immolation and subjected friends and family members of the self-immolators to heavy punishments, including imprisonment.

Young Tibetan monk dies in second self-immolation protest in May

By Catherine Lai, *Hong Kong Free Press*, 22 May 2017

A young Tibetan monk has died in what is the second self-immolation protest reported this month, according to US-backed Radio Free Asia and NGO Free Tibet.

Jamyang Losal, who was around 22-years-old, set himself on fire at around 5am on Friday in the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the northwest Chinese province of Qinghai.

An unnamed source told RFA that the monk carried out his protest near the Jianzha People’s Hospital to protest the government’s “repressive policies.”

They said that his body had been cremated by the authorities, who refused to hand over the remains to his family.

Jamyang Losal was previously detained for over ten days for sharing a photo of the Dalai Lama on WeChat, the source said. He was a practising monk at Gyerteng Monastery in Jianzha County.

Jamyang Losal’s protest was the second self-immolation by a Tibetan to be reported this month, and the fourth this year.

Chakdor Kyab, a 16-year-old student, set himself on fire at the beginning of May in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Gansu Province. The student, whose status was previously unknown, died on the day of the demonstration, another source told RFA on Thursday.

Self immolations are a common form of protest against Chinese rule. According

to the International Campaign for Tibet, 150 Tibetans have self-immolated since February 2009, including Jamyang Losal.

“Jamyang Losel is the fourth Tibetan in three months to have set himself on fire in protest against the Chinese occupation of Tibet,” John Jones, the Campaigns and Communications Manager of London-based NGO Free Tibet said.

“While we should be cautious about talking about a renewed wave of self-immolations across Tibet, these numbers cannot be ignored, just as the grievances that motivate self-immolation protests cannot be ignored.”

Latest Tibetan Self Immolation Brings Toll to 149

The Medium, May 26, 2017

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has been in exile for decades. But on Thursday, a Tibetan monk reportedly died after burning himself alive in Chengtsa County of North-eastern Tibet. Like many who have made the same sacrifice, he was protesting Chinese rule over the Himalayan nation. He was the fourth to do so since the beginning of 2017.

Jamyang Losel, who was reportedly about 22-years-old, set himself ablaze near a prayer wheel in Chengtsa County of northeastern Tibet, according to a TPI source speaking on condition of anonymity.

“He died of severe burn injuries after setting himself on fire. His family approached the authorities for the body but they were not give the custody of his body,” he told reporters.

According to the source, Losel is a monk of Jerteng Monastery, coming from the Nangra Dhungkya village in Chengtsa County of northeastern Tibet.

Following the incident, Chinese authorities reportedly moved in to place heavy restrictions in the area.

The latest self-immolation would bring total verified self-immolations inside Tibet to 149. Of these, 125 have died. Most of the self-immolators called for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people.

The Chinese Communist Party views the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist and says Tibet remains in its territory. The people of Tibet say they had belonged to an independent nation for centuries until Chinese troops invaded in the 1940s.

Since then, more than 6,000 monasteries have been looted and destroyed. Tibetans accuse China of leading torture, rape, starvation, and forced marches under what China calls a “Peaceful Liberation.”

Young monk dead in year's fourth protest self-immolation in Chinese ruled Tibet

Tibetan Review, 23 May 2017

A second Tibetan has carried out a protest self-immolation in Chinese ruled Tibet this month, taking the total since Feb 2009 to 150, according to several online reports over May 19-20. Jamyang Losel, an about 22-year-old monk, set himself ablaze at around 5:00 AM on May 19 in Chentsa (Chinese: Jianza) County of Malho (Huangnan) Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

The monk carried out his fiery, suicide protest near the county government hospital and died on the spot, said Dharamshala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy May 20.

The reports said Chinese police took away the monk's charred remains. Family members visited the police station to claim his body for the purpose of carrying out the last rites but were turned away.

The monk was said to belong to Gerting Monastery in Kangtsa's Nangra Town. The small monastery, located some 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of the county seat, was said to have just about 20 resident student-monks.

Losal was said to belong to the county's Donggya Village. His was the fourth protest self-immolation to occur in Chinese ruled Tibet this year.

Before Losal, Chagdor Kyab, a 16-year-old school boy, had torched himself near Bora Monastery in a township by the same name in Kanlho (Gannan) Prefecture of neighbouring Gansu Province on May 2. He had shouted a similar call and slogan. Although believed to have died on the spot, his fate remains unknown.

Chinese police were reported to have taken away his parents again on May 18 after releasing them the first time they detained and interrogated them. The boy's sister could not be taken away this time as she was suffering from mental breakdown and was bedridden following the previous detention.

Tenzin Choeying

Age: 19

Occupation: student

Date: 14 July 2017

Place of self-immolation: Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Current status: deceased



Tibetan student self-immolates in India after shouting ‘freedom’

Agence France-Presse, South China Morning Post, Published: 12:03am, 16 Jul, 2017

A Tibetan student self-immolated in India after shouting “freedom”, injuring himself critically, Indian police said on Saturday.

The student set himself on fire on Friday at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh state.

Self-immolation has regularly been used as a protest against China’s actions in Tibet. But Indian police said they were also investigating the 20-year-old’s recent exam failures as being a possible cause for his actions.

“We are not entirely clear about the reasons but eyewitnesses told us that he shouted ‘freedom’ before running out, dousing himself with kerosene and setting himself on fire,” Varanasi police spokesman Sanjay Tripathi said.

“There were some Tibetan representatives at the institution at the time. But the institute authorities have also told us that they had announced exam results a day earlier and he had failed two exams.”

The International Campaign for Tibet identified the student as Tenzin Choeying. It quoted Chime Namgyal, head of the Tibetan Youth Congress activist group in Varanasi, as saying Choeying shouted “Victory to Tibet”.

Police said they were still investigating and will take statements from Choeying and his family. “The boy is recovering at the hospital. He can speak but has around 50 per cent burns,” Tripathi said.

China says its troops “liberated” Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

China rejects the accusations and accuses the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader who lives in exile in the Indian hill town of Dharamshala, of inciting self-immolations in a bid to split Tibet from the rest of the nation.

The Tibetan pilgrimage film that took on Transformers in China’s cinemas and

broke a box office record

A young farmer self-immolated in southwest China in March, the first Tibetan to set themselves on fire this year. The Tibetan government in exile in India said he was the 146th Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009.

Choeying is not the first Tibetan to set himself on fire in India. A Tibetan exile set himself alight and died two days later in New Delhi in 2012.

On April 15, a Tibetan Buddhist monk set himself on fire in a public square in Ganzi, in western Sichuan province, according to Radio Free Asia and Free Tibet, an advocacy group based in Britain.

Tibetan student self-immolates in India

Al Jazeera, 16 Jul 2017

A Tibetan student has self-immolated in India after shouting “freedom”, police said on Saturday, injuring himself critically.

Tenzin Choeying set himself on fire on Friday at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh state.

Self-immolation has regularly been used as a protest against China’s actions in Tibet. But Indian police said they are also investigating the 20-year-old’s recent exam failures as being a possible cause for his actions.

The International Campaign for Tibet identified the student as Tenzin Choeying. It quoted Chime Namgyal, head of the Tibetan Youth Congress activist group in Varanasi, as saying Choeying shouted “Victory to Tibet”.

Tenzin Tsundue, who visited Choeying at the hospital in Varanasi, told Al Jazeera that the patient is expected to survive.

“He is stable, the next five days are crucial, the doctor says,” he wrote in a Whatsapp message to Al Jazeera.

“My concern, as his brother, is to arrange for him the best treatment, and get him back to life.”

Tsundue also sent to Al Jazeera a note, which he said Choeying wrote before the incident.

In it, Choeying wrote in English, “Please don’t cry. Tell everyone that my body is for Tibet.”

Police said they were still investigating and will take statements from Choeying and his family. “The boy is recovering at the hospital. He can speak but has around 50 percent burns,” Sanjay Tripathi, a Varanasi police spokesman, told

AFP news agency.

Religious repression accusations

China says its troops “liberated” Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

China rejects the accusations and blames the Dalai Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader who lives in exile in the Indian hill town of Dharamshala, of inciting self-immolations in a bid to split Tibet from the rest of the nation.

A young farmer self-immolated in southwest China in March, the first Tibetan to set himself on fire in 2017.

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Choeying is not the first Tibetan to set himself on fire in India. A Tibetan exile set himself alight and died two days later in New Delhi in 2012.

Tibetan student sets self on fire in university campus demanding free Tibet

ANI, The Asian Age, Published : Jul 16, 2017, 4:13 pm IST

Varanasi: Tenzin Choeying, a Tibetan student studying at the Central University of Tibetan Studies in Varanasi, attempted to commit suicide by immolating himself inside the campus demanding free Tibet.

Born in Karnataka’s Kollegal district, the 19-year old set himself on fire on Friday at 9 pm against China’s illegal occupation of Tibet and for their policies towards Tibetan people. He is undergoing treatment in a district hospital.

Talking about his reason for self immolation, Choeying said, “Since I was a small boy, I always wanted to do something for Tibet as it is illegally occupied by the Chinese government and the current policies of the Chinese government wiping out Tibetan language and culture.”

He currently remains in the Heritage Hospital, Varanasi with 66.6 percent burns.

Choeying is an active member of the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) in Varanasi and was also a part of TYC volunteer crew during the 2017 Kalachakra Teachings in Bodh Gaya.

The Tibetan Youth Congress is the largest Tibetan NGO based in exile Tibetan community working for freedom and independence of Tibet.

So far, there have been 150 self-immolations by the Tibetan people, a majority of which have taken place inside Tibet.

Choeying is fifth such Tibetan Youth Congress member, who resorted to this style of protest in India.

Tibetan student, who attempted self-immolation, dies

PTI, The Outlook, 23 July 2017

New Delhi, Jul 23 A 19-year-old Tibetan student, who had attempted self-immolation on a university campus in Varanasi demanding a “free Tibet”, has succumbed to his injuries in a hospital here, a doctor said today.

Tenzin Choeying, a student of the Central University of Tibetan Studies in Varanasi, succumbed to his burn injuries at the Safdarjung Hospital yesterday.

“He died yesterday, days after he was shifted here from a Varanasi hospital for specialised treatment,” said a senior doctor of the Safdarjung Hospital.

He added that the body would be handed over to the authorities after post-mortem.

According to the police, Choeying had set himself ablaze on July 14 on the university campus, while protesting against the Chinese rule in Tibet, and was being treated at a Varanasi hospital, before being shifted to Delhi.

The police in Varanasi had said that as per the accounts of eyewitnesses, Choeying shouted “freedom” before pouring kerosene on his body and setting himself ablaze.

The police were looking at every possibility which led the Tibetan student to take the extreme step, including failure in examinations.

According to the International Campaign for Tibet, 150 Tibetans have self-immolated since 2009.

Tibetan student dies after setting himself alight in India

Agence France-Presse, The Independent, 24 July 2017

A Tibetan student who self-immolated in an act of protest against Chinese rule in the Himalayan region has died in an Indian hospital, a doctor said yesterday, reports AFP from New Delhi.

Tenzin Choeying, 19, succumbed to critical burn injuries in New Delhi a week after shouting “Victory to Tibet” and setting fire to himself at a university campus in Varanasi, in India’s northern Uttar Pradesh state.

“He died on Saturday days after he was shifted from a Varanasi hospital for

specialised treatment,” Anil Rai, medical superintendent at Safdarjung hospital, told AFP.

His body will be handed over to the authorities after a postmortem, Rai added.

Self-immolation has regularly been used as a protest against China’s actions in Tibet.

The International Campaign for Tibet—which claims 150 Tibetans have self-immolated since since 2009 -- said Choeying shouted “Victory to Tibet” before setting himself on fire.

Varanasi police, quoting eyewitnesses, said the 19-year-old yelled “freedom” before dousing himself with kerosene and setting himself ablaze on July 14.

Martyr Choeying’s parents urge Tibetan youths not to self-immolate

Tibetan Review, 26 July 2017

(TibetanReview.net, Jul26, 2017) – As Tibetans paid their last respects to Tenzin Choeying, a 19-year-old third-year student who immolated himself in the Central University of Tibetan Studies at Varanasi on Jul 14 in protest against the Chinese rule in Tibet, his parents have called for refrain from such type of protest action. Choeying was airlifted from Varanasi to Safdarjang Hospital in New Delhi for specialist treatment on Jul 20 but succumbed to his burns in the evening of Jul 22. His body was then brought to Dharamshala to enable Tibetans to pay their last respects and for his cremation services.

Choeying’s father Ngawang Khedup told the gathering that all Tibetans, young or old, have a collective responsibility to fight for the Tibetan cause. And he urged the younger generation to carry on the fight by educating themselves thoroughly. He said the loss of even one Tibetan life was a grave misfortune.

Choeying’s mother Tashi Yangzom said pretty much the same thing. She urged the younger generation of Tibetans to refrain from harming themselves. She stressed the importance of preserving Tibetan cultural heritage and language, a demand voiced by her deceased son.

Choeying had told his mother when he came home during the last winter vacation that he would not be coming during next year’s vacation as he had some important work to do for Tibet and asked whether it was okay. Having no inkling of what he was up to, Yangzom had said she readily agreed while telling him it was important for him to study hard for his country and people.

His father too said that he thought his son was joking when he said he had left

some clothes for his parents to wear to thank them.

Choeying's body was brought up and kept in the office of the Tibetan Youth Congress, of which he was an active member, ahead of his cremation on Jul 26. The Tibetan Youth Congress campaigns for the restoration of Tibet's independence from Chinese rule.

Hundreds of Tibetans lined up since early morning to pay their respects to the latest addition to their rank of martyrs.

The president of the Central Tibetan Administration, Lobsang Sangay, was among those who paid their last respects to Choeying.

Tibetan self-immolator Tenzin Choeying cremated in Dharamsala

PTI, India Today, 26 July 2017

<https://www.indiatoday.in/pti-feed/story/tibetan-self-immolator-tenzin-choeying-cremated-in-dharamsala-1005130-2017-07-26>

Dharamsala, Jul 26 (PTI) The father of Tibetan teenager Tenzin Choeying, who died after setting himself on fire, today urged Tibetans not to take the fatal step and instead pursue their cause through stronger means -- like education.

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral procession of 19-year-old Choeying, who succumbed to his burn injuries on July 22, after attempting self-immolation on a university campus in Varanasi, on July 14, demanding a "free Tibet".

Among the attendees were officials from the Tibetan government-in-exile, exiled Tibetans and supporters.

Choeyings father, Ngawang Khedup said his only regret was not speaking to his son before he took the extreme step.

"I urge the youth to pursue more powerful means such as education to contribute substantially to our cause," said Khedup.

"We must have the determination to achieve our goals, i.e. the freedom for six million Tibetans and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Potala palace and place the Tibetan national flag back on the world map," he said.

Following the service, the body was taken to the McLeod Ganj crematorium, in upper Dharamsala.

Speaking highly of Choeying for his "dedication towards the Tibetan issue and preservation of Tibetan culture and language", Tibetan Youth Congress vice-president Tamding Hrichoe urged the Chinese government to heed the calls of

Tibetan self-immolators.

“I would also urge the United Nations and remind them that they are the global organization formed to address any abuse of human rights and freedom,” said Hrichoe.

Tibetan parliament Speaker Khenpo Sonam Tenphel said that all Tibetans had a collective responsibility to fulfil the late teenagers wish “of preserving the Tibetan language, and culture which is the main source of strength in our struggle”.

Tibetan Self-Immolator Tenzin Choeying Dies in Indian Hospital

RFA News, 2017-07-24

A Tibetan student who set himself on fire in India on July 14 in a protest calling for Tibetan freedom has died in a hospital in Delhi, sources said.

Tenzin Choeying, 19, passed away at about 4:50 p.m. on July 22, having suffered burns that finally spread to 90 percent of his body, doctors at Delhi’s Safdarjung Hospital said.

Choeying’s remains were set to be taken to the Indian hill town of Dharamsala, seat of the Tibetan government in exile, where they are expected to arrive on July 25, Tibetan activist and relative Tenzin Tsundue told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“There, the Tibetan Youth Congress [TYC] plans to organize his cremation on the morning of the 26th, guided by Tibetan astrological calculations,” Tsundue said.

Choeying, a member of the TYC regional chapter in Varanasi, India, set himself ablaze at around 9:00 a.m. on July 14 at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in a protest calling for freedom for his homeland, Tibetan sources said in earlier reports. Choeying was especially concerned that Tibetans living under Chinese rule should be allowed to learn their own language, one source said.

‘Urgent pleas for help’

“The image of a person engulfed in flames is shocking, often disturbing, to people living in the free world,” Tenzin Dorjee, former director of the Students for a Free Tibet activist group wrote in a recent posting on his Facebook page.

“But instead of being disturbed by [these acts], we must understand them as urgent pleas for help and intervention from a people who have been pushed to the brink of existence by decades of ruthless repression and colonial oppression by China,” Dorjee wrote.

Self-immolation protests by Tibetans living outside Tibetan-populated areas of China are rare, while a total of 150 have now set themselves ablaze in Tibet and Tibetan-populated counties in western China.

Most protests feature demands for Tibetan freedom and the return of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama from India, where he has lived in exile since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

Tenga

Age: 63

Occupation: monk

Date: 23 November 2017

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Report: Tibetan monk sets himself on fire in western China

Associated Press, November 30, 2017

<https://apnews.com/ee109b745ace44318a39534d5edf5b2b>

BEIJING (AP) — A Tibetan monk set himself on fire in western China in an apparent protest against Chinese rule in the traditionally Tibetan region, a monitoring group said Thursday.

Citing an unidentified friend, London-based Free Tibet said 63-year-old Tenga set himself alight on Sunday in Sichuan province's Kardze county while shouting "We want freedom in Tibet."

Security forces put out the flames and carried Tenga away, the group said. It wasn't clear whether he survived.

Police, government and religious affairs bureau officials in the region either said they were unaware of the situation or did not answer their phones.

The self-immolation was the first among the Tibetan Buddhist community in the region since April.

Nearly 150 Tibetans have immolated themselves since 2009, including monks and laypeople, in protest against Chinese policies and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader.

The actions have sparked increased security measures in the already heavily policed region, one possible reason behind their decreased frequency in recent years.

The area is off-limits to foreign media, making it virtually impossible to confirm reported self-immolations, which are believed to have peaked in 2012 with 83 that year.

China claims Tibet, including Kardze, has been part of its territory for more than seven centuries and regards the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist. Many Tibetans insist they were essentially independent for most of that time and have protested what they regard as China's heavy-handed rule.

Tibetan monk self-immolates in China: campaigners

By [AFP](#), December 1, 2017

BEIJING: A 63-year-old Tibetan monk has self-immolated in southwest China in protest against Beijing's presence in Tibet, campaigners said, the fifth person to do so this year.

Tenga, a popular monk and volunteer teacher of village children, died after setting himself ablaze Sunday in Sichuan province's Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, said the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), headquartered in Washington.

The group said he was the 151st Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009. Earlier this year, another Ganzi resident named Wangchuk Tseten also carried out a fatal self-immolation.

Authorities told AFP they knew nothing about the latest incident.

London-based campaign group Free Tibet cited a friend of Tenga's present at the scene as saying the monk shouted "we want freedom in Tibet" as he lit himself on fire.

It released a horrific minute-long video of the incident, which showed the man burning on a street before a crowd of onlookers, as some quietly recited prayers. Uniformed officers then swept in with blankets and a fire extinguisher to put out the flames.

"He said that every Tibetan has a responsibility, and told me that wherever I went, I should not forget Tibet. I always remember him saying, proudly, I am Tibetan," said one of Tenga's relatives now living in exile in the US, according to the ICT.

Beijing says its troops “peacefully liberated” Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the Communist central government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled into exile after a failed uprising in 1959.

Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire.

63 year old Tibetan monk self-immolates in Chinese ruled Tibet

By Lobsang Tenchoe, *Tibet Express*, 30 November 2017

A senior Tibetan monk has set himself on fire in Kardze in the traditional Tibetan province of Kham in an apparent protest against China’s rule in Tibet.

Tenga, a 63-year-old monk is reported to have self immolated on Nov 26, according to the exile administration’s official website and several online reports.

The elderly Tibetan monk is said to have shouted “freedom in Tibet” as he self-immolated. Chinese police arrived within minutes at the protest site and took away his charred body, the reports said.

But sources in the region told Tibet Express that it is hard confirm the exact date on which Tenga staged the fiery protest as there is heavy security presence in the region which has made it impossible to contact his family members. However, one of the sources said Tenga self-immolated on Nov 20.

Tenga hails from Dadho village near Kardze county in eastern Tibet. The elderly Tibetan monk conducts prayer teachings for local Tibetans and he is refereed by the locals as Gen Tenga, meaning teacher Tenga in Tibetan.

At least 150 Tibetans have self-immolated in occupied Tibet since 2009. Out of which, 126 are known to have died. Karze alone accounts for 13 fiery protests.

Though the Central Tibetan Administration headquartered in Dharamsala has repeatedly urged Tibetans not to resort to drastic measures such as self-immolation, the saga of fiery protests by the Tibetans continues.

Tibetan Monk Burns to Death in Sichuan Calling For Tibetan Freedom

RFA News, 2017-11-29

A Tibetan monk set himself ablaze and died on Sunday in western Sichuan province in a challenge to Chinese rule in Tibetan areas, Tibetan sources said.

The protest brings to 151 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans living in China since the wave of burnings began in 2009.

Tenga, aged 63 and a monk at a monastery in Sichuan's Kardze (in Chinese, Ganzi) county, set himself alight on Sunday, Nov. 26, and died of his burns, a Tibetan living in exile in South India told RFA's Tibetan Service, citing sources in Kardze.

While burning, Tenga called out for freedom for Tibet, a second source said, speaking on condition of anonymity from inside Tibet.

"Security officers and armed police quickly arrived at the scene and took his body away," the source said.

"Afterward, there was a heavy security clampdown in the area, with family members in Dando village placed under watch by Chinese police."

"With police now stationed around his house, and phone calls not getting through, it is difficult to assess the current situation," he said.

"Police have not returned [Tenga's] body to his family yet," a third source said, also speaking on condition he not be named.

Communications clampdown

News of Tenga's fiery protest on Sunday was briefly delayed in reaching outside media contacts due to communications clampdowns imposed by Chinese authorities in the Kardze area.

Telephone and online social media connections are now blocked in the area where the incident occurred, RFA's source in South India said, adding that a phone call he had made to Kardze seeking information ended abruptly when the phone line was cut.

"But what we know for sure is that he burned himself for the Tibetan cause, and that he demanded freedom for Tibet," he said.

The second of four siblings in his family, Tenga had worked as a volunteer teacher before joining the Kardze monastery, another local source said.

"He was very popular in several villages in his hometown, where he was respectfully called 'Teacher' by the villagers," the source said.

A total of 151 people have now set themselves ablaze in Tibet and Tibetan-populated counties in western China. Their protests have featured demands for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from India, where he has lived since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

Tibetan Monk Self-Immolates in China, Say Campaigners

PTI, 01 December 2017

A 63-year-old monk has self-immolated in southwest China in protest against Beijing's presence in Tibet, campaigners said, the fifth person to do so in 2017.

Tenga, a popular monk and volunteer teacher of village children, died after setting himself ablaze on Sunday, 26 November, in Sichuan province's Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, said the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), headquartered in Washington.

Authorities told AFP they knew nothing about the latest incident.

London-based campaign group Free Tibet cited a friend of Tenga's present at the scene as saying the monk shouted "we want freedom in Tibet" as he lit himself on fire.

It released a horrific minute-long video of the incident, which showed the man burning on a street before a crowd of onlookers, as some quietly recited prayers. Uniformed officers then swept in with blankets and a fire extinguisher to put out the flames.

One of Tenga's relatives, now living in exile in the US, according to the ICT, said: He said that every Tibetan has a responsibility, and told me that wherever I went, I should not forget Tibet. I always remember him saying, proudly, I am Tibetan.

Beijing says its troops "peacefully liberated" Tibet in 1951, but many Tibetans accuse the Communist central government of religious repression and eroding their culture.

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama fled into exile after a failed uprising in 1959.

Tibetan monks within China have reported a campaign of government intimidation targeting the family and friends of those who set themselves on fire

CTA Holds Prayer Service for Tenga Who Self-immolated for Tibet

www.tibet.net, December 2, 2017

DHARAMSHALA: The Department of Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration today held a prayer service for Tenga (63) who died after burning himself in protest against the Chinese government on 26 November in Kardze, eastern Tibet.

The prayer service was presided over by Lupon Thupten Choephel of Namgyal Monastery, and attended by members of the Kashag, members of the Tibetan Parliament, chief justice commissioners and staff of the Central Tibetan Administration along with local Tibetan public.

In his condolence remarks, President Dr Lobsang Sangay expressed the Kashag's profound sadness at the self-immolation of Tenga and read out a brief biography of the deceased, describing him as a scholar of Tibetan language. He further conveyed the Kashag's concern at the clampdown imposed by local Chinese authorities in Kardze following the self-immolation.

He highlighted the growing international attention on the situation inside Tibet, citing the coverage of the latest self-immolation protest in leading international dailies and the discussion on status of Tibetan political prisoners in the Canadian parliament.

"The Canadian senate recently raised the issue of five Tibetan political prisoners including the status of Panchen Rinpoche. The Canadian foreign minister also stated in the parliament that China should allow human rights activists and UN officials to meet the Panchen Lama who has been forcibly kidnapped since the age of six. The United Nations has also released a report on the situation inside Tibet based on five urgent researches conducted between February and August this year," he said, and urged the international community to do more to alleviate the sufferings of the Tibetan people inside Tibet.

President Dr Sangay also underlined non-violence as the principal approach undertaken by the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom including the self-immolators. "At least 150 people have set themselves on fire in protest since 2009. However, not even a single person has resorted to violence or attempted to hurt someone while staging their protest. This is something that the world should know," he said.

Addressing the Tibetan diaspora, he said the Tibetan people in exile should heed the profound aspirations of the Tibetan people inside Tibet i.e, restoration of freedom inside Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet. "We should treat the aspirations of the Tibetan people inside Tibet as sacred and exert our concerted effort to fulfill their aspirations by preserving the unity of the Tibetan people," he said.

Dr Sangay further urged Chinese president Xi Jinping to reform China's failed policies in Tibet in his second term, and said that repressive, hard line policies will never work, but rather they should address the genuine grievances of the

Tibetan people to resolve the Tibet issue.

Despite the Central Tibetan Administration's repeated appeals not to resort to drastic actions such as self-immolation, at least 150 Tibetans have set themselves on fire inside Tibet since 2009. Out of the 150, 128 of them has died while the status of the rest remains unknown. Tenga who was the latest self-immolater, has raised calls for freedom in Tibet before succumbing to his injuries that he has sustained during the fiery protest.

Konpe

Age: 30

Occupation:

Date: 23 December 2017

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan man self-immolates in protest at Chinese rule

Gulf Times, DPA/Beijing, December 28 2017

A 30-year-old Tibetan man has died after setting himself on fire earlier this week in an act of political protest, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, marking the sixth death by self-immolation this year.

The organization identified the man as Konpe, a former Buddhist monk, late Wednesday. It said that Konpe self-immolated on December 23 in Ngaba while shouting inaudible statements and died the following day.

Since 2009, 152 Tibetans including Konpe have self-immolated in “one of the most sweeping and significant waves of self-immolation as political protest globally,” according to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Self-immolation is seen as an act of extreme political protest against Beijing, which has ruled Tibet since 1951. Ngaba has been the site of dozens of self-immolations and it is where the movement began in 2009.

A prayer service was held by the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala, India on Wednesday, which included remarks from President Lobsang Sangay.

“The video of Konpe’s self-immolation that is circulated on social media is really disturbing and poignant,” Sangay said at the ceremony, according to a statement from the exiled government.

“Although the slogans that he raised were not clear, we can safely say that the step he has taken is a desperate message to the Chinese government of the grim situation prevailing inside Tibet for Tibetans.”

Tibetan man self-immolates in Ngaba County in eastern Tibet

By Lobsang Tenchoe, *Tibet Express*, 25 December 2017

A Tibetan man engulfed in fire in a video circulating on social media sites has been identified as Konpe and has passed away after his fiery protest.

Konpe reportedly self-immolated in Ngaba County in Amdo on 6:30 pm (Local Time) in an apparent protest against China's repressive rule in Tibet on Dec 23.

Of late, video of Konpe's fiery protest has been circulating across social media sites. In the video, he can be seen marching forward on the street in front of Kirti monastery in Ngaba County while his entire body was engulfed in fire.

Chinese police are said to have arrived within minutes at the protest site and took Konpe to Barkham but he passed away around 5 am (Local Time).

The Chinese police are said to have summoned his family to Barkham to collect his remains, but the Chinese police has dented his father claiming that tens of thousands of Yuan were spent on medical treatment for his son.

Konpe, son of Gyakyap and Thindok . Konpe, hails from Chukle Gongma pastoral community in Cha village but moved to Meruma Township in Ngaba region in eastern Tibet's Amdo Province after his marriage a year ago. He is the 151st Tibetan known to have self-immolated inside Tibet since 2009.

Though the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) headquartered in Dharamsala has repeatedly urged Tibetans not to resort to drastic measures such as self-immolation, the saga of fiery protests by the Tibetans continues.

“Despite repeated appeals from the Central Tibetan Administration, at least 151 Tibetans have set themselves on fire inside Tibet since 2009. The Chinese government should realise that the cause as well as the solution to this wave of fiery protests lie with the Chinese government itself,” a report by CTA's official Tibet.net cited President Dr Lobsang Sangay as saying after Konpe's fiery protest.

Self-immolation in Tibet continues in protest of Chinese occupation

By Duncan DeAeth, *Taiwan News*, Staff Writer, 25 December 2017

On Saturday Dec. 23, a 30 year old Tibetan Man set himself ablaze along the

infamous “Martyr’s Lane” in the town of Ngawa in Sichuan.

The 30 year old man, named Konpe, is the most recent in a long line of martyrs who have chosen to self-immolate in protest of the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Following the events of Dec.23, the president of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, Dr. Lobsang Sangay, called on China to address the grievances of Tibetans suffering under the Chinese government, according to VOA.

Since 2009, there have been 151 Tibetans have chosen to die as martyrs by self-immolation. Expressing his concern about the problem the president said that the Chinese government must recognize that the problem of this issue, and the solution both lie with them.

Witnesses say Konpe was shouting slogans promoting Tibetan Independence before he set himself aflame around 6p.m. on Saturday evening. Shortly after, Chinese authorities arrived to remove the man.

Some alleged footage of the incident has been shared through the internet.

He was reportedly taken to a hospital, but died of his wounds on the morning of Dec. 24. Authorities then immediately cremated the body despite requests of the family members to receive the body, reports the Tibet Post.

Konpe was reportedly a former monk of the Kirti Monastery. He is the sixth person to carry out a self-immolation protest in 2017, with the previous occurring on Nov. 26 by a monk named Tenga.

The protesters generally demand an end to the occupation of Tibet, and a call for religious freedom, respect and humane treatment from the Chinese government.

Tibetan Self-Immolator, a Former Kirti Monk, Dies of His Burns

RFA News, 2017-12-26

A Tibetan man who set himself on fire and died on Saturday in western China’s Sichuan province has been identified as a husband and former Kirti monastery monk who opposed Beijing’s rule in Tibetan areas of China, Tibetan exile sources say.

Konpe, aged about 30, set himself ablaze at around 6:00 p.m. on Dec. 23 on the main road of Ngaba town, a site of numerous self-immolations and other protests calling for Tibetan freedom, a Tibetan monk living in India told RFA’s Tibetan Service.

“While Konpe was burning, police and other people arrived and extinguished the fire and took him to Barkham hospital, reaching there around 10:00 p.m.,”

Lobsang Yeshe, spokesman for the India branch of Kirti monastery, said, referring to a hospital in a neighboring county.

“However, he died at about 5:00 p.m. on Dec. 24,” Yeshe said, citing contacts in Ngaba.

Detailed information on Konpe’s identity and condition were briefly delayed owing to a communications clampdown imposed by Chinese authorities in the area.

However, a video obtained on Saturday by RFA and circulating widely on social media shows a person engulfed in flames and walking down the street, while a woman nearby can be heard calling out in tears to exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

“Afterwards, Chinese authorities sent a message to Konpe’s family and relatives, telling them he had died and saying they should come to the hospital to collect his remains,” Yeshe said, adding that restaurants and shops in Ngaba remained closed on Dec. 24 and 25 out of sympathy for Konpe’s family.

Death rituals performed

Family members are now performing death rituals for Konpe, a second source in Dharamsala, India, told RFA on Dec. 25.

“But Konpe’s father has now been detained by authorities in Barkham, who tell him that tens of thousands of yuan [10,000 yuan = U.S. \$1,530] were spent on Konpe’s medical treatment before he died,” the source, Kirti monastery monk Kanyag Tsering said.

Konpe, a former resident of the Chukle Gongma pastoral community in Ngaba county’s Cha village, married Kelsang Lhamo, a daughter of the Rawa family in Meuruma Settlement No. 2, about a year ago and had joined her family there, Tsering said.

“His father’s name is Gyakyab and his mother’s name is Trindok,” Tsering said.

“He has two brothers and three sisters. One brother is a Kirti monk. Konpe himself joined the monastery as a young child, but later disrobed,” Tsering said.

Konpe’s protest brings to 152 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009.

Most protests feature demands for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from India, where he has lived since escaping Tibet during a failed national uprising in 1959.

December 23 Tibet self-immolator a former monk, died next morning

Tibetan Review, December 27 2017

Further details emerging about the self-immolation which took place on Dec 23 evening in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province say the fiery protest was carried out by a 29-30-year-old Tibetan man named Konpe. The reports say he had succumbed to his burns the next morning.

One source said he was a former monk of the local Kirti Monastery who had since got married.

Reports said the man was taken by Chinese police to Barkham (Ma'erkang) County where he died around 5 am.

Police were reported to have summoned the man's family to Barkham to collect his remains but then detained his father until he repaid the few thousand yuan they claimed to have spent on his son's treatment. The police were also stated to have cremated the deceased's body rather than handing it over to his family for performing the last rites.

The deceased was stated to be a resident of Meuruma Township in Aba County after he was married off into the Rawangtsang family there.

Tsekho aka Tsekho Tukchak

Age: 44

Occupation:

Date: 7 March 2018

Place of self-immolation: Meuruma, Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Tibetan man dies in self-immolation protest in China's Sichuan province, group says

Associated Press, 8 March 2018. (As appeared in *South China Morning Post*)

A man set himself on fire and died in southwestern China's Sichuan province in the first self-immolation protest among Tibetans this year, monitoring groups reported on Thursday.

Tsekho Tugchak, reportedly in his 40s, died in Ngaba county on Wednesday amid intensified security in the restive region ahead of the anniversary of the

2008 riots in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, and the 1959 independence uprising, the International Campaign for Tibet said.

ICT said his death was the 153rd self-immolation by a Tibetan since the protests began in 2009. The Free Tibet Campaign and US-backed Radio Free Asia also reported the death, saying it took place in Ngaba's Meruma township.

In Beijing, Tibet's Communist Party chief – the region's most powerful official – dismissed the reports.

"I don't think they're telling the truth," Wu Yingjie told reporters at a meeting on the sidelines of the annual session of China's ceremonial parliament.

The self-immolations by Tibetans monks, nuns and laypeople aim to highlight harsh Beijing rule and the oppression of Tibet's Buddhist culture, as well as appeal for the return of exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

The region is closed to foreign media, making it virtually impossible to confirm reported self-immolations, which are believed to have peaked in 2012 with 83 that year.

Staff members reached at police headquarters, government offices and the local propaganda department in Ngaba, also known by its Chinese name, Aba, said they had no knowledge of the case. All declined to give their names as is usual among Chinese bureaucrats.

China claims Tibet's traditional territory, including Ngaba, has been part of its territory for more than seven centuries and regards the Dalai Lama as a dangerous separatist.

Many Tibetans insist they were essentially independent for most of that time and have protested what they regard as Beijing's heavy-handed rule imposed after it took control of Tibet in 1950, in what it calls a "peaceful liberation" of the remote, Himalayan region.

An uprising against Beijing's rule in Tibet erupted in 1958 and troops crushed it the following year. The Dalai Lama fled from the crackdown and was granted asylum in India.

He has lived mostly in Dharamsala, where his supporters run a small government in exile and advocate for autonomy for Tibet by peaceful means.

Meanwhile, Indian officials said on Wednesday that exiled Tibetans had been banned from holding a rally with the Dalai Lama in New Delhi this month to mark the 60th anniversary of the failed uprising against Beijing's rule.

"We don't want Tibetans to hold big anti-China protests in New Delhi because it creates a bit of diplomatic tension between India and China," a senior foreign

ministry official said.

“It’s a very sensitive time for India and China ties and we want to ease tensions.”
Peoples Liberation Army’s battled its way into the Himalayan region in 1950.

Tibetan Dies in Self-Immolation in Sichuan’s Ngaba County

RFA News, 2018-03-07

A Tibetan man self-immolated on Wednesday in Sichuan’s Ngaba county in an apparent protest against Chinese rule and policies in the far-western region of China, a Tibetan source living abroad said.

Tsekho Tukchak, set himself ablaze in Ngaba’s Meruma township at about 5 p.m. local time and died at the scene, said Meuruma Kungyam, a Tibetan political prisoner living in Australia who is from the same town as Tukchak.

“At the time of his self-immolation, Tsekho called out, ‘Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet,’” Kungyam said. “The self-immolation was a protest against China’s repressive policy in Tibet.”

Tukchak, also known as Tsekho Topchag, was in his early 40s and is survived by his mother, wife and two daughters, he said.

Local residents told Kungyam that Tukchak had lately expressed concern about China’s occupation of Tibet and repression of their culture.

“He paid great attention to Tibetan issues and was very capable of speaking out about the cause,” Kungyam said. “Whether it was at a tea shop or in the market, he often discussed Tibetan issues and convincingly explained Tibet’s situation to others.”

In recent days, Chinese authorities have deployed an increased number of security forces in Meruma, ready to crack down on large gatherings and blocking internet service, he said.

Tukchak likely self-immolated on Wednesday because he assumed the heavy security presence would have made it difficult to carry out his plan on March 10, Kungyam said, referring to the 59th anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese occupation of the formerly self-governing region.

Security forces spread throughout the region in the run-up to the anniversary of the incident, which saw thousands of Tibetans killed amid a crackdown by Chinese authorities and led to the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile in 1959.

The day will also mark the 10th anniversary of the beginning of several days of peaceful protest that were brutally suppressed by police and culminated in an

anti-China riot in Tibet's capital Lhasa on March 14, 2008.

During the riot, Tibetan demonstrators torched ethnic Han Chinese shops in the city and carried out deadly attacks on Han residents.

Protests then spread across Tibet and into Tibetan-populated provinces of western China, causing official embarrassment ahead of the August 2008 Beijing Olympics. Hundreds of Tibetans were detained, beaten, or shot as Chinese security forces quelled the protests.

Chinese officials later said that 22 people, mostly Han Chinese and Hui Muslim civilians, died in the Lhasa rioting, but denied that police had fired on protesters.

'Prayers for his martyrdom'

Meanwhile, news of Tukchak's death has spread throughout Meruma township and beyond.

"Tibetans in Tibet are sad to hear the news and are mourning the death of the self-immolator Tsekho," said a source inside Tibet, who declined to be named.

"Many Tibetans are saying prayers for his martyrdom," the source said. "The situation in the area is very tense."

Tukchak's self-immolation was also noted by Lobsang Sangay, president of the India-based Central Tibetan Authority (CTA), who expressed "deep concern" over the incident and reiterated an appeal by the CTA to Tibetans to refrain from such protests in a statement on Wednesday.

Sangay said that self-immolations by Tibetans in Tibet, however, "evidences that repression in Tibet under the Chinese rule is making lives unlivable" and urged China's government to heed to the calls of those who "long for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet."

Tukchak's protest brings to 153 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans living in China since the wave of fiery protests began in 2009.

Most protesters who have set themselves on fire have called for Tibetan freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from India where lived since 1959.

Tibetan man dies in self-immolation protest ahead of 59th anniversary of uprising

Hong Kong Free Press, 8 March 2018

A Tibetan man has died after self-immolating on Wednesday in the western province of Sichuan, according to US-backed Radio Free Asia and rights groups.

Tsekho Tukchak, a man in his 40s, set himself on fire at around 5pm in the town

of Meruma. The town is in Ngaba county – known as Aba county in Chinese. Tukchak died at the scene, according to Meuruma Kungyam, a Tibetan living in Australia speaking to RFA.

His protest took place amid a buildup to the anniversary of the March 10 Tibetan uprising in 1959. The date also marks the 10th anniversary of the beginning of 2008 protests. Overseas NGO the International Campaign for Tibet said there has been increased security leading up to the anniversary, with a series a military drills and the presence of troops in riot gear at prayer festivals.

According to Kungyam, who is from the same town as Tukchak, Tukchak called out “Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet” at the time of his self-immolation.

“The self-immolation was a protest against China’s repressive policy in Tibet,” Kungyam said.

He added that the Chinese authorities have blocked internet services and increased security forces in Meruma ready to crack down on large gatherings.

Matteo Mecacci, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, said: “Since the wave of self-immolations in Tibet began in Ngaba, Tsekho Tugchak’s home area, the Chinese authorities have responded by intensifying the military buildup and repression... It is unthinkable that China can continue to block all independent investigations and requests of access to Tibet and impose a regime of fear and repression.”

Lobsang Sangay, the president of the Tibetan government in exile, expressed deep concern over reports of Tukchak’s protest.

“Despite repeated appeals from the Central Tibetan Administration not to resort to drastic measures such as self-immolation, at least 152 Tibetans including Tsekho have set themselves on fire since 2009 in Tibet,” he said.

“Such sacrifices by Tibetans in Tibet evidences that repression in Tibet under the Chinese rule is making lives unlivable.”

Free Tibet Director Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren said: “Chinese authorities are quick to complain about its ‘hurt feelings’ whenever anyone mentions Tibet or human rights. Yet Tibetans suffer far more tangible pain on a daily basis. Every time a politician or a company defers to one of China’s melodramatic objections, they are telling the world that they believe a Tibetan life is worth less than the Chinese government’s feelings. We cannot just stand by and condone this callous indifference.”

In March 2008, protests in Lhasa marking the anniversary of the Tibetan uprising 49 years earlier escalated into violence, causing embarrassment as China prepared to host the Olympics in Beijing.

China has ruled Tibet since the 1950s, and has been accused of trying to eradicate its Buddhist-based culture through political and religious repression. Tukchak's self-immolation was the first reported case this year.

Chinese authorities say Tibetans enjoy extensive freedoms and that they brought economic growth to the region and liberated the people from serfdom.

Tibet's Government in Exile Laments Another Self-immolation Incident

By *TWJ Reporters*, 9 March 2018

<https://wokejournal.com/2018/03/09/tibets-government-in-exile-laments-another-self-immolation-incident-2/>

The Tibetan Government in Exile on Thursday criticised Chinese government, a day after a Tibetan self-immolated himself in China's Sichuan province. Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) President Dr Lobsang Sangay said another self-immolation incident was a disturbing news and it showed that the Tibetans denounce the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

"As you know Ngaba (a county in Sichuan), especially around the Kirti Monastery in Ngawa City had the most number of self-immolators, so it's sad to learn that one more person has committed self-immolation; from what I know he was in his 40s, has a wife and two daughters," Dr Sangay told ANI here.

Adding to one of the many incidents of self-immolation in Tibet, a middle-aged man from the Ngaba county of the province set himself ablaze on Wednesday, in protest against China's policies.

Tsekho, popularly known as Tsekho Tugchak, hailed from a nomadic village in Meurumatownship of the county. He survived by his mother, wife and two daughters. With Tsekho's self-immolation, 152 Tibetans have self-immolated, of which 130 have succumbed to their burn injuries.

The incident comes three days ahead of Tibetan Uprising Day that is observed every year on March 10 to commemorate the rebellion against Chinese occupation of Tibet. As of 5 June 2017 there have been 148 confirmed and two disputed self-immolations reported in Tibet since 27 February 2009, when Tapey, a young monk from Kirti Monastery, set himself on fire in the marketplace in Ngawa

City, Sichuan. In 2011 a wave of self-immolations by Tibetans in Chinese-occupied Tibet, as well as in India and Nepal, occurred after the self-immolation of Phuntsog of 16 March 2011 in Ngawa County, Sichuan.

Dopo or Dorbe

Age: 23

Occupation:

Date: 4 November 2018

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: deceased



Report: Tibetan dies of self-immolation in protest of China

Associated Press, November 9, 2018

BEIJING (AP) — A Tibetan man set himself on fire and died in a protest earlier this week calling for the return of the region's exiled Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, a rights monitoring group reported.

The Washington, D.C.-based International Campaign for Tibet said 23-year-old Dorbe self-immolated on Sunday in Ngaba county, a traditionally Tibetan region of Sichuan province.

The group reported that Dorbe wished long life to the Dalai Lama before setting himself on fire, becoming the 154th Tibetan to self-immolate since the protests began in 2009. Such acts have grown increasingly rare in recent years amid a smothering security crackdown by the Chinese authorities.

Many Tibetans use just one name.

China insists Tibet has been part of its territory for centuries, but many Tibetans say they were essentially independent for most of that time. The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 amid an abortive uprising against China's heavy-handed rule imposed after the People's Liberation Army's battled its way into the Himalayan region nine years earlier.

The self-immolations by Tibetans monks, nuns and laypeople aim to highlight harsh government regulations and the oppression of Tibet's Buddhist culture, as well as appeal for the return of the Dalai Lama.

The region is closed to foreign media, making it virtually impossible to confirm

reported self-immolations. Government officials routinely deny any knowledge of such incidents.

154th protest self-immolator in Tibet did not survive

Tibetan Reiven, 11 November 2018

Further reports on the protest self-immolation that took place in Chinese ruled Tibet on Nov 4 suggest that the protester did not survive and that he was a 23 year-old man whose name has been spelled as Dobo as well as Dorbe.

The reports confirm that the self-immolation took place in Ngawa (Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province but do not say how and where exactly it happened.

The reports also do not know whether there was any police intervention and who has possession of the protester's mortal remains given the fact that Chinese police routinely take custody of Tibetan self-immolators, dead or alive and ensure that families do not get to give the dead a decent, traditional burial.

The reports confirm that the protester had prayed shouts of long-life for the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, and wishes for his return to his homeland as he burned.

The reports also confirmed that Dobo belonged to the Jhakorma village-level division of the county's Choeje-Ma Township. He was stated to be living in his uncle's home after his parents passed away few years ago.

Dobo's was the 41st known protest self-immolation in Ngawa since Feb 2009, with the first one also having taken place there. His was also the 154th protest-self-immolation by Tibetans in Tibet during that period.

The Central Tibetan Administration at Dharamshala, India, held a prayer service for Dobo on Nov 9, led by the Dalai Lama's Namgyal Monastery and with the participation of its entire staff.

Drugkho

Age: 20s

Occupation:

Date: 8 December 2018

Place of self-immolation: Ngaba, Amdo

Current status: unknown



Third 2018 self-immolation in Chinese rule Tibet reported

Tibetan Review, 10 December 2018

Online reports suggest that there has been a third protest self-immolation this year in Chinese ruled Tibet with the latest one having occurred in Ngaba (or Ngawa, Chinese: Aba) County of Sichuan Province on Dec 8 afternoon.

There are no details yet about the protest incident itself, including on whether the self-immolator survived.

The self-immolator has been described as a young man named Drugkho, thought to be in his 20s, belonging to Soruma Village in the same county.

“A Tibetan youth self immolated on December 8 in the afternoon in Ngaba county, and it is true that it happened, but after the incident any discussion of this is very inconvenient,” the Tibetan Service of rfa.org Dec 9 quoted a source in Tibet as saying.

Another report said Drugkho had shouted long-life prayer for Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, as he burned, and for freedom in Tibet.

This incident brings the known number of self-immolation protesters in Chinese ruled Tibetan Plateau region since Feb 2009 to 155, including 42 in Ngaba alone.

Earlier, a 23-year-old man named Dobo was reported to have immolated himself and died in the same county on Nov 4, shouting prayers of long life for Tibet’s exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and for the latters’ right to return to his homeland. He was a resident of Jhakorma village-level division of the county’s Choeje-Ma Township. Little further information has emerged about this incident.

And in this year’s first protest self-immolation, Tsekho Tukchak, a father of two, torched himself and died in Ngaba’s Meuruma nomadic township on Mar 7, just ahead of the 59th anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising day of Mar 10, 2018.

Youth immolates self in Ngaba

Phayul, Sunday 9 December 2018

Dharamshala, Dec. 9: A Tibetan youth named Drugkho has set himself ablaze in Ngaba's Soruma township on Saturday. It is not known if he is still alive.

This marks the 164th self-immolation by a Tibetan since 1998 in Tibet and exile.

Ngaba, home of the Kirti monastery with a record number of protests and self immolation just recently saw a self-immolation by a 23-year-old Dhorbo who succumbed to burns while calling for the long life and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan Youth Self-Immolates Over China's Tibet Policies

VOA News, 10 December 2018

A young Tibetan man set himself on fire outside a district security office in China's Sichuan province earlier this month, chanting, "Long Live His Holiness the Dalai Lama! Free Tibet!"

Tibetan sources say the man, Drugkho, is about 22 years old, and is believed to still be alive, but his whereabouts and his condition remain unclear. He is the latest Tibetan to attempt to self-immolate over repressive Chinese policies in Tibet. Local sources said the incident occurred last Saturday near the Ngaba District security office, but details were scarce.

Whenever there is a self-immolation protest, China typically beefs up its security to try to prevent the news from spreading.

"There has been an immediate lockdown in the area, with internet communications blocked. A Tibetan youth self-immolated on December 8 in the afternoon in Ngaba county, and it is true that it happened, but after the incident any discussion of this is very inconvenient," RFA Tibetan service and The Tibet Post International reported, quoting sources in Tibet.

Dharamsala-based Kirti Monastery's spokesman Lobsang Yeshe says no further details were known because of strict restrictions on information flow in the area and dangers to the Tibetans speaking to the outside world.

The protester was a former monk at Kirti Monastery. He was formerly known as Chokyi Gyaltsen, but after he disrobed in 2017, he took the name of Drugkho, according to Tibetan sources.

Ngaba's main town and nearby Kirti Monastery have been the scene of repeated self-immolations and other protests in recent years by monks, former monks, and other Tibetans calling for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. Drugkho's self-immolation protest is the 42nd such confirmed incident in Ngaba.

Drugkho's protest brings the total number of self-immolations to roughly 155 in Tibet since February 2009. The majority of those self-immolators have died.

Tibetan Man in Ngaba Stages Self-Immolation Protest

RFA News, 2018-12-09

A young Tibetan man set himself on fire in Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) county, a Tibetan region in the western Chinese province of Sichuan, on Dec. 8 in a protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, sources in the region said on Sunday.

"A Tibetan youth self immolated on December 8 in the afternoon in Ngaba county, and it is true that it happened, but after the incident any discussion of this is very inconvenient" a source in Tibet told RFA's Tibetan Service.

"It has become an emergency issue and the details of the incident cannot be discussed at the moment. Everyone is aware of this self-immolation case in Ngaba, but no one has received a detailed account of the situation," the source added.

The source said the self-immolator was identified as DrukKho, from Soruma in Ngaba county, and was thought to be in his 20s.

The Tibet Post International, an online news outlet based in Dharamsala, identified the man as Drugkho and said he set himself on fire while shouting slogans calling for the long life of the Dalai Lama and freedom in Tibet.

"There has been an immediate lockdown in the area, with internet communications blocked, according to the same sources. Chinese police, government and religious affairs bureau officials in the region either said they were unaware of the situation or did not answer their phone," said the Post.

The Post and RFA's source said it was not immediately clear whether the man was alive.

"After the self-immolation, the Chinese armed police have beefed up security in Ngaba and it has become a tense situation," said a source in the Tibetan exile community.

The source told RFA that Chinese authorities, in an effort to prevent the news

from spreading, have “started to monitor any online communication between Ngaba and the world.”

T Tibetans in Ngaba have “requested their friends and relatives abroad sever any communication contacts with them for the moment,” added the second source.

Drugkho’s protest follows the Nov. 4 self-immolation of Dupo, also in Ngaba, and brings to 155 the number of self-immolations by Tibetans since the wave of fiery protests against Chinese rule of their homeland began in 2009.

It is the 42nd confirmed self-immolation in Ngaba so far, and the third in the county in 2018

Ngaba’s main town and nearby Kirti monastery have been the scene of repeated self-immolations and other protests in recent years by monks, former monks, and other Tibetans calling for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet.

INTERVIEWS,
FEATURES
&
OPINIONS

Interview with the Dalai Lama

The Hindu, 9 July 2012

Uncertainty surrounds the future of the Tibetan movement as the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, turns 77. Last year, the Tibetan spiritual leader announced he would relinquish his political roles, a position the Dalai Lamas have enjoyed since the 5th Dalai Lama, Lobsang Gyatso (1617-82). The decision came at a time of new challenges facing the Tibetan movement. More than 40 Tibetans in Tibetan areas across China have set themselves on fire in the past year to protest Chinese policies, with some calling for the exiled leader's return. The self-immolations have triggered accusations from Beijing of a plot being instigated by the Dalai Lama. Negotiations with China have stalled after the Tibetan leader's envoys resigned last month, citing a hardening Chinese stand.

The 14th Dalai Lama discussed these challenges in a wide-ranging interview with Ananth Krishnan in his residence in the hill-station town of McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, in Himachal Pradesh, on July 6, his 77th birthday.

After you made the decision of relinquishing your political authority, how has the adjustment been, for you and for Tibetans?

I am very happy. In fact, one of my secrets is that the day I formally announced or handed over all my political responsibility, that night I had very unusual sound sleep. No dreams. Just very sound sleep. I really feel, in any case, I am getting older. Our struggle is an issue or struggle for the rights of a nation. That responsibility should be carried on by the Tibetan people themselves, and should not rely on one person.

During our election, I noticed that in the Tibetan community, they are really showing genuine interest and a sense of responsibility... This is also not only my own retirement but also that of a four-century-old Tibetan tradition. Now that has ended. Proudly, voluntarily, happily.

Your special envoy in talks with Beijing, Lodi Gyari, resigned last month. Do you share his concerns that China is moving further away from trying to reach a solution?

In the last 10 years, we have had nine meetings. Because their policy is something fixed, there has been no effect. Therefore, the two envoys also feel frustrated and they resigned. That does not mean we have no interest to talk. Now there is a new elected leader [Lobsang Sangay]. As soon as he was elected, he made it

clear that as far as our relationship with the Chinese government is concerned, the Middle Way approach will continue. There is no change on our side. Once the [Chinese] leadership is thinking in a more realistic way, then we are always ready.

Following recent problems, such as the 2008 riots in Tibet and now the self-immolations, Beijing has claimed the incidents were planned in Dharamsala. You have said there needs to be a fact-finding mission.

That is very important. After the 2008 crisis, even Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, who is usually considered more moderate, blamed all these crises as being instigated from Dharamsala. Then I immediately responded, saying please send some Chinese officials and check all of our records. But there was no response.

When the first self-immolation happened, again I expressed that. The Chinese still blame everything on us. If the Chinese have the confidence, they must allow the international community to see the truth. That is very important. If they do not allow, it is an indication that they have the feeling of guilt, that they have something to hide.

Since 2008, local conditions are much worse... On the other hand, I met a number of Chinese who told me that after the 2008 crisis, they paid more attention about the crisis and feel genuine sympathy. In that respect, there is some benefit. The Chinese propaganda always says the Tibetan people are very happy, that they were liberated from the feudal system under the Dalai Lama. So now their propaganda is on shaky ground.

Following the immolations, more people may be aware of problems, but on the other hand, some Tibetan poets and writers have expressed a concern that young Tibetans must be encouraged to cherish their life and not give it away. Do you share their view?

This is a very, very delicate political issue. Now, the reality is that if I say something positive, then the Chinese immediately blame me. If I say something negative, then the family members of those people feel very sad. They sacrificed their own life. It is not easy. So I do not want to create some kind of impression that this is wrong. So the best thing is to remain neutral. Right from the beginning, when this sort of event happened, what I said, and still I am insisting, is this is not happening due to alcohol or family quarrels.

Now the Chinese government must carry thorough research, what is the cause of this, and not pretend that nothing is wrong. Like [former Chinese leader] Hu

Yaobang said in the early 1980s when he came to Lhasa, he publicly apologised about what they had done, the past mistakes. He promised they would follow a more realistic policy. Now for that kind of courage, that kind of spirit, the time has come.

Do you still have the belief that a solution to the Tibetan issue could be found within the Chinese Constitution, for meaningful autonomy?

That is the only way, the only realistic way. Number one, many Tibetans inside Tibet want independence, but according to the circumstance, the Dalai Lama supports the Middle Way approach, which is the best, realistic way. I have met, personally, quite a number of Tibetan intellectuals, some old, some young, and they all express to me they fully realise that our approach is the best approach.

Second, in order to find the solution to the Tibetan problem, Chinese support is very important. The solution must be found between Chinese and Tibetans. We have to find understanding or support from our Chinese brothers and sisters. Also, at this moment, [Tibetans] have never had the experience of democracy. Even in the refugee community, the Khampas, Amdos, U-Tsang [the three traditional Tibetan regions] people sometimes have unnecessary competition. Tibet is a huge area and a majority of Tibetans are uneducated and never experienced democracy.

And most important [Tibet is], materially backward. Tibetans also want to modernise Tibet. In order to modernise Tibet, remaining within the People's Republic of China is in our own interest, provided they must give us meaningful autonomy so that we can carry any activity regarding preservation of our culture, we can promote our language and carry out full protection of the environment. So that is a mutual benefit. Realistically speaking, separate Tibet, at this moment, I don't think it is really a benefit to us. Our approach for meaningful autonomy is not only for the Tibet Autonomous Region but for the entire area where the Tibetan population exists [in Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai and Yunnan provinces]. The Chinese Constitution itself recognises Tibetan areas — Tibetan autonomous regions, prefectures or counties. So we are asking the Chinese government that all the areas that the Constitution recognises as a Tibetan area should have the same right of meaningful autonomy.

Some Tibetans feel India is going too far to accommodate China's concerns on Tibet, especially after Hu Jintao's visit to New Delhi this year

when many Tibetans were detained and not allowed to protest. Do you feel so?

No. I think maybe in the late 20th century and beginning of 21st century maybe [the Indian government was] overcautious and had a reconciliatory attitude. For example, my visit to Tawang [in 2009], in a Cabinet meeting they had a discussion on whether I should go, but ultimately I was able to go. Now the government of India has a more realistic position than in the past. For some period, there were no significant people supporting Tibet or expressing consideration for Tibet. Now, more and more people express support. I told [a meeting of groups] that this is due to Chinese pressure, so we should thank the Chinese! I also told the Tibetans now we, whether Amdo or Khampa, have a very remarkable unity. That is also due to Chinese suppression, so we must thank the Chinese government.

On the issue of reincarnation, when the next, the 15th, Dalai Lama is chosen, China has said it will not accept your choice. In fact, the Communist Party has issued regulations on reincarnation. If China chooses its own Dalai Lama, will there be a division in the Tibetan community?

After a meeting with Tibetan religious leaders [last year] we had a consensus and I made a formal statement where I made very clear that when my age reaches around 90, then I will convene a bigger meeting. Then I will decide [on the issue]... In order for the Chinese government to take responsibility for the Dalai Lama's reincarnation, then the Chinese Communists should first accept religion and particularly Buddhism, and they should accept the theory of rebirth.

If the Dalai Lama becomes 100 per cent pro-Chinese, then Tibetans will not respect the Dalai Lama. Like what happened with the Panchen Lama. [China appointed a Panchen Lama in 1995 in place of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who was chosen by the Dalai Lama as the 11th reincarnation and was subsequently disappeared.]

I think the Panchen Lama himself now knows that. Recently during these crises, he has remained very silent. He is quite wise. It looks like the Chinese Panchen Lama is more wise than the Chinese leaders.

The Interview: Dr Lobsang Sangay

The Diplomat, September 04, 2012

Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the Kalon Tripa (prime minister) of the Tibetan government in exile, talks exclusively with Saransh Sehgal about the recent self-immolations of Tibetans inside China, his experience serving in a political position once held by the Dalai Lama, and his thoughts on Beijing's upcoming leadership transition.

You recently finished up your first year serving as the Kalon Tripa- what was it like handling the political affairs of the Tibetan exiles?

The situation inside Tibet is very grave and Tibetans inside Tibet are suffering tremendously so there are a lot of expectations and the gravity of the situation makes my job difficult. In the last year, however, we have managed to keep the solidarity and Tibetan spirit alive and strong among both the Tibetans inside and outside of Tibet. The international community also has begun to pay more attention to the Tibetans' cause and many governments have issued statements on behalf of it. Still, we would like to see concrete action from the international community. Unfortunately, the Chinese government hasn't changed their policies towards Tibet much, and continue to hold onto their hardline policies. We have not made much progress in that area.

Overall the last year has been stable, which is in itself notable. There was a high level of anxiety among Tibetans when His Holiness the Dalai Lama devolved all his political authority to the elected leader. This anxiety has subsided considerably and Tibetans are at least beginning to embrace His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision where Tibetans will be able to stand on their own feet and lead the movement on their own.

You have been traveling across the world since your term began. What types of responses have you been receiving from the governments in some of the major countries around the world?

People are generally sympathetic to the issue of Tibet and also willing to issue statements in support of Tibetans. Some governments, however, are far more hesitant to actually pressure the Chinese government to pursue a peaceful solution through dialogue. I should note though that the recent trend has been positive, with more governments now willing to address the issue directly with Beijing. Still, we wish more could be done.

You recently admitted during a press conference in New Delhi that the Dalai Lama's political shoes are hard to fill. What types of difficulties are you facing? Have you faced any domestic criticism from within the exiled Tibetans?

It is a little difficult at times. After all, I have just taken over political responsibility from His Holiness, who holds great worldwide acclaim as a Nobel peace laureate, global peace statesman, and world renowned non-violence advocate. So, obviously there are going to be a lot challenges- the job itself is a difficult one. Initial acknowledgement and recognition is also growing, so we are making progress but still have a long way to go.

There have been almost 51 self-immolations inside Tibet over the past year. What is the situation inside Tibet now?

The situation inside Tibet is very serious; the Chinese government has essentially shut down Tibet with no tourists or journalists being allowed in. The Tibetans who resident outside the capital city of Lhasa are being chased out when they visit. Even residents of Lhasa have to live in an environment of fear- for instance, there are checkpoints set up every few miles- which goes against one's nature as a human being and social animal. The Chinese government has created this system with their repressive policies. This is very sad. Of the 51 self-immolations, 41 have died. That speaks to just how grave and desperate the situation is that Tibetans are choosing to die than to leave.

What signals are you getting from Tibetans inside Tibet?

They say it is so oppressive under Chinese rule that it isn't even worth living, which is why they are self-immolating. At the same time, across the three Tibetan regions solidarity and spirit remain so strong that they have neither given up nor given in but instead continue to resist the Chinese policies.

It seems to me that the international community's response to the self-immolations has been rather lackluster, especially with regards to placing pressure on the Chinese government. What are your views?

It is very unfortunate. We welcome statements and appreciate sympathies but we would like to see these be followed with concrete actions to press the Chinese government. We'd like the foreign delegations visiting China to be allowed to visit Tibetan areas and investigate what is going on so the truth will come out. The Chinese government accuses us [Tibetan Exiles] of not telling

the truth but we also cannot accept what the Chinese government says as truth based on its word alone. If the Chinese government is telling the truth then it should allow the international community to visit Tibet and verify the Chinese government's statements. And the international community too should be saying to the Chinese government that we want access to the Tibetan regions to determine what's going on for ourselves. This will determine how best to move forward and the international community could even give suggestions and recommendations to the Chinese government on how best to move forward as well.

What are the United States and India's stances on the Tibet issue?

India has done the most for the Tibetan people because the Tibet administration is based here, large numbers of Tibetans reside here, and Tibetan schools are subsidized by the Indian government so we are the byproduct of that general humanitarian consideration. As far as the United States is concerned, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently urged the Chinese government to enter into dialogue with the Tibetan leadership to solve the issue of Tibet. And also some Congressmen have suggested there should be a contact group with a multilateral approach to solving the issue. All these ideas are welcome but we would like to see some concrete results.

What are your views on the failed China-Tibet talks?

There has been a stalemate mainly because of the hardline policies of the Chinese government – they have maintained an opaque process where they have never given us any clear indication. We wish for an earnest and substantive dialogue; their lack of willingness has stalled the process.

The Dalai Lama's two envoys to the talks with Beijing resigned this year. What message does this send?

By resigning they made it clear that given the deteriorating situation in Tibet since 2008, and with the growing number of self-immolations, they face utter frustration but lack a response from the Chinese government. From our side the envoys have said they were willing to enter into a dialogue but between January 2010 and June 2012 the Chinese government did not give a positive response to these overtures. The envoys resigned to make clear that for the time being they do not see any prospect for a dialogue. Now whenever there is once again a prospect for dialogue in the future, hopefully after the changes in the

leadership in China, we are still willing to enter into dialogue anytime, anywhere.

Who would be the next person to serve as the envoy in talks with Beijing?

Through the end of this year there will be changes in China's leadership. We want to see how that goes. We do not have a deadline as such. As soon as the Chinese government is willing and ready for talks again, we will have the new envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama ready to enter into a dialogue.

The onus of the entire Tibetan struggle is on you now. How do you feel about this?

It is a very difficult job that someone has got to do and the fact is that I have been chosen for the position. I can't complain nor do I wish to give up. I'm determined to carry forward the flag and work hard on behalf of the Tibetan cause, which is to solve the issue non-violently through dialogue.

In a recent interview the Dalai Lama expressed some hope about what China's leadership transition could mean for Tibetans. Do you expect a breakthrough once the new administration assumes power in Beijing this year?

I am hopeful that with new leadership there will be new people, new thinking and new policies - that there will be any sort of change. But given the past 50 years we do not have strong reasons to be optimistic.

Most Tibetan exiles expect you to advance talks with the Chinese, are you in any communication with Chinese officials?

I have the political responsibility for this as the administrative head so it will be our decision. We have been in informal communication but no formal ones as of yet.

Could we also expect any future administrative or political role for the 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorjee in the exiled Tibetan movement?

Not as of yet but maybe if people elect him. Any Tibetan is eligible for election and our voting system is set up so that anyone can nominate anybody else. Then it's up to him to stay in as a candidate or not.

The 2nd Special General Meeting of Tibetans is coming up at the end of September. Can you tell us what will be discussed in the meeting?

Given the severity of the situation, mainly because of self-immolations and repressive policies inside Tibet, our discussion will focus on how to best address the situation. To discuss how to organize activities and events that highlight the suffering of Tibetan people and to find ways for the administration and the people at large to help alleviate this suffering

What do you consider your biggest achievement so far during your time as Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration?

I have made some progress in keeping the solidarity and Tibetan spirit alive and strong, raised the profile of the Tibetan issue within the international community, and pressed the Chinese government to solve the issue. I have also made some progress domestically in the areas of administrative reforms, education, and information technology.

Do you think the middle way policy advocated by the Dalai Lama and you will ever succeed?

Yes, that is why I have returned from America; I have left my job at Harvard and everything else to come here and deal with the situation in a hands-on way. We will see that day sooner or later.

TIBET: 50 self-immolations later

By Emily Lodish, *The Global Post*, 21 August 2012

Once unheard of in Tibetan society, lighting oneself on fire has become a relatively common form of protest today. Since March 2009, there have been about 50 self-immolations in Tibet and ethnically Tibetan areas of China. Last week, Tibetan monk Lungtok, 21, and his friend Tashi, 20, from Ngaba county in Sichuan province became the latest to torch themselves in protest of China's repressive policies.

But, by most accounts, the repressive policies continue. Tibetan monks are still arrested and "re-educated." They are beaten and forced to denounce the Dalai Lama. They disappear.

Given the continuation of such brutality, can we then say the self-immolations have failed?

Tenzin Dorjee, executive director of Students for a Free Tibet, doesn't think so, though he admits China has intensified its crackdown as a result of the self-immolations.

Dorjee says the extreme acts of protest have rallied disparate parts of the Tibetan diaspora around what he calls the "defining nonviolent movement of our time."

Here, Dorjee — a Tibetan born and raised in exile near Dharamsala, India — explains why he sees the spate of self-immolations as a success story above all.

GP: What, if anything, has changed as a result of these acts of protest?

The Chinese government has responded to the self-immolations in the same way it always responds to perceived threats to its absolute control over Tibet – by intensifying repression and trying to stamp out resistance. But what the self-immolations have shown is that Tibetans are slowly losing fear of the regime. If you are willing to light yourself on fire, you are saying to your occupier – your tools of oppression can no longer touch me; your mechanisms of torture and abuse no longer control me. In many ways, it is the ultimate expression of resistance.

At the same time, the self-immolations truly show how critical the situation is in Tibet and how new approaches are desperately needed by the international community to help resolve the issue. On the one side you have the Chinese regime with all the military power and control trying to crush the Tibetan population, and on the other hand you have Tibetans who have not only refused to give up but are more unified than ever. The self-immolations have resulted in a call for stronger, international diplomatic approaches by world governments including a multilateral forum for Tibet, akin to the contact groups that we have seen for Syria, Kosovo, etc. This multilateral forum offers the best opportunity for applying pressure on China to stop its abuses and to seek a genuine solution to the crisis.

Given that China's repression has heightened, can we say the self-immolations are a failed tactic?

The Chinese government is responsible for creating the conditions that have led to the self-immolations in Tibet. Beijing has the power to remove the troops, withdraw the checkpoints, reduce the tensions on the ground, and end the self-immolations overnight. But instead they are exacerbating the situation by locking Tibet down. It is China that has failed in its 60-year campaign to subdue Tibet and assimilate Tibetan language, culture and identity into Chinese.

No one has the power to read the minds of those who self-immolated, but we know there has been an overwhelming call for freedom for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Self-immolation is a tactic taken by people who have not yet resorted to violence as a means to overthrow their oppressor but who are desperate for the situation to change. The effect the self-immolations have had in Tibet is powerful beyond all expectations. They have ushered in a total and irreversible awakening of the Tibetan people, built unprecedented unity among

the three provinces, and returned to Tibetans a proud cultural identity. They have unanimously rejected Chinese colonialism and fundamentally delegitimized China's rule over Tibet. They have turned Tibet into a burning issue for the Chinese government that they can no longer ignore.

They have also shifted the paradigm of activism and sacrifice. A friend of mine whose brother is in Chinese prison for joining a political protest recently spoke on the phone with her parents. The parents couldn't conceal their excitement over the phone, because their son (my friend's brother) was "about to be released from prison." I asked her when he was to be released, and she said, "In two years." The parents were saying to her: "Our son can at least return, and he'll be home in two years, unlike so many others who cannot return." The self-immolations have deepened the Tibetan people's capacity for endurance and thus increased the life and strength of the movement.

What will it take for China to change its ways?

There is one immediate step the world can take to reverse China's repressive policies: It's the formation of a "Friends of Tibet" contact group, like the Friends of Syria or the Friends of Kosovo groups, focused on resolving the Tibet crisis. Students for a Free Tibet and other groups have been calling for a multilateral approach to nonviolent intervention in Tibet, and it's encouraging to see the same appeal coming from Congressmen Frank Wolf and Jim McGovern in a letter they sent to Hillary Clinton last week. The letter urges the US government to work with other like-minded governments such as Canada, Germany, Czech Republic to start a public, multi-government group whose sole task will be to focus on the Tibet crisis and chart out a resolution that will last. At this point, the formation of such a group is one of the strongest ways to hold China accountable to its policies in Tibet.

There are many other forms of diplomatic censure that can be applied. In Myanmar, the American-led economic sanctions made a huge difference, though their impact was long underestimated. In other situations, travel bans have been imposed on officials of regimes abusing human rights. There are many practical ways that governments can pressure China to change its ways and this is where the grassroots public can make a difference by urging their political representatives to do something. It just takes political will and little bit of creativity on the part of those governments.

Although the media has reported on the self-immolations, it is hard to see why they haven't drawn more coverage. What's the best way to tell the story of the Tibetan struggle?

The real story is 6 million people locked in an epic battle — the defining non-violent movement of our time — for freedom. We Tibetans are fighting for our survival and dignity, we want our basic right to self-determination recognized by the global community of nations. What is at stake is not just the freedom of Tibetans, but also the freedom of Chinese people. One of my Chinese friends and activists often says, “In order for China to be truly free, Tibet needs to be free.” So they tell the story of everything that is wrong with oppression, everything that is wrong with the Chinese government, and heightens the urgency for the world to intervene.

The best way to tell this story is through success. If we can succeed in persuading and pressuring various governments such as Germany, Canada, the US, France, Norway, Czech Republic and others to form a multi-government coalition, a Friends of Tibet contact group, to address the emergency and begin the process of finding a real solution, that will be the victory story that could eventually bring the self-immolations to an end.

Testimony of Kirti Rinpoche, Chief Abbot of Kirti Monastery to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the grim human rights situation in Tibet as reflected by many cases of self-immolation

3 November 2011

I would like to thank the US Congress for giving me this precious opportunity to talk about the worsening human rights situation in Tibet today.

Today at this session I would like to report that Tibet was an independent country that the Communist China occupied. It has been more than half a century since the occupation and the situation in Tibet has been deteriorating year by year. The main reason for this is the fact that the early promises made by China to help the Tibetans through the so-called Democratic Reforms have disappeared like a rainbow and instead policies to oppress the Tibetan people were carried out. The Chinese government has not brought about any positive policy changes by pretending not to know that the promises it made earlier have now totally dis-

appeared. As a result the local party cadres carry out repressive policies such as to deny religious freedom and forceful confiscation of farm and nomadic produce. By decreeing everything that they say as laws, the legal punishment has now become a source of income, which has rendered any hope of justice worthless and consequently driven the Tibetan youth into desperation.

Tibet is divided into so-called autonomous regions and autonomous provinces, which sounds nice and appears to have liberal political systems. But in fact let alone such tolerant system, Tibetans do not even have half rights that ordinary Chinese do. The policies framed by the Han chauvinists / ultra-nationalists have driven the Tibetan people to the end of their tether. It has become a fact that whether a Chinese is educated or not he or she is bound to become a leader. Moreover, the fact that even the few Tibetans who work for the Chinese government are not trusted indicates that there is racial discrimination. If the Chinese leaders had accepted the mutually beneficial Middle Way policy initiated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetans and the Chinese by now would be having the same equal relations as enjoyed during the time of Tibet's great religious kings.

Hu Yaobang accepted that the Han chauvinists / ultra-nationalists officials, who are the real people who engage in separatism, have kept the central government in dark by filing reports written in flowery language. At this point, I would like to report about the situation in Tibet in general and particularly the events taking place in Ngaba in Amdo, a province in North-eastern Tibet that has close personal association with me. Apart from the general suffering of the people of Ngaba Autonomous Prefecture, the people of this region have a particular wound causing excessive suffering that spans three generations. This wound is very difficult to forget or to heal.

1. The wound of the first generation: Ngaba in Amdo was the first place that the People's Republic of China attacked during its occupation of Tibet. Before the founding of PRC, in 1935 during the Long March when the Red Army marched through Ngaba, the Chinese army destroyed Lhateng Monastery, which housed over two thousand monks. They then walked through Muge Gonchen during which many monks and civilians were either killed or wounded. The army convened a meeting in Muge Monastery and later confiscated valuables and grains from Gyarong Choktse, Kyomkyo, Japhuk and Datsang Monastery, which led to the first-ever famine in Tibet. This was the first time that Tibetans in this region survived by eating leaves of trees.

The king of Choktse, chief of Meu and people from many other areas fought against the occupying army but were defeated by sheer numbers of Chinese soldiers. The relatives of Aku Thapkey, the forty-fourth abbot of Ngaba Kirti Monastery and many others were shot dead. When the Red Army Chief, Zhu De, and his soldiers occupied the central prayer room of the Kirti Monastery during which they looted and destroyed images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the people realised that the Red Army members were not only against religion but they were also looters. It was during this time that Mao saw the vast Tibetan region and developed the idea about its occupation, which was done by ordering the Eighteenth Army to be sent into Tibet the year after the PRC was founded in October 1949. These events have caused a wound in the heart of Ngaba people, which is hard to heal.

2. The wound of the second generation: In 1958 the so-called Democratic Reform was carried out in Ngaba. The Cultural Revolution began in 1966 and two years later a local Red Guards called Hung Cheng was formed in Ngaba. All these campaigns, enforced one after another, led to the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands of Tibetans, torture, public struggle sessions, famine and other forms of inhuman persecutions. The king of Meu, Trinley Rapten was tortured until he committed suicide by jumping into a river. The Tulku of Jigme Samten Tsang and many others were sentenced to death. In short a policy to eliminate the entire Tibetan people was carried out. All the religious institutions were destroyed. Even names of all the places and people in Tibetan language were changed into Chinese, thus undermining and stifling Tibetan language and culture. For over half a century, the rich natural resources around Ngaba, particularly forests, were excessively exploited, leading to landslides, floods and other natural disasters. The destruction of the natural environment is so extensive that it appears beyond repair. Thus these caused wounds in the hearts of the second generation of Tibetans growing under Chinese rule.

3. The wound of the third generation: Since 1998, the 'Patriotic Education' campaign has been strongly enforced in monasteries around Ngaba. In the same year, on 27 April Thupten Ngodup, an elderly Tibetan man, set himself on fire and died in the Indian capital city of Delhi. In 2003 and again in 2008, the school with over 1200 students run and managed by Kirti Monastery in Ngaba was forcefully shut down and private schools such as Bontse School and another school near Khashe Thon operated by Tibetans were taken over by the government. However, the Chinese monasteries and Chinese people are permitted to

run and operate schools.

On 16 March 2008, when the people of Ngaba led by the monks of Kirti Monastery peacefully protested in Ngaba district, the Chinese security forces immediately cracked down against the protesters, killing 23 Tibetans. Kirti Monastery was surrounded by the Chinese forces and was cut off from the outside world, turning it into a virtual prison. Since then five military garrisons have been built up in Ngaba district. According to a recent report by New York-based Human Rights Watch, the security expenses in Ngaba is twice as much as other areas in China's Sichuan Province. This report further states that there are now over fifty thousand armed security personnel in Ngaba area.

Since 20 March monks of the Kirti Monastery have been divided into eight divisions and a 'Patriotic Education' campaign is forcefully imposed on them almost day and night. Monks' quarters are searched, all electronic devices have been confiscated, holy scriptures are cut into pieces by knives and monks are forced to stamp on photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. About 100 monks were arrested en-mass, tortured and interrogated. Furthermore, the ritual instruments offered to the monastery's protective deity were seized and the monastery was wrongly accused of possessing weapons to fight against the Chinese government and this accusation was widely propagated. Two monks from Kirti Monastery, one monk from Dongri Monastery and another monk from Gomang Monastery committed suicide in their quarter because of torture and intense fear. A 70-year-old monk from Kirti Monastery died from heart attack under this suffocating circumstances and the Kirti Monastery was barred from holding an important religious festival in the winter. Likewise an order was given to ban this year's Tibetan New Year celebration, which was planned according to traditional Tibetan astrological calculation.

On 27 February 2009, 27-year-old monk, Tapey, from Kirti Monastery in Ngaba set himself on fire as a protest against China's repressive rule. The security personnel instead of putting out the fire shot him. His whereabouts remains unknown to date.

Following the immolation incident of 20-year-old monk, Lobsang Phuntsok, on March 16, 2011, the armed security personnel have been deployed in the Kirti monastery and surrounded the monastery for the second time. All communication to the outside world was cut off for the past seven months, the situation in Kirti monastery became like a dreaded jail. Within the barricaded monastery,

the monks were divided into fifty-five groups and over 800 government officials moved into the monastic compound. They carried out 'political re-education' and 'patriotic education' campaigns, which were strictly imposed on the monks. There have been cases of starvation in the monastery as well.

Electronic surveillance apparatus such as listening devices and CCTV cameras in the monks' quarters and watchtowers are being built in all sides of the monastery. Furthermore, unscheduled searches are being carried out in monks' rooms at any time by smashing the windowpanes, walls and doors, and monks are randomly beaten, dogs let loose on the people and there are also cases of thieving by security personnel. Monks are threatened that the monastery would be destroyed if they did not excel in 'Patriotic Education' and 'Re-education' campaigns. In nutshell, the monks are driven to a state of utter fear and desperation.

On the night of 21 April 2011, a large contingent of army swooped down on the monastery and arrested more than 300 monks in military trucks and were detained in an unspecified location. Since then many new rules have been imposed such as banning young boys to become monks, setting limit to the number of monks in the monastery and threatening that the survival of the monastery was in the hands of the monks.

Thus on 15 August, Tsewang Norbu, a monk from Nyatso Monastery in Kham set himself on fire to protest against the brutal Chinese rule in Tibet.

On 26 September by 18-year-old, Lobsang Kalsang and 19-year-old Lobsang Kunchok, both from Kirti Monastery, set themselves on fire on 3 October 3. Subsequently many others followed suit: 17-year-old Kalsang Wangchuk from Kirti Monastery on 7 October, 19-year-old Choephel and 18-year-old Khaying on 15 October, 19-year-old Norbu Damdul on 17 October, 20-year-old nun Tenzin Wangmo, from Mamae Dechen Choekhorling nunnery on 25 October and Dawa Tsering, a monk of Kardze Monastery on 26 October. These brave Tibetans set themselves on fire to protest against the China's oppression and to bring attention to the deteriorating situation in Tibet.

On 29 August, the Chinese authorities accused three monks from the Kirti Monastery of aiding Phuntsok, who set himself on fire. Phuntsok's uncle, Lobsang Tsundue, 46, was sentenced for eleven years in jail on 29 August, 22-year-old Lobsang Tenzin (aka Tenzin Gyalmokha) to thirteen years on 30 August and 21-year-old Lobsang Tenzin (aka Nakten) was sentenced to ten years in jail.

Three more monks from Kirti Monastery were sentenced: 30-year-old Tsekho and 22-year-old Lobsang Dhargyal to two and six years, respectively, on 5 September; and Dorjee to a three-year jail term. In all these case no legal or judicial procedures were followed during the trial. The decisions of the court were kept secret and only made available much later.

Thus, from 16 March 2008 to 17 October 2011, thirty-four Tibetans have died in Ngaba region from extreme torture, execution, suicides and by setting themselves on fire and more than 619 have been detained (this does not include mass detention of 300 Kirti monks). Only 108 detainees have been put on trial. There have been over 20 writers, poets and intellectuals among the 619 who were detained.

In brief, for the Tibetan people both in and outside Tibet, particularly those born and raised under the red banner, there is no greater expression of their desperate opposition to the Chinese government than by resorting to the most powerful method of a non-violent movement, which is by refraining from causing any harm to the Chinese people and appealing to the Chinese government, than by setting themselves on fire. The main slogans chanted were: "His Holiness the Dalai Lama must be allowed to visit Tibet. Tibet demands freedom. We want religious freedom." Most of those who have committed self-immolation have already died. If any of them are still alive, we ardently appeal to you to please save their lives.

During the first wave of repression in Ngaba this year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with the peace-loving governments and individuals, have urged China to stop repression and start earnest negotiation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Since the Chinese government not only refused to listen to those appeal but also continue resorting to oppression, it has been the main cause behind the wave of self-immolation protests. If repression continues, it will certainly harm the interest of both Tibet and China. If the repression and the hard line policies are stopped, it will naturally lead to peace and harmony. In fact, in order to promote harmony between Tibetans and the Chinese, I have recently proposed that I will extend my full cooperation whenever required. Upon requests from many of the people concerned, I have, time and again, approached the Chinese government for permission to visit Tibet, thinking that my visit will give me an opportunity to deliver a few words of advice and solace. Unfortunately, I have yet to receive any response from the Chinese government.

The Tibetan youth are setting themselves on fire is a proof of the sufferings of the Tibetan people. They want their appeal heard by peace-loving governments and people around the world, including world leaders and human rights organizations, so that they could appeal to China to stop oppression in Tibet and also to tell that that repression cannot bring stability. In order to forge a friendly co-existence between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples and in order to create a harmonious society as advocated by Hu Jintao, the dialogue between Tibet and China must start at the earliest. We also urge you to pressure China to allow independent international delegates and the media to visit Ngaba and other Tibetan areas. Your support restores the inner strength of Tibetan people, both in and outside Tibet. As one of the spokespeople of the Tibetans, it is my duty to convey to you the aspiration of the Tibetan people, particularly those who have been directly affected by the recent events in Tibet.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for giving me this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Tibetan people and their plight.

Transforming the Language of Protest

By Tsering Shakya, University of British Columbia

Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology, 28 March 2012

The Tibetan region of Ngaba (Ch: Aba) in Sichuan province is engulfed in a wave of self-immolations by young Tibetan monks and nuns. At the time of writing, twenty-five cases have been reported and immolations have spread to other Tibetan areas. The latest report is of a monk setting himself on fire in Reb-kong (Ch: Tongren), Qinghai Province. Why are such actions happening? What are the causes and motivations of those involved?

Self-immolation as a form of public protest, new to Tibet, demonstrates that many Tibetans have embraced the narrative of “self sacrifice” and have come to see it in the context of the resurgence of Tibetan nationalism. After all, giving one’s body is one of the key modern idioms of nationalism: the conflating of body and nation. Like suicide bombing, self-immolation cannot be explained by individual motivation. Yet, in contrast to the latter, self-immolation is not an act of terror and is seen instead as self-inflicted pain that causes no damage to others; it is seen as a horror intended to induce empathy. For co-nationals and the religious, the act is a statement of faith and identity; the former are quick to

embrace the self-immolators as martyrs. Their act provides symbolic capital; it speaks of injustice from the perceived perpetrator to those in power. It is an act that is meant to coerce concessions. But in China, as in all authoritarian regimes, it is unlikely to lead to such an outcome, since the acts of self-immolation are like hunger strikes to the authorities. They are tantamount to blackmail.

Self-immolation as a form of protest is not intrinsically a Buddhist act any more than suicide bombing is an Islamic act. What links the current incidents to religion is that most of the Tibetans who have committed self-immolation have been monks, former monks or nuns. Their actions were not an obeisance to religion or the performing of virtue. Rather, they signify something entirely different: they are a product of “rage,” induced by daily humiliation and intolerable demands for conformity and obedience. Religious figures in Tibet have been particularly subjected to the discipline of patriotic education and the campaigns opposing the so-called “Dalai clique.” These campaigns, viewed by the monks as a regime of degradation, require them to endlessly feign compliance, obliging them to demonstrate repeatedly their patriotism and fidelity to the Communist Party. That is not an easy task to sustain, and we see that it has finally become something they refuse to do. As Hannah Arendt put it, rage arises not as a result of poverty but “when our sense of justice is offended.” People react with rage “where there is reason to suspect that conditions could be changed and are not.”^[1]

In the case of Mohamed Bouazizi, a street vendor in Tunisia, self-immolation was neither intended as a religious expression of virtue nor as a spark to ignite the Arab Spring.^[2] It was a disavowal of authority and of state inscription over body and life. Ever since the monk Thich Quang Duc self-immolated in 1963 as a protest against what he considered to be the anti-Buddhist stance of the Vietnamese government, the act of self-immolation has entered the global vocabulary of politics and protest, where it is imitated and appropriated by those with grievances and reasons to fight perceived injustice. For the Tibetans, self-immolation is invested with emotion and is deemed necessary in the absence of other options for expression. It becomes a sign of life and demonstrates one’s existence against the might of the Chinese state. Self-inflicted violence is a symbolic gesture of the will to survive and resist coercive transformation of body and space.

Ironically, sacrifice as a political act is something the Chinese Communists introduced to Tibet. It is a residual effect of Lei Feng, the model soldier of the

1960s who was the most famous exemplar in a campaign that called on all citizens to dedicate themselves totally to the nation. In Tibetan history, there is no tradition of sacrificing oneself for one's nation or religion; this is an alien concept that Tibetans now have appropriated from the language of resistance coined and championed by the Communist Party.

There is no Tibetan term equivalent to the English word "sacrifice." Tibetans struggle to find appropriate terminology to express this concept, having no easy way to convey the sentiments it embodies. The closest term used recently for self-immolation in the sense of an act of sacrifice is "*rang srog blos btang*" (giving up one's life), but this does not have a sense of offering oneself for a greater cause. Nor does the Tibetan term *lus shyin*, meaning "offering of the body," which is used for the Buddha's offering of his body as alms. The offering of the self as religious gift holds no connotation of protest or disavowal. Thus, the search for new terminology reflects the shifting nature of political discourse among Tibetans and its permeation everywhere by the global language of protest and resistance.

Whatever horrific forms of action the Tibetan protesters might continue to adopt, it is most unlikely they will achieve any form of concession from the Chinese authorities. In an authoritarian system, the cycle of resistance and repression is an inevitable consequence of the inflexibility of the regime. Moreover, the Tibetans' protests will not make a dent on the consciousness of most Chinese. This is not only because China lacks a developed civil society but also because it is widely believed in China that violence and terror can be used, to borrow a phrase from Talal Asad, "against uncivilized populations" because "they lack a sovereign state."^[3] There is no shock in the death of Tibetans; it merely reaffirms their barbarity. This was the implication behind the statement by Xiong Kunxin, a scholar from Chinese Minzu University, in the state newspaper *Global Times* that "geographic and historical factors made Tibetan people there more aggressive."^[4]

There is a sense amongst the Tibetans of the impossibility of change under the current regime, bent as it is on economic and resource extraction and subjugation. The lives of monks and nuns are seen as incongruous in modern China, economically unproductive and refusing to fit into the current state's neo-liberal belief that market capitalism and consumption will liberate everyone. Since the beneficent exemption of minorities from the one child policy is irrelevant for them, their lives negate the biopower of the state, and they therefore are subject

to surveillance and particular kinds of discipline that must bend their subjectivity to the will of the state. As a monk once described it to me, the disciplinary strictures of the state are as futile as a potter making a bottomless vase. Beneath all other questions is this sense of the “impossibility of making a meaningful life.” This impossibility is the root cause of the self-immolations in Tibet today.

NOTES

- [1] Hannah Arendt, Reflections on Violence, *The New York Review of Books*, February 27, 1969.
- [2] Fassin, Didier, “The Trace: Violence, Truth, and the politics of the Body”, *Social Research*, 78:2, 2011, pp: 281-298.
- [3] Asad, Talal. *On Suicide Bombing*, Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 26
- [4] *People’s Daily Online*, 08:59, February, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/102774/7725303.html>

Tibet is Burning

By Woesser, *High Peaks Pure Earth*, Beijing, 18 October 2011

On February 27, 2009, the 24 year-old monk Tapey from Kirti Monastery in Amdo, Ngaba, died from self-immolation; it was perhaps the first time that someone from within the Tibetan region used self-immolation to express his will. I wrote in an article titled “Tapey, A Martyr Who Sacrificed His Body”: “He lifted up the Snowlion flag and a photo of His Holiness, he lit a petrol-soaked robe and took the burning bundle to the streets with the purpose of protesting against the darkness that had enveloped Tibet.”

Two years later, on March 16, 2011, the 20-year-old monk Phuntsog from Kirti Monastery in Amdo, Ngaba, died from self-immolation. On the basis of accounts given by local Tibetans, I documented the scene in an article: “On a sunny afternoon, he left the monastery that was under close surveillance by military police and walked on his own to the end of the sun-drenched road; here he suddenly went up in flames. From within the fireball he shouted: “Let His Holiness Return!” “Tibet must be free!” “Long live the Dalai Lama!” People gathered around watching in a state of shock, the entire street filled up with heavily armed special, ordinary, armed and plain-clothed police forces using clubs ferociously striking at Phuntsog; was this to extinguish the fire or to beat him?”

A few months later, up to yesterday, October 17, 2011, 8 cases of self-immo-

lation occurred in a row. These included the 29 year-old monk Tsewang Norbu from Nyitso Monastery in Tawo County, Kham, the 18 year-old Lobsang Kelsang, the 18 year-old Lobsang Kunchok, the 17 year-old Kelsang Wangchuk, all monks from Kirti Monastery, the 19 year-old Choephel, the 18 year-old Khaying, the 19 year-old Norbu Dramdul who used to also be monks at Kirti Monastery but because they couldn't bear the repressive atmosphere in the monastery, they left the monastic order. What made people feel particularly sorrowful is yesterday's self-immolation of 20 year-old Tenzin Wangmo, she was a nun from Mamae Nunnery in Ngaba County.

What does self-immolation mean? Is it the same as suicide? There have been so many Tibetan monks dying from self-immolation; is it as the so-called "Living Buddha", the one who has sold his soul, the vice-president of the Sichuan Buddhist Association Gyalton claimed: "suicide is a very severe violation of the Buddhist doctrine, any act of self-inflicted harm is going entirely against human nature, the continuous cases of self-immolation among Tibetans are countered with incomprehension and disgust by people from all levels of society feel".

Up to the present day, the whole world still remembers how in 1948, a Vietnamese monk burnt himself in the city centre of Saigon. People revered him as a great martyr and erected a bronze statue on a public square, recreating the tragic scene of self-immolation. Also, this 67-year-old senior monk, Thich Quang Duc, left behind some last words: "before closing my eyes and moving towards the vision of the Buddha, I respectfully plead to (the) President (...) to take a mind of compassion towards the people of the nation and implement religious equality (...) I call the venerables, reverends, members of the sangha and the lay Buddhists to organise in solidarity to make sacrifices to protect Buddhism." These are exactly the aspirations and feelings of the 10 Tibetan monks, nuns and lay people who set themselves on fire.

After Thich Quang Duc died from self-immolation, within a period of a few months, 6 other monks and nuns burnt themselves on the streets of Vietnam. A Vietnamese senior monk quite accurately explained and commented on the behaviour of these martyrs: "The media calls it suicide, but essentially this is not suicide at all (...) in the last words that the monks who died left behind, they all explain that their aim of self-immolation is only to wake people up, to appeal to the oppressors' sympathy, and to make the world aware of the persecuted people in Vietnam. Self-immolation is a way to prove that what they have to say

is extremely important (...) This Vietnamese monk used all his strength and determination to show that he is ready to bear the greatest pain in order to protect his people (...) using self-immolation to show one's aspirations and desire should not be regarded as destructive, on the contrary, it is somewhat constructive, an act of suffering and even dying for the people. This is by no means suicide. ”

In actual fact, dictatorship and evil governance is what lacks any human nature; they are the ones who set Buddhist monks and lay people's bodies on fire! It is just like the Tibetologist Katia Buffetrille who recently went to Tibet says: “The monks at Kirti Monastery are already in a state of deep hopelessness. This is because the situation there is continuously worsening. The local authorities' only method of response is repression... yet, these strategies of repression only intensify the tense relations. I actually got to know that there is a leaflet circulating in the area that says, unless the situation starts to improve, there will be many more monks who are prepared to sacrifice their lives.”

Chinese repression to blame for immolations in Tibet

By Lobsang Sangay, *Washington Post*, 4 November 2011

Eleven Tibetans have set fire to themselves in eastern Tibet since March. Six have died. The Chinese government describes them as “terrorists in disguise.”

The reality is that their desperate acts were a scathing indictment of the People's Republic of China's rule in occupied Tibet. They highlight the dramatic struggle for survival as a people with a unique culture and identity.

Tibetans in exile have reacted to the pain and suffering inside Tibet, particularly in the Ngaba and Karze areas, where most of these self-immolations have occurred, with horror and anxiety. The monks and nuns who immolated themselves were sacrificing their bodies to draw the world's attention to Chinese repression in Tibet.

The immolators acted on behalf of Tibet and the Tibetan people, and their intention was to harm no one else. This painful and sad action emerges from their anguish; they live in a climate of fear and have no other means of expressing themselves.

The Tibetan leadership in exile does not encourage self-immolation or protests inside Tibet because China only responds with more repression. It also heaps

blame on the protesters. Instead of dousing the fire, Chinese authorities beat the first immolator, who died partly because of those injuries.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has consistently appealed to Tibetans not to resort to such desperate acts. In 2008, for example, His Holiness the Dalai Lama asked Tibetans to cease the hunger strikes they were staging in response to China's repressive policies.

As Tibet's political leader, I also have appealed to exiled Tibetans to end their unto-death hunger strikes because we need them to protect and preserve our cultural and national identity, and to ensure the strength of our movement world-wide.

We urge Tibetans in and outside our homeland to focus on secular and monastic education. Highly educated professionals and learned monks will provide the human resources and the capability to strengthen and sustain our movement.

We must focus on the cause of the recent tragedies: the continuing occupation of Tibet and the Chinese policies of political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalization, and environmental destruction.

China risks further escalation by tightening the measures that led to the protests. During and after the uprising of 2008, the Chinese government imposed undeclared martial law in Tibet and carried out harsh actions, particularly in monasteries. Following the death of 20-year Kirti monk Lobsang Phuntsog in March of this year, the authorities cracked down even more tightly in Ngaba, virtually occupying the monastery, banning religious ceremonies, and imprisoning and torturing an unknown number of monks. They even forbade possession of a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

In exile, we support those in Tibet who are on the front lines of protecting their religious and cultural integrity; we try to ensure that their voices are heard by the world community. On Oct. 19, we organized a day-long prayer and fast, in accordance with our Buddhist traditions, in solidarity with those who self-immolated. It is our responsibility make sure that that the calls those Tibetans for restoration of freedom are heard, and their sacrifices are not in vain.

It is clear that the root of the self-immolations is the continuing occupation of Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan administration are not the problem but the solution.

We urge the United Nations and the international community to send fact-finding delegations to Tibet and view the situation firsthand. Independent media and liberal Chinese intellectuals should also be allowed access. The international community must press the government of the People's Republic of China to restore freedom and resolve the issue of Tibet through dialogue for the mutual benefit of the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

Chinese Attitude to the Burnings in Tibet

By Thubten Samphel*, *Tibet.net*, 10 September 2012

Ancient China erected the Great Wall to keep out the barbarians. Modern China has erected the Great Firewall to prevent barbarian thoughts from infecting the health of the citizens of the People's Republic. Like the ancient wall, the Great Firewall has been breached. Tibetan exiles have initiated a conversation with the netizens of China that has the potential to moderate Beijing's policy towards Tibetans and other minorities.

One burning topic of discussion between Tibetan exiles and the Chinese on the Mainland is the spate of fiery deaths that engulf Tibet today. So far, 51 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009. All of them called for freedom in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to his homeland. When informed of these self-immolations, the reaction from the Chinese netizens is one of shock and disbelief. Even when images of self-immolations were sent to them, the sentiment of the majority Chinese netizens is, this can't be happening in China.

Buried in the widespread sentiment of disbelief are also expressions of support and understanding, says Tsering Wangmo, who heads Drelwa, a Tibetan NGO based in Dharamsala, the seat of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in north India. Drelwa consist of six young Chinese-speaking Tibetans who daily surmount the Great Firewall of China to carry on a conversation with netizens in China. One netizen writes, "You Tibetans are not alone. We are also frustrated by rising food and rent prices. Though we haven't heard about the self-immolations, we understand the reasons for the frustration arising out of a loss of hope."

Another blames the Chinese Communist Party for the increasing cases of Tibetans resorting to self-immolation. He says, "The CCP hides the truth and

spreads distorted information. The CCP suppresses not only Tibetans, Mongols, Uighurs but the Chinese people. The Chinese people don't know the truth because all channels of free information are blocked. To solve all these problems, China must tread on the path of democracy."

These are some of the sentiments of support and sympathy whispered beyond the radar of China's censor and below the din of China's Internet chatter.

Others openly express what they feel about the self-immolations going on in Tibet. For example, in an interview for the *Foreign Policy* magazine in its September-October 2012 issue, Ai Weiwei, the world famous Chinese artist, made these comments. "The one exception is Tibet, because of its natural resources, but the Tibetan people are burning themselves to death. Already over 40 of them in the past two years, and nobody's talking about it."

When asked whether he had been to Lhasa before, Ai Weiwei said, "No. I would feel ashamed to go. I think to respect [the Tibetans] is not to touch them, to leave them alone."

Ran Yunfei, one of China's most outspoken public intellectuals, in an interview to Ian Johnson for the *New York Review of Books*, said, "The communists really destroyed religion. They don't understand it at all. Look at Tibet. I told the guobao (state security agents) that, "you guys have gone too far. You don't allow them to hang pictures of the Dalai Lama. You don't have faith so you don't understand. So the Tibetans get very angry and depressed. And then you go into temples and instead hang pictures of Mao and Jiang (Zemin) or Hu (Jintao). You've gone overboard! This isn't right. Think about it. No wonder they set themselves on fire."

In the wake of the widespread and sustained protests that erupted in Tibet in 2009, Chinese intellectuals' expression of sympathy for Tibetan grievances was loud and clear. A letter, signed by the leading lights of China, including by the imprisoned Nobel Laureate, Liu Xiaobo and more than 340 others, urged the Chinese authorities to hold direct dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to resolve the issue. Similarly, in May 2009, Gongmeng, a law firm in Beijing that advocates the rule of law, published a detailed report investigating the causes of Tibetan discontent. It cited China's policy failure as a major cause. The reported recommended that Beijing in future base its Tibet policy on the aspirations of the Tibetan people.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama joined in this conversation in 2010, answering questions on his successor, his approach to resolve the issue of Tibet with Beijing, the nature of autonomy for Tibet, whether Tibetans would stick to non-violence after his demise and relations between Tibetans and Chinese. 1,543 Chinese submitted 326 questions. 12,771 netizens voted for the final ten questions, which were then answered by the Tibetan leader.

Yu Jie, now in exile in the United States, the author of *Wen Jiabao: China's Best Actor* and a biography of Liu Xiaobo, commenting on the event said, "The scale of the dialogue is not that big, just several thousand [participants]. However, I believe its influence and impact are getting bigger and bigger. One day it will defeat all distorted propaganda on the Dalai Lama and truth in Tibet."

Given China's current fluid political situation in which the premier of the nation is calling for the absolute necessity for political reform, these voices of moderation and tolerance may shape China's attitude towards Tibet. Li Yuanchao, head of the Organization Department that supervises appointments of officials and a strong candidate for the Standing Committee of the Politburo, recommends that the authorities "comply with the will of the people." If these sentiments of Chinese leaders are translated into policy, there is real hope for China and its minorities.

For another group of Chinese there is a different Tibetan attraction. This is Tibetan Buddhism. Young and well-to-do Chinese are turning to Tibetan Buddhism, inviting Tibetan lamas to their homes, joining monasteries in Tibet and even coming to India to attend the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This year in January when the Dalai Lama gave a set of Buddhist teachings in Bodhi Gaya in northern India where the Buddha attained enlightenment, more than 1,000 Chinese from the Mainland attended the event.

These two strands of conversation which the Tibetans carry on with the Chinese in the Mainland constitute a drop in an ocean. However, if it is allowed to grow to its full potential within an evolving and increasingly pluralistic China, this conversation will help positively shape how China treats its minorities.

**Thubten Samphel is the director of the Tibet Policy Institute. Views expressed here do not reflect those of the Central Tibetan Administration.*

For Tibetans, no other way to protest

By Lobsang Sangay, *Washington Post*, 14 July 2012

Since 2009, 43 Tibetans have set themselves on fire while shouting slogans for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet and crying for freedom for Tibetans. These people include monks, nuns, nomads and students. Two were mothers. All but 11 have died. Yet their actions and the issue of Tibet have not generated the commensurate attention or support. Instead, the Chinese government casts blame on these Tibetans and refuses to examine the root causes of their actions.

Despite repeated appeals by the central Tibetan administration, which is based in India, to refrain from such drastic actions, Tibetans persist in self-immolations. At the same time, we in the Tibetan administration recognize our sacred duty to make the protesters' cries heard around the globe by all who believe in justice. Tibetans everywhere have offered prayers for those who have died.

The Communist Party of China has labeled these self-immolations terrorist acts. This is ludicrous. Complexities exist in Buddhist philosophy about whether harming oneself is violent or if the motivation for the act, rather than the act itself, determines its nature. What is absolutely clear, however, is that these protesters intended to avoid harming anyone other than themselves.

To understand these acts, it is crucial to know that within China, there is no room for freedom of speech and conventional forms of protest. A participant in a simple demonstration runs a high risk of arrest, torture and even death. Consider that when the Chinese celebrated their new year in February, hundreds of Tibetans protested in the regions of Drakgo, Serta and Ngaba (traditionally known as Amdo; now Qinghai province). The Beijing government responded by shooting at the demonstrators. Six died.

Denied the right to less extreme forms of protest, Tibetans are setting fire to themselves as political action. Nearly all have been younger than 50. That means they were born and brought up under the occupation of Tibet that has lasted since 1959, when the government of the People's Republic of China promised a "socialist paradise." These Tibetans were intended to be the "primary beneficiaries" of the Chinese political system and its education, economy and culture. Instead, they serve as a clear indictment of the Chinese government's failed poli-

cies for Tibet: policies founded on political oppression, social marginalization, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction. These are the root causes of the demonstrations and the deaths. Were the Chinese government to offer to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully through dialogue, the self-immolations would end immediately.

The Chinese government has completely shut down Tibet to foreign tourists and journalists. Tibetans from outside the Tibet Autonomous Region are expelled. One Chinese scholar noted early this year that in the capital of the region, it is thought that “there are more Han Chinese than Tibetans, more soldiers than monks, and more surveillance cameras than windows.” Sadly, there are simply more guns than our traditional butter lamps for the dead.

Tibetan self-immolation is part of a historical global phenomenon. It is well known that Vietnamese monks set themselves alight in protest against the Vietnam War and that a Quaker in the United States then self-immolated in an act of support. In 1969, a man self-immolated in Czechoslovakia to protest Communist rule. In Tunisia in late 2010, an unemployed fruit seller set himself on fire and became the catalyst for the Jasmine Revolution. During the uprisings that followed, more such acts were reported in Tunisia and across the Arab countries. Even in China, self-immolations have been committed by Chinese as a protest against their government.

What is unique about the situation in Tibet is the terribly high number of tragedies. Even though so many of our people have resorted to self-immolation as their only means of protest, the international response has not at all resembled the outpouring of support for the anti-Vietnam War campaign or the powerful network of support shown during the Arab Spring.

Of course, all Tibetans welcome statements of concern from the international community, such as the recent one from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, asking the Chinese to resume dialogue with Tibetans. But concrete action is needed to help stop the tragedy in Tibet. The time has come for the world to shut out the noise of China’s influence and to hear the Tibetan cries: that repression is unbearable and unacceptable. Voices in Tibet cry out to see their leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Exiled since 1959, His Holiness is accessible to millions of people around the world, but not to his own people inside Tibet.

Because we know that the democracies of the world recognize basic human

rights and freedoms to be universal values, we ask the international community to intervene before our situation deteriorates even further. In its annual human rights dialogue with China this month, the State Department should urge the Chinese to relax restrictions in Tibet immediately and request fact-finding delegations to investigate the reasons for the tragically high number of self-immolations in Tibet.

Man on fire

By Bhuchung K. Tsering, *HIMAL SOUTHASIAN*, 10 February 2012

On 27 February 2009, Tapey, a Tibetan monk in his 20s, walked from the Kirti Monastery, in Amdo (in today's Sichuan province), to the nearby crossroads in the town market. His garment was drenched in oil. Upon reaching the crossroads, he set himself on fire, unfurled a homemade Tibetan flag bearing a photo of the Dalai Lama and shouted slogans. Before people could hear what he was saying, members of the People's Armed Police intervened and shot at Tapey. When he fell, they took him away.

That incident turned out to be the first of many such self-immolations in Tibetan areas. It also seems to have set a precedent for a new direction in Tibetan activism. In March 2011, another Tibetan, Phuntsok, committed self-immolation; by the end of January 2012, at least 15 others have done so. Twelve of these are known to have died. Even as this article is being written, during the first week of February, there are reports of three more Tibetans having self-immolated. A common demand of these individuals has been the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet and freedom for the Tibetan people.

Most of the self-immolators were from Kirti Monastery. Its head lama, Kirti Rinpoche, who resides in Dharamsala, has said that the self-immolations are the result of wounds suffered by three generations of Tibetans. During the 1930s, the first generation suffered when Chinese communists raided the Kirti area while on their Long March; during the 1960s, the second generation suffered prior to and during the Cultural Revolution; and since the late 1990s, the third generation of Tibetans has suffered on account of so-called Patriotic Education and related campaigns put in place by the Chinese government.

For its part, the Chinese government's initial reaction to the recent spate of self-immolations was one of denial. As the number of these incidents continued

to increase, Chinese officials sought to deflect blame by humiliating the Tibetans, declaring the self-immolators to be criminals and saying their actions were instigated by ‘the Dalai clique’. They also attempted to minimise the political significance of these actions by portraying them in the light of economic protest, suggesting that they are effects of globalisation – though how exactly they make that connection has never been explained. To counter any allegation that they have neglected Tibet, Chinese authorities have highlighted the monetary assistance that is being rendered to the Tibetans.

The critical factor in this string of self-immolations is that the Chinese government is victim of its own decision to link the Tibetan issue with the survival of the Communist Party of China (CPC). In its failure to understand the nature of Tibetan identity, which is inseparable from Tibetan religion and culture, the Chinese leadership looks at Tibetans’ adherence to their traditional mores and to the reign of the Communist Party as being mutually exclusive.

A flourishing nationalism

Today, the Chinese government sees the very existence of a distinct Tibetan identity as a political statement. As a result of this thinking, Chinese officials are attempting to sever the relationship between the Dalai Lama (a symbol of Tibetan identity) and the Tibetan people. These efforts include a continued ban on portraits of the Dalai Lama. News is currently coming in from Tibet that Tibetans who went to India to receive the Kalachakra teachings from the Dalai Lama in January are now being detained and interrogated upon their return, and that sacred protection cords are being confiscated. Since most of the self-immolations have taken place in Tibetan regions that were not under the control of the Tibetan government at the time of the Chinese communist takeover, the tie between Tibetans in these areas and Lhasa or the Dalai Lama should be seen by China primarily as spiritual and cultural, not political.

Chinese policies have therefore led to the growth – if not outright origin – of Tibetan Buddhist nationalism. Ironically, China’s short-sighted clampdown on Tibetan Buddhism has caused a feeling of unity among Tibetans to solidify, both within the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and in all traditional Tibetan areas, something the Chinese government was trying to discourage in the first place. Mandating that all Tibetan monasteries hang portraits of the four Chinese leaders – Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao – as the TAR administration did in December 2011 as part of its ‘Nine Possession’ decree, will

only add to the provocation.

In fact, the religious basis of Tibetan identity should have been apparent to the Chinese Communist authorities from the time they first invaded Tibet, in 1950. Tibetan nationalism was primarily centred on religion. Tibetans called the Chinese invaders *tendra* (Enemy of the Faith), and the most renowned Tibetan resistance force was called *tensung thanglang maggar* (Voluntary Force for the Defence of the Faith).

Instead, this year, Chinese leaders sent to Tibetan monasteries over the Chinese New Year to offer ‘Spring Festival greetings’ had no qualms about preaching their real message of *ten-lhing sung-kyong* (maintaining stability) and providing monetary incentives for the monks to keep the peace. It certainly says much about the credibility of Chinese rule in Tibet that, even after 50 years, the Chinese leadership’s main message remains ‘stability’.

Offering of light

In any case, the recent Tibetan self-immolations have taken place in remote areas. Further, most of these individuals have left behind no statement indicating that publicity – for themselves or their cause – was among their main objectives. Instead, these were actions undertaken by people who simply felt the need to fight, in some way, the injustice they were experiencing. An audio testament left behind by Sonam Wangyal Sopa Rinpoche (known popularly as Sobha Tulku), who died on 8 January 2012 after self-immolating, may be the only concrete document left behind thus far. In his statement, Sobha Tulku said:

this is the year in which so many Tibetan heroes have died. I am sacrificing my body both to stand in solidarity with them in flesh and blood, and to seek repentance through this highest tantric honour of offering one’s body. This is not to seek personal fame or glory.

A look at how the Vietnamese Buddhist master Thich Nhat Hanh described the self-immolators in Vietnam during the 1960s may help us to better understand Sobha Tulku’s words. In a letter to civil-rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr in 1965, Thich Nhat Hanh explained:

I believe with all my heart that the monks who burned themselves did not aim at the death of the oppressors but only at a change in their policy. Their enemies are not men. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, cupidity, hatred and discrimination which lie within the heart of man.

That sentiment was echoed by Sobha Tulku: 'I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering.'

The Tibetan self-immolators were challenging political, cultural, religious and social injustices, the roots of which are deeper than any mere material developments could assuage. What US columnist Thomas L Friedman wrote about Egypt and Russia in the *New York Times* on 31 January 2012, in a column titled 'The Politics of Dignity', is also applicable to Tibet. Friedman wrote:

the political eruptions in both countries were not initially driven by any particular ideology but rather by the most human of emotions – the quest for dignity and justice. Humiliation is the single most underestimated force in politics. People will absorb hardship, hunger and pain. They will be grateful for jobs, cars and benefits. But if you force people to live indefinitely inside a rigged game that is flaunted in their face or make them feel like cattle that can be passed by one leader to his son or one politician to another, eventually they'll explode.

In a way, the self-immolations could be a new form of Tibetan Buddhist liberation theology in the making. In the words of Father Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Peruvian priest credited with coining the term, liberation theology is about emancipation of the poor, the marginalised and the oppressed from 'those things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity.' Similarly, Deane William Fernald, a religion scholar, in his *Third World Liberation Theologies*, says that liberation theology 'stresses liberation from all forms of human oppression: social, economic, political, racial, sexual, environmental, religious.' These forms of oppression are essential features of the environment in which the Tibetan Buddhists have committed their self-immolations.

Father Gutiérrez has also talked about 'witnessing several new expressions of this theology in different contexts and continents – North America, Central and South America, Africa and Asia.' We now have a Tibetan version of liberation theology, similar to the 'engaged Buddhism' of Buddhist political activists in places like Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Tsampa Revolution

Foreign governments have also been taking note of these developments in Tibet. Even though *Time* magazine listed the Tibetan self-immolations as one of the 'Top 10 Underreported Stories' of 2011, whatever information we have indicates that these incidents have in fact led to intense discussions within government

circles in numerous capitals as well as among their respective embassies in Beijing. In particular, governments seem concerned with how the movement could develop hereafter. When the latest self-immolations were taking place, the CPC's point-person on Tibet was on a visit to Germany, trying to put the party's point of view across to the German government.

Indeed, if these self-immolations are forerunners of a radicalised Tibetan movement, then the Chinese government is greatly mistaken to think that this trend can be stopped by increasing restrictions, including those on movement, the Internet and other communication channels. Tibetans will look for, and find, different ways to express themselves. In the wake of the pan-Tibetan uprising in 2008, the Chinese authorities thought they had resolved the situation by quelling it with force. But the self-immolations have clearly indicated that the Chinese approach at that time was no permanent solution. Therefore, the latest stringent restrictions will only increase the sense of injustice and discrimination felt by Tibetans. Leaving aside political aspirations, as long as Tibetans continue to be denied the opportunity to live a life of equality, respect and dignity, it is clear that they will undertake actions to convey their feelings.

Chinese writer Wang Lixiong had an interesting solution in a recent piece titled 'Except self-immolation, what else can be done?' Wang says people need to show the Tibetans some way of finding answers. His feeling is that 'getting Tibet out of this crisis should start from village autonomy.' He was referring to recent developments in the village of Wukan in Guangdong province, where a people's movement won villagers the right to elect their local leadership. Wang wrote:

Tibetan villages too possess all the conditions Wukan does. If one Tibetan village succeeds, Tibet will already have a banner; when ten villages succeed, darkness of the night will be ignited with light of the dawn; with a hundred villages, genuine autonomy will rise from the horizon and embrace Tibet.

Of course, Tibet is not comparable to other Chinese provinces, and Tibetan Buddhism is not Christianity. As Christian Caryl, a contributing editor at *Foreign Policy*, wrote in November 2011, 'The history of self-immolation as a political tool suggests that it is a highly volatile one. Setting oneself on fire can sometimes ignite a huge political protest, but there's no guarantee that it will.'

Tibetans should heed such words of caution. In 1998, when Thupten Ngodup became the first Tibetan to self-immolate, it led to much soul-searching among

Tibetans. Writing in the Tibetan Review at the time, this writer warned against reactions that unintentionally glorified death:

Thupten Ngodup's action was the result of the courage of his conviction. Interpreting it in any other way so as to bolster a short-term political objective would not be doing justice to Thupten's action. We should not take his action as a model ... for other Tibetan freedom fighters to follow.

This certainly holds true in the present situation, too.

However, just as the Vietnamese self-immolations became symbolic of the Vietnamese resistance, the Tibetan self-immolation has become a symbol of the radicalisation of the Tibetan struggle and its movement in a new direction. As it is, in the Tibetan social-media world the self-immolations have been dubbed the 'Tsampa Revolution', referring to the roasted barley flour that is a staple of the Tibetan diet. In December 2011 a report emerged that Tapey, the monk introduced at the beginning of this article and whose whereabouts had not been known, was undergoing treatment in a Chinese military hospital. Tapey may be recovering, but the recent self-immolations could just be the tip of the iceberg. What lies underneath, and how it should be dealt with, is a challenge for both the Tibetan people and the Chinese government.

Rare visit to remote Chinese region shows depth of Tibetan despair

By Tom Lasseter, *McClatchy Newspapers*, 14 February 2012

ABA, China — The monk reached into the folds of his red robe, pulled out a small notebook, and gently slipped from its pages a tiny photograph.

The man in the creased picture was a relative. He used to be a fellow monk at the monastery perched in snow-wrapped mountains outside the town of Aba. Then a Chinese security officer killed him, the monk said.

It is a sorrow that cannot be spoken of in public. A local government "working team" visits the monastery often, looking for signs of discontent, according to monks there. Sometimes, they said, when returning to their living quarters from chanting or studying, the monks find a door busted in and possessions scattered after a search.

The monk showed the snapshot as a way of explaining why ethnic Tibetans,

mostly current or former Buddhist clergy, are setting themselves on fire in Aba and surrounding regions in an unprecedented show of protest against Chinese rule. Since March 2011, between 20 and 23 have committed self-immolations, according to rights groups. Of those, at least 13 are said to have died.

“China in our eyes is not fair or peaceful,” said the monk, a man in his early 40s who, like every ethnic Tibetan interviewed for this story, did so on the condition that he not be named and that certain details be withheld, for fear of getting dragged off by police. “We are suffering a lot in our hearts, and when we can no longer bear it we burn ourselves to death.”

The Chinese government and its media have confirmed some of the self-immolations and denied others. The government, though, goes to extensive lengths to prevent outsiders from visiting this area. Police routinely block roads, search vehicles and turn back foreigners, especially journalists.

A *McClatchy* reporter last week apparently became the first from an American news organization to make it to Aba since the chain of self-immolations began in March. To do so, he hid on the rear floor of a vehicle under two backpacks and a sleeping bag as it passed through multiple checkpoints.

Beijing has long blamed unrest in ethnic Tibetan areas on conspiracies hatched by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader who fled to India after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959.

But conversations with ethnic Tibetans here and elsewhere in Sichuan province, where almost all of the self-immolations have occurred, suggest that China’s authoritarian policies designed to tamp down disorder are fueling the troubles.

As the nation’s vice president and presumptive next leader, Xi Jinping, tours the United States this week amid talk of greater understanding, his government at home continues to flood a wide swath of ethnic Tibetan lands with armed troops.

At the entrance to Aba last week, at least seven police officers manned a checkpoint. When an SUV approached with a Han Chinese man in the front seat, it was allowed to pass without a question — as the *McClatchy* reporter lay in the back.

Ethnic Tibetans face tougher scrutiny. One Tibetan from a nearby village described the interior of his taxi being almost ripped apart during a search at the

entry of Aba, which is known in Tibetan as Ngaba.

On the same day the reporter entered Aba, an 18-year-old woman in a nunnery near the town's outskirts set herself on fire. The ethnic Tibetan nun, Tenzin Choedon, reportedly called out slogans against the government as the flames took her life.

Sections of the town famous for its Tibetan Buddhist monasteries have come to resemble an armed camp. A few blocks from the entrance, paramilitary police stood behind riot gates with shotguns and assault rifles. Three large troop-carrier trucks sat on the side of the road, flanked by more men with guns. Up ahead, traffic wound through further riot gates and troop positions not unlike those used in counterinsurgency efforts.

The security was so dense that it was impossible to speak with clergy or, indeed, anyone in Aba because of the risk of bringing danger to those interviewed. The Internet had been shut off and efforts to send text messages from Aba failed repeatedly.

Police roadblocks and patrols in the region begin just outside the city of Chengdu, hundreds of miles away. Even in that sprawling metropolis, Chengdu's main Tibetan quarter is stacked with police who stand guard outside restaurants and shops that sell incense and religious paraphernalia.

An attempt in November to reach Aba ended with a *McClatchy* reporter being held and questioned by Chinese police for two hours before he was released and told to return to Beijing.

Aba, in the high mountains and mist, gained international attention as an epicenter of Tibetan turmoil last March when a monk from the Kirti monastery lit himself ablaze. He was reportedly commemorating the third anniversary of 2008 demonstrations and riots across the Tibetan Plateau, including Aba, which ended in bloodshed.

After that self-immolation, some 300 other monks were allegedly hauled away from Kirti in trucks, sparking concern from the United Nations.

Chinese officials point out that they've spent billions of dollars constructing hospitals, roads and schools in Tibet, which is referred to by Beijing as an autonomous region, and nearby areas like those in Sichuan.

Or as a billboard depicting green fields and blue waters outside Maierma Town-

ship, approximately 20 miles from Aba, puts it: "Building a civilized, new Aba together."

Many ethnic Tibetans recognize the benefits of the government's projects. But they chafe at the government's restrictions on free expression of their culture and religious practices, and they speak of anguish over being separated from the Dalai Lama.

The lingering threat of police showing up at their doorstep has by all accounts made the situation even more complicated for ethnic Tibetans.

"If you say the government is not treating us well, that's not completely true, they are providing us with good things," said a 26-year-old small-time trader in Hongyuan, which sits 65 miles or more to the east of Aba, depending on which winding road is taken. "But on the other side, the police are behaving badly. We don't know what to say about the situation."

The man, in a brown leather coat and sunglasses pushed up his forehead, thought it over and then said, "You should talk with somebody in Aba."

His younger brother, sitting in the family's living room under a single light bulb, spoke up: "Of course things are not good, they are killing people."

The brothers turned to their father, a man in his late 40s who had a green camouflage jacket slung over his shoulders and a cigarette in hand.

Why were Tibetans self-immolating?

The father first wanted it made clear that he would not "take legal responsibility" for his words, and then said, "The Chinese government issues messages that these things are happening because of foreign plots, but of course the people lighting themselves on fire are local people ..."

The father paused and looked at the small stove in front of him, which was heating the room with burning stacks of yak dung.

The younger brother, in his early 20s and with plans to move to a bigger city, finished the sentence with an assertion that no one contradicted.

"The people lighting themselves on fire do it because they are suffering ... or because one of their family members has been killed by the government and they are now filled with hatred," he said. "They are doing these things because they want to express their pain and their hardship."

The majority of Tibetans approached in the area said they couldn't discuss such issues.

One herder near the town of Chali, about 30 miles east of Aba, gestured for a reporter to follow him to his house. Once inside, the 67-year-old man with tough, thick hands shook his head, saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I don't dare talk about this."

Walking back out across a field, the herder in brown corduroy pants and a dark winter jacket had a piece of advice: Listen to what the monks have to say.

The monk with the dead relative had marched in a demonstration against the Chinese government during the tumult of March 2008. When the police later came, the monk said, they surrounded the monastery and threatened to destroy it if those who'd participated in the incident didn't turn themselves in.

Official documents describing his arrest said that he and others had taken part in an action that "disrupted public order" and caused a traffic jam. The monk keeps the papers tucked in a plastic bag even though they're written in Mandarin, a language he doesn't understand well.

The monk said he was held in jail and fed such small amounts of thin porridge that it became difficult to stand up. He was then transferred to a reform-through-labor camp. "They told me that the Dalai Lama group is an obstacle to our road to peace," said the monk, who was reluctant to describe the nearly two-year experience.

His relative never made it back — he died in custody, the result of being beaten in the head and then not receiving medical treatment, according to the monk and others at the monastery.

The monk returned to the area near Aba in 2010. Much was as he left it. Candles made of yak-butter still flicker in the night. Old men patiently twirl prayer wheels. Young monks with freshly shaven heads scamper up and down steep hillsides.

The monk found that one of his framed pictures of the Dalai Lama had survived in a hiding spot. The glass was cracked and missing a piece, but the rainbow-colored frame and the image itself were intact.

With the ongoing government searches and his record of jail time, having the photograph around could be hazardous for the monk.

He kept it anyway.

Tibet Is the Test of China's Rise

By Lobsang Sangay, *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 November 2012

President Barack Obama's decision to visit Asia, his first foreign trip after re-election, reaffirms his administration's foreign policy pivot to Asia. The tour will attract a lot of attention throughout the region, but especially in Tibet. Mr. Obama will visit Cambodia and Thailand, two predominantly Buddhist countries, and will be the first sitting American president to visit Burma, also a majority Buddhist nation.

The Burma stop is meaningful to Tibetans because that country's struggle for freedom so closely tracks Tibet's efforts to secure greater autonomy from Beijing. Mr. Obama's presence will offer a firm gesture of support to the forces of democracy and freedom as symbolized by Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese pro-democracy leader. In partnership with President Thein Sein, she is working under extremely delicate circumstance with the junta lurking in the shadows.

The Burmese people and their leader, Ms. Suu Kyi, have suffered greatly. The 8888 Uprising was brutally crushed and the military junta killed thousands of Burmese democracy activists. Ms. Suu Kyi remained under house arrest for 15 years despite winning the 1990 general elections overwhelmingly. Her father, Aung San, the father of modern-day Burma, was assassinated in 1947.

Ms. Suu Kyi's struggle and experience has many parallels with the Dalai Lama, a fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate. In spite of being forcibly separated from his people in Tibet, the Dalai Lama established a democratic system within the Tibetan refugee community, separating church and state, and transferring his political power to a democratically elected leader, the Sikyong. This model of a functioning democracy is unique among refugee communities.

Mr. Obama should use his trip in part to make a broader point about the compatibility between Buddhism and democracy. Just as the Burmese people and the Thais, Tibetans in exile have worked to build a democracy. Indeed, as with the upsurge of the Saffron Revolution in Burma, Tibetan monks have been at the forefront of a non-violent struggle for freedom in Tibet for the last 60 years.

The Obama administration also could take up the issue of Tibet more seriously with the new Chinese leadership appointed at the 18th Party Congress. Tibetans in Tibet are crying out for justice, including the autonomy and freedom

to worship they have been promised by Beijing over the years. Some 72 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, 70 of them since March 2011, and five in one day this month alone. The common cry of all self-immolators is the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and freedom for Tibetans.

Tibetans have invested in democracy and non-violence for the last five decades. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has made reassuring statements on U.S. commitment to human rights and democracy, and Ambassador Gary Locke recently visited Tibetan areas. The next four years present an opportunity for the Obama administration to build on the positive start from the visit to the three Asian Buddhist countries and make its Asia pivot even more meaningful by raising the issue of Tibet with China.

Helping resolve the issue of Tibet is not only in synch with American values, but it is also a strategic imperative. America and the rest of the world have a vital stake in China's rise from an economic giant to a potential superpower. With regard to the development of real stability in China and peace in Asia, a litmus test will be China's willingness to grant genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the constitution of the People's Republic of China.

Solving the Tibet problem will help improve relations between China and India. It will allow Tibetans to resume their traditional role of being responsible stewards of Tibet's immense natural resources, including the management of Asia's great rivers that originate in Tibet and on which hundred of millions of Asians depend for their livelihood and their very survival.

A successful American engagement with China on Tibet will also be welcomed by millions of Indians, Nepalese, Bhutanese and Mongolians who at one time looked upon Tibet as the source of their culture and home of their faith. Today there are reportedly more than 300 million Chinese Buddhists and millions of other Asians.

America's ability to engage China on Tibetan autonomy also accords with the thinking of the best minds in China. When peaceful and sustained protests swept Tibet in 2008, many Chinese intellectuals, writers and human rights activists, including Liu Xiaobo, the imprisoned Nobel laureate, signed an open letter to the Chinese government calling on the authorities to stop its one-sided propaganda and to resolve the issue through dialogue.

This I believe is the current sentiment of many in China and the aspiration of

Tibetans in Tibet. President Obama's leadership on this shared sentiment will give a much-needed human rights dimension to America's Asia pivot.

Horrific becomes normal as self-immolations sweep Tibet

By The Associated Press, 21 March 2012

For more than a year the deadly protests have swept the Tibetan plateau, waves of people burning themselves alive in a widening challenge to Chinese rule.

The prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile calls them acts of desperation. The Dalai Lama says they give China an excuse for even harsher crackdowns. But to many Tibetans, they are carefully reasoned attempts to bring attention to an often-forgotten cause.

"These are intelligent people who knew what they were doing," said Tenzin Choekyi of the Tibetan Youth Congress, a prominent Dharmasala, India-based activist group. "What is the ultimate thing you can offer? It's your life."

In Tibet, the horrific has become normal.

More than two dozen Tibetans, many in their teens or 20s, have set themselves on fire since early 2011 in an unprecedented series of suicide-protests. In the moments before they are overwhelmed by pain or tackled by Chinese security, they cry out for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, for an end to China's crackdowns or for their homeland's independence.

There is little sign that the immolations could lead to a broad uprising. But they have embarrassed Beijing, and are a key test of Chinese policies across the Tibetan plateau. The protests also have taken place in peripheral areas far from the Tibetan heartland, showing opposition to Beijing's rule is geographically more widespread than ever.

Most of the immolations have occurred in ethnic Tibetan regions in China's Sichuan and Qinghai provinces.

While the most restive towns have been effectively sealed off, some details have emerged: the Buddhist monk who drank gasoline before dousing himself with fuel and setting himself alight; the two young men who set themselves on fire, then ran together into the streets shouting for the return of the Dalai Lama; the nun, seen in a video distributed by activists, walking along a busy street fully

engulfed in flames.

At one point, a woman tosses a white scarf – a traditional Tibetan offering of respect – at her feet.

“The self-immolations don’t hurt anybody else. They just want people to see that there are problems here,” said a young schoolteacher in trendy faded jeans in the small Tibetan town of Hongyuan, in China’s Sichuan province. He spoke on condition of anonymity fearing retribution by Chinese officials.

Until recently, though, such protests were rare among Tibetans, raised in an enveloping Buddhist culture that normally discourages suicide.

While there had been a handful of earlier Tibetan suicide protests, the recent surge began March 16, 2011, when a 20-year-old monk at Sichuan’s Kirti monastery burned himself alive, apparently to mark the anniversary of a 2008 protest brutally crushed by Chinese forces.

The burnings spiked in October, and then again in January. There have been at least seven so far in March, activists say.

The Kirti monastery, which in recent years has emerged as a centre of political activism, has been the focus of the protests, with at least 14 current and former monks among the self-immolators.

The monastery and the town around it, Aba, have been flooded with Chinese forces. Soldiers and police in riot gear now line the town’s streets, and more have been posted inside the monastery. But they have been unable to stop the protests.

The roots of the self-immolations lie along Tibetan periphery. Aba, like most of the towns that have seen recent suicides, is well over 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometres) from the Tibetan capital of Lhasa.

Until the 1990s, China’s most repressive policies were concentrated on the official Tibetan Autonomous Region, with Tibetans living to the east, in Sichuan and Qinghai, given freer reign. When protests shook Lhasa in the 1980s, they barely touched Sichuan.

“These areas had not been part of a Tibetan state for centuries, and were outside the administration of the old Tibetan government, yet now we often hear of people there raising the Tibetan flag or calling for freedom for Tibet,” Robert Barnett, a professor of modern Tibetan history at Columbia University, said in an email.

“It’s not that these people are radical, it is that China’s policies, especially since its decision in the 1990s to insult the Dalai Lama and to treat monasteries as threats, has turned a formerly complex Tibetan cultural sphere into a relatively unified sphere of political dissent.”

The trouble began in the late 1990s, as a divide between Beijing and Tibetans began growing over the Panchen Lama, the second-highest Tibetan religious leader. In 1995, the Dalai Lama named a 6-year-old boy as the reincarnated Panchen Lama. But the boy and his family soon disappeared, and Beijing gave another boy the title.

When monks in Sichuan spoke out, Beijing’s policies began reaching deep into monastic life. Monks were pressed to accept the Panchen Lama, to declare their fealty to China, to denounce the Dalai Lama. As senior monks died, China forbade the traditional searches for reincarnated successors, forcing the monks to look abroad for guidance, toward more politicized monasteries in exile.

In Tibet, where monasteries often serve encompassing roles – school, cultural centre, home to the sons of local families who have become monks – Beijing’s moves created a bitter cycle of revolt and repression, with Tibetan protests leading to ever-more official interference, which in turn sparked more protests.

Aba now looks like an occupied town.

During a clandestine late February visit by an Associated Press reporter, road-blocks guarded every road into the town, while members of Chinese security forces massed along the main street and outside the monastery.

“People have never seen the type of restrictions that exist now in Aba,” said Lobsang Yeshe, a monk from the town who fled to India more than a decade ago. He is now based at Kirti’s brother monastery, in Dharmasala, which keeps in close contact with Aba.

He said the crackdown and what he calls “the invisible troubles” – everything from the influx of ethnic Han Chinese to Tibetan nomads encouraged to settle into permanent homes – have nurtured the self-immolations. Tibetans, he said, have no choice but to harm themselves in protest.

“The Tibetans who made the decision to self-immolate, who can question them?” he demanded. “This is their choice. This is their own method of non-violence.”

But why suicide by self-immolation? No one knows. Some see inspiration in the Arab spring, and the Tunisian vegetable seller who helped inspire it by setting himself on fire. Others look to a history of Buddhist immolators: Vietnamese monks who burned themselves alive in the 1960s, angry over government crack-downs; Chinese monks who killed themselves in political protests during the last imperial dynasty.

Beijing, though, sees them as part of a decades-long campaign by the Dalai Lama to carve Tibet away from China. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told reporters that the Dalai Lama and his aides were trying to incite more self-immolations, calling their activities “terrorism in disguise.”

The Dalai Lama, who fled Lhasa in 1959 and now lives in exile in India, insists he only wants more autonomy for Tibet.

A year after the suicides began, many details are unanswered. Many protesters have been dragged away by police, and it is unclear how many survived. Activists say dozens of people have been arrested, accused of encouraging the immolations.

Meanwhile, a handful of Tibetans have begun to speak out against the self-immolations.

Tsering Woesser, a well-known poet living under virtual house arrest in Beijing, posted a recent online appeal calling for an end to the suicides, signing the appeal with two other Tibetan intellectuals.

“Tibetans must cherish life and live with resilience. Regardless of the magnitude of oppression, our life is important, and we have to cherish it,” the March 8 appeal said.

At least four Tibetans have set themselves on fire since then.

A burning desire for freedom

By Rupert Fisher, *ASIAN AFFAIRS*, September 2012

The self immolation of two Tibetan protestors in the country’s troubled Ngaba prefecture is a reminder of the human rights clampdown and how most Tibetans refuse to accept the Chinese occupation of their country. A third attempted suicide along similar lines has also been reported but not confirmed.

These latest protests against Chinese occupation follow three deaths from self immolation only a week earlier, when two others died in Ngaba and one died in Kanlho prefecture in Gansu province.

The two most recent self immolating protestors have been named by the campaign group Free Tibet and US-funded Radio Free Asia as Lungtok, a monk from Kirti monastery in Ngaba, and Tashi, a lay Tibetan. They set themselves alight to highlight their opposition to Chinese rule in Tibetan-populated areas.

According to Free Tibet, 20-year-old Lungtok, who has since died, and 21-year-old Tashi 'set themselves on fire early in August inside a prayer-wheel hut near Kirti Monastery in Ngaba Town. Once they were in flames, they came out of the hut and walked towards the street now known as Martyrs' Street'.

The Tibetan self immolations have invoked comparisons with similar acts elsewhere in the world, such as the self-immolations of Thích Quảng Đức in Saigon in 1963 and Jan Palach in Prague in 1969. More recently, in December 2010, Tunisian street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire in Tunis, sparking a political chain reaction across the Arab world.

'Tunisians could easily identify with Bouazizi's extreme predicament,' explains Professor Costica Bradatan of the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Studies in the US. Commenting on CNN about Bouazizi, Bradatan added, 'His actions spoke to the community's shared frustration and despair. But the demands of Tibetan self-immolators are varied. Some want a "free Tibet", as do all Tibetan exiles, but others only want freedom of religion, or political autonomy, or the opportunity to study in Tibetan as opposed to Chinese, or the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

'It's very disturbing to watch these self-immolations, but that is part of the intent. The Tibetans want the Chinese and the world to look...

'In essence, these self-immolations are an extreme form of political self-expression. They are performed as part of a struggle for recognition, as an autonomous political community. It confirms what Thích Nhất Hạnh was saying in 1967: "To burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance. There is nothing more painful than burning oneself. To say something while experiencing this kind of pain is to say it with utmost courage, frankness, determination and sincerity".'

Reliable information about the Tibetan self immolations and other allied pro-

tests has been difficult to get hold of, but apart from what has been obtained by the likes of Free Tibet and Radio Free Asia, protesting Tibetans have been making and sending out videos that record their actions.

They confirm the gravity of protests that escalated from February 2009 and incorporated nearly 50 self immolations, including the two confirmed incidents from early August.

In every case, according to local Tibetans quoted by news agencies, the act of self immolation brings out a large contingent of police and armed members of the Public Security Bureau, who impose yet more restrictions of freedom of movement in the area. As locals gather, clashes result and tensions rise still further.

In the case of the recent Kirti Monastery protests, Free Tibet told of eyewitnesses beaten with metal batons spiked with nails as others were dragged away. One male Tibetan is said to have been beaten to death.

Senior Asia researcher for New York-based Human Rights Watch, Phelim Kine, explains that the frequency of the Tibetan self-immolations is ‘a reflection of the ever-deepening frustration and despair’ that many feel about hopes for reform and protection of their culture, religion and language.

Thus almost all the recorded protests have been against Chinese occupation, while calling for the immediate return of the exiled Dalai Lama, winner of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize and spiritual leader of all Tibetans. For their part the Chinese authorities label such protestors as terrorists, outcasts and mental patients who are being encouraged by the Dalai Lama.

Commenting on the escalating self immolations and suicides, the head of the Tibetan government in exile, Lobsang Sangay, said, ‘To understand these acts, it is crucial to know that within China, there is no room for freedom of speech and conventional forms of protest. A participant in a simple demonstration runs a high risk of arrest, torture and even death. Consider that when the Chinese celebrated their new year in February, hundreds of Tibetans protested in the regions of Drakgo, Serta and Ngaba (traditionally known as Amdo; now Qinghai province). The Beijing government responded by shooting at the demonstrators. Six died.’

Sangay commented in the *Washington Post* newspaper, ‘Tibetans are setting fire to themselves as political action. Nearly all have been younger than 50. That means

they were born and brought up under the occupation of Tibet that has lasted since 1959, when the government of the People's Republic of China promised a "socialist paradise". These Tibetans were intended to be the "primary beneficiaries" of the Chinese political system and its education, economy and culture.

'Instead, they serve as a clear indictment of the Chinese government's failed policies for Tibet: policies founded on political oppression, social marginalization, cultural assimilation and environmental destruction. These are the root causes of the demonstrations and the deaths. Were the Chinese government to offer to resolve the issue of Tibet peacefully through dialogue, the self-immolations would end immediately.'

Tibet's old way of life is slow dying.

Not even self-immolation will change that

By Pankaj Mishra, *The Guardian*, 8 December 2011

In 2008, the Tibetan monastery of Kirti was a focal point for the anti-Chinese protests that consumed dozens of lives and led to the imprisonment of innumerable Tibetans. In March this year, the third anniversary of the protests, a young Tibetan from the monastery doused his body with kerosene and set it on fire. Nearly a dozen young Tibetan men and women have immolated themselves since then.

Self-immolation is a radical form of protest for Tibetan monks, a violation of Buddhism's basic tenets of respect for all sentient lives. "Desperation" was the response from Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche, the 70-year-old exiled abbot of Kirti monastery, when I asked him last month to explain the recent spate of self-immolations. He described the repressive measures of local Chinese authorities: indiscriminate arrests; checkpoints on the roads; police camps inside monasteries; and the ideological re-education campaign in which the 2,500 monks at Kirti, confined to their cells, are forced to repeat such statements as "I oppose the Dalai clique" and "I love the Communist party".

The foremost Chinese commentator on Tibet, Wang Lixiong, has described how the Communist party's oversized bureaucratic machines in Tibet, which reflexively respond to mass disaffection with heavy-handed measures, impair the central government's ability to provide an imaginative solution to the Tibetan

crisis. And Tibet seems, on first glance, an instance of an unremittingly authoritarian and secular regime pressing down on a docile religious population.

But it is also true that, as a path-breaking study of the 2008 protests by the Beijing-based NGO Gongmeng law research centre (subsequently shut down by the Chinese authorities) points out, “there is now a new frame of reference for measuring reality” in Tibet. The report asserts that it is no longer “a self-sustaining Tibet protected by the natural environment, but a realm which, whether actively or passively, is intimately connected to all of China and the rest of the world”.

For some years now, Tibet has been part of the world’s fastest-growing and globalising economy – indeed Tibet, helped by government investments and subsidies, has enjoyed higher GDP growth than all of China. There has been a general rise in living standards. Many Tibetan regions have been transformed. A new “Tibetan aristocracy” consisting of ethnic Tibetan party cadres and businessmen has come to the fore.

Many Han Chinese may reasonably wonder why Tibetans, apparently showered with government largesse, are so ungrateful. But as the Gongmeng report points out, “the assistance and ‘development’ brought by the Han is often accompanied by forced change and conflicts”. The logic of development, for instance, forces Tibetan nomads off their grasslands and brings Han Chinese migrants into Tibet’s cities. The unavailability of jobs together with the undermining of Tibetan language has led to a general feeling of disempowerment among the population. And rural-urban inequality has rapidly grown.

Of course, much of the Chinese population also suffers from the humiliation of being left behind by a few lucky rich. But as Wang Hui, one of China’s leading independent thinkers, writes, the gaps of income and opportunity in minority areas are “closely connected with the difference in traditions, customs, language, and the position in the economic market that exists between ethnic groups”.

The radical dissimilarity of *Weltanschauung* (worldview) is crucial here. One Tibetan interviewed by the Gongmeng researchers clarifies that “a Tibetan’s prosperity is more about freedoms such as religious belief, a respect for people, a respect for life, the kind of prosperity you get from extending charity to others”. Chinese-style modernisation has imposed alien values on Tibetans, forcing them to accept “development” and “consumption” as the last word.

The authors of the Gongmeng report sum it up: “When the land you’re accus-

tomed to living in, and the land of the culture you identify with, when the lifestyle and religiosity is suddenly changed into a ‘modern city’ that you no longer recognise; when you can no longer find work in your own land, and feel the unfairness of lack of opportunity, and when you realise that your core value systems are under attack, then the Tibetan people’s panic and sense of crisis is not difficult to understand.”

In this sense, Tibetans are akin to other uprooted and bewildered victims of globalisation and modernisation, such as the Indian villagers protesting against nuclear plants on their lands or the indigenous forest-dwelling peoples in central India resisting their dispossession by a nexus of mining corporations and governments.

The usual simple-minded oppositions between authoritarianism and democracy deployed in discussions of India and China are not of much use here. What these conflicts, cutting across differences in political systems, illustrate is a deeper clash: a powerful and aggressive ideology that upholds social and economic individualism against a traditionally grounded respect for collective welfare and the environment.

But what specific conditions triggered these recent protests in Tibet? The sociologist Béatrice Hibou offers a persuasive answer in her new book, *The Force of Obedience*, which, ostensibly about Tunisia, is also insightful about the psychologies of many other semi-globalised and unequal societies. Hibou describes how it wasn’t so much top-down coercion by a one-party state as the promise and practices of inclusion into global modernity – the visible bonanza of GDP growth, the creation and co-optation of local elites, and the myth of an ever-imminent “economic miracle” that would lift all boats – that had generated a kind of “obedience” among the majority of the population.

For a long time, things seemed appealingly “stable” to foreign governments and investors. Tunisia had achieved a satisfactory macroeconomic equilibrium. It was slowly integrating into the world market. The widely advertised possibility that anyone could join the conspicuously consuming new middle class seemed to be defusing political anger among the disenfranchised. And then a poor vegetable vendor called Mohamed Bouazizi broke the spell, burning himself to death and igniting mini-revolutions across west Asia and north Africa.

Writing to Martin Luther King about the dozens of Buddhist monks who im-

molated themselves in Vietnam in the 1960s, the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh clarified that they “did not aim at the death of the oppressors, but only at a change in their policy”. Events in the Arab world following Bouazizi’s death have confirmed the political efficacy of this extreme act of self-negation.

Still, Tibetan self-immolations cause more embarrassment than anxiety among Chinese authorities. As China increasingly appears as a saviour of many struggling economies, the world’s conscience looks likely to be as little troubled in the future by Tibet as it is by Kashmir – British MPs had failed to even discuss the self-immolations until this week, and did so only after being pressed by the advocacy organisation Avaaz.

Most people may also be too distracted by the destruction of their own fantasies of easy wealth and consumption to notice a greater tragedy: that, as Philip Larkin wrote in his poem *Nothing to be Said*, “For nations vague as weed / For nomads among stones ... Life is slow dying”.

Self-Immolation and Slander

By Woesser, *Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*, 2 April 2012

Looking back upon the recent series of self-immolations by Tibetans, we can see that the first such case occurred on February 29, 2009, in Ngamdo, Aba County, while the second took place two years later in the same region on March 16, 2011. Since then, however, the number of self-immolations has grown rapidly and spread to other areas in Tibet to the point that, altogether, thirty-three Tibetans within Tibet and three in exile have made the ultimate statement of protest through the act of self-immolation as of March 30, 2012. Twenty-four of these protestors have furthermore made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. Now, the question remains, how many more will be consumed by these flames?

These acts of self-immolation have placed the Chinese government in an extremely awkward position. For decades, the state has proudly proclaimed that it “liberated” Tibet and “emancipated the serfs,” thereby granting the Tibetan people the opportunity to lead a “happy life.” But if this is true, how can we account for the fact that so many Tibetans-- including monks, nuns, tulku, peasants, herders, fathers, mothers, and high-school students, ranging in age from 17 to 43, and all descendants of the “serfs” supposedly “liberated” by the glorious Chinese Communist Party-- have chosen to set themselves aflame? Why have they been

driven to these acts of seeming desperation

Eager to discredit these incidents as anything but acts of resistance to a tyrannical colonizing power, and hoping to hide the fact that Tibetan regions of China are facing unprecedented pressure from the state, the Chinese government and its mouthpiece Xinhua (New China News Agency) have engaged in a smear campaign, redirecting attention by questioning the morals and tarnishing the image of self-immolators. They underwrite those who have given their lives in these acts of protest by claiming, for example, that they are epileptic or have “other psychological problems,” are thieves, or have had “inappropriate sexual relations” or conflicts with their spouses. Such slander has been even more malicious when accusing self-immolations as being funded by the “Dalai clique” who “handed out cash for corpses.” At the same time, Xinhua portrays the state as a savior, claiming that protestors who try to self-immolate are “promptly rescued by the People’s Police responsible for maintaining law and order” and are “in stable condition.” Yet to this day, none of the self-immolating protestors “rescued” by the military police have returned home alive.

We should all be quite accustomed to such shameless conduct from Party mouthpieces by now. The sole purpose of their unrelenting attacks is to continue deceiving the people of their country and the people of the world. And it works. One prominent Chinese human rights advocate even recently joined in these attacks, asking “what have these self-immolating Tibetans ever done for the Han people?” Thankfully, some Chinese are not deceived by the party line. For example, the Chinese human rights lawyer Teng Biao has voiced criticism of the general silence on this issue on Twitter. As he wrote “this series of self-immolations has, with a few extremely rare exceptions, been met with a collective blindness and muteness by China’s public intellectuals. This is the elephant in the room, ignored by a conspiracy of silence. Those who engage in such silence are, however, just as shameless as those perpetrating the abuses.”

Of course, the Chinese government knows very clearly that their slander against the self-immolators will fail to have any effect upon our fellow Tibetans. Just as work units across Lhasa have held meetings to pass on the “instructions from above,” “self-immolations have spread from the Tibetan regions of Sichuan to Qinghai, and even to the Qamdo area of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, approaching ever closer to Tibet’s center, Lhasa. Full-scale mobilization is required to prevent such incidents in Lhasa.”

In cities, villages, and temples across this region, Tibetans are saying prayers for these heroic sons and daughters of our people. In many temples and monasteries, as well as in a number of ordinary people's homes, offerings are made to the images of those who have given their lives. When I posted images of these protestors on my blog and wrote about their lives and their final acts, one young Tibetan left the following words in response: "I am recording the names, backgrounds, and achievements of each of these compatriots in my diary, as well as deep within my memory. I want to remember the names of these heroic sons and daughters of our nationality. I want to light a lamp and recite mantras for them, as an expression of my deepest reverence and respect."

Fatal Flames In Tibet

By Babin Kumar Chhetri, *Eurasian Review*, March 13, 2012

Lobsang Kalsang was only 18 years old when he set herself in flames last year. Another monk named Phuntsog, 19 years old, followed the same course. The trend of self immolation was later adopted by Kalsang Wangchuk (17 years), Khayin (18 years), Choephel (19 years), Norbu Damdul (19 years) and many others who wanted the world to recognize the motive behind their death. This year alone, more than a dozen cases of self immolation have signaled a radical humanitarian crisis in Tibet. The wave of unprecedented death amongst the Tibetan youths has sent a spine chilling message across the globe.

After bearing the Chinese regime for more than six decades, the cumulative pain of the Tibetans has been spilling in the form of extreme human sacrifice. Self immolation has become a new metaphor to vent their disappointment. The pattern of self immolation, carried out by Tibetan monks and nuns has shocked the world. 21 activists have already set themselves in flames to protest against the Chinese authority.

This new form of protest shows the failure of China's policies on Tibet. A renewed voice of Tibetan nationalism runs in the hearts and minds of the people. Continuous trend of self immolation has suddenly attracted the world towards Tibet. This wild form of protest shows how the Tibetans want to make their desperation visible. With the growing number of incidents that has disturbed the Himalayan fraternity, it does not seem this practice will end soon. Incidents of self immolation have further fueled the Tibetans to take a decisive step against

the regime. At the juncture of this heart rending sacrifice, the Tibetan communities spread across the globe have been fervently fanning their campaigns for an independent Tibetan homeland.

Self immolation is perhaps the most desperate form of human protest. Nothing can be as painful as dousing oneself into a raging flame. The rationale here is different than other suicide bombers who inflict harm upon others. However, China has tagged the self immolators as terrorists. Why are they called terrorists? The Chinese authority can alone answer the world. Given the gravity of the challenge, posed by this distressing event, China will have to embark a softer stance in dealing with the Tibetans. It is obvious that the Tibetans cannot fight back but they may finish themselves in this sacrificial mania if things do not change. In response to self immolation, China has done nothing to curb the problem, apart from beefing up and fortifying their army which is already strong.

The chain of human sacrifice in the Tibetan plateau is likely to rise, if China remains adamant to reformative changes. Policing the Tibetan monasteries, restricting their rights of movements, arresting their religious freedom and freedom of speech will further ignite unrest in the region. Thus, China must put an abrupt halt to the cultural genocide that it has been practicing since six decades. If the death of 21 Tibetans can shake the world, it is obvious that thousands of Tibetans would be willing to die to make themselves heard.

No one knows the reality of Tibet more than China. Over the years, the heavy-handedness of this huge bureaucracy has fractured the spirit of the Tibetans. Discouraging foreign Journalists from Tibet, enforcing rigorous measures against their religion, culture and linguistic identity has aggravated the situation. Years of repression have bitterly crushed the Tibetan population. China must be willing to consider a meaningful Tibetan autonomy by shaping its policies. Tibet can remain an integral part of China by becoming a religious autonomy and China can still exercise their vested political interest.

Since China is emerging as an enlightened state in terms of economy and growth, it must rise above narrow indifferences and respect the fundamental rights as described in the UN charter. Only rightful legal concessions, infused with democratic values can save the dying monks of Tibet. If China overlooks the plight of the Tibetans, a time will come when the mountains of Tibet will reverberate with the echoes of burning monks and nuns. Peaceful dialogue between the Chinese government and their Tibetan counterparts is the only way to

break this political impasse that is silently killing the language, religion, culture and lives of Tibetans.

**Dying as a political act: Centuries-old Buddhist tradition of
self-immolation continues in China**

By Peter Goodspeed, *The National Post*, 17 March 2012

On Wednesday, Jamyang Palden, a 39-year-old monk, described as “calm, humble and virtuous,” set himself aflame in Drolma Square in the town of Rongwo in the Chinese province of Qinghai, along the border with Tibet.

He prostrated himself three times beside a Buddhist monastery that was founded in 1301, said a silent prayer, then set himself alight, according to the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet.

In a matter of minutes more than 500 crimson-robed monks and 700 students from nearby schools were swarming over the site of the attempted suicide, chanting prayers for the monk’s soul, shouting political slogans, waving outlawed photographs of the exiled Dalai Lama and filming the scene with their cellphones.

News of the self-immolation was posted on the Internet in a matter of hours, but the fiery protest had its roots deep in the past – in centuries-old traditions of self-sacrifice, disdain for the body and belief in the ritualistic cleansing of fire.

“As a rule, suicide is prohibited [in Buddhism],” said Pinit Ratanakul, director of the College of Religious Studies at Thailand’s Mahidol University and an expert in bioethics. “Even when one is suffering from a painful and incurable disease, or when one’s life is unsatisfactory, one should bear it quietly and patiently, while simultaneously trying to rid oneself of the pain and suffering in all possible ways.

“Yet in some cases, according to Buddhist scriptures, taking one’s own life is allowed for noble ends. The giving of one’s own life to save the lives of others, as a bodhisattva [enlightened] gave himself to a hungry lioness to save her from eating her own cubs, is one example of this exception. Another is suicide to escape from an incurable illness that is an obstacle to the attainment of nirvana.”

In the last 12 months, 27 Tibetan Buddhist monks, nuns and young people have set themselves on fire to protest China’s occupation of Tibet.

They have doused themselves in gasoline in front of government buildings and

police stations, turning themselves into human torches, while shouting demands for religious and cultural freedom or calling for the return of the Dalai Lama.

Twenty people who have self-immolated have died – horrible flaming deaths in which their skin blisters and melts and their bodies are fused into charred lumps of burnt flesh.

In China, there is a long history of self-immolation among Buddhist monks and nuns that goes back to the early Middle Ages, said James Benn, chairman of the religious studies department at McMaster University and author of *Burning for Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism*.

In his book, Mr. Benn cites the case of a renowned monk, Daodu, who burnt himself to death in 527 after reciting verses on emptiness as “an active means of deliverance” and a way of becoming a Buddha through a selfless offering.

“This was not the random act of a disturbed individual, but rather a single manifestation of a deeply rooted set of ideas and ideals in Chinese Buddhism that blossomed again and again in the history of pre-modern China,” Mr. Benn said.

While there is a strain of Indian Buddhist literature concerned with heroic self-sacrifice or the “gift of the body,” in China religious suicides have traditionally also had political overtones.

“Early self-immolation was often constructed and construed as an explicitly political act, a way of getting the emperor’s attention and forcing him to act for the benefit of the Buddhist community,” Mr. Benn says in his book.

“The practice of ‘abandoning the body’ (through self-immolation, being devoured by wild animals, drowning oneself and self-mummification) has been common in Chinese Buddhism from the middle ages to the present,” he says.

The current rash of ritual suicides in Tibet and the surrounding provinces of Sichuan and Qinghai have been met with fierce repression by Chinese officials, who describe the self-immolations as “terrorism in disguise” and a separatist plot inspired by the Dalai Lama.

China has flooded Tibet and its surrounding regions with troops and police, shut down Internet and phone communications, banned foreign news coverage, conducted door-to-door searches for activists and ordered monks and nuns to undergo new “legal education” courses in their monasteries.

Jia Qinglin, the fourth ranking member of China’s Politburo, recently told of-

ficials in Beijing they must “resolutely smash the Dalai Lama’s plots to sow chaos in Tibet and maintain social harmony and stability.”

Chinese state media depict the self-immolations as the work of fanatical monks engaged in acts “aimed at disturbing social order” and have vilified Tibetan protesters, saying some monks “frequented places of entertainment, prostitution, alcohol and gambling and spread pornographic CD-ROMs.”

But each new self-immolation has been greeted by thousands of mourners rushing to Tibet’s monasteries to pray and hold candlelight vigils.

Tibet’s government-in-exile in India has urged the world to criticize China’s human rights record. Lobsang Sangay, prime minister of the government in exile, recently told Australian TV that Chinese repression is driving Tibet’s Buddhist clergy to suicide.

“Tibetans cannot protest, they cannot peacefully gather – if you do, you might get shot. You can’t have hunger strikes; you can’t have rallies. Tibetans see this as the only or most drastic way of protesting against these repressive policies,” he said.

So far the Dalai Lama has discouraged, but not explicitly prohibited self-immolation by his followers.

“[People] should bear whatever suffering is inflicted on them with patience and use their precious human lives to develop wisdom and compassion and attain Buddhahood for the sake of all living beings,” said Robert Thurman, a professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University who has studied with the Dalai Lama for nearly 30 years. “Yet there is a tradition within the spiritual heroes and heroines of Buddhism to offer the body out of altruism, love, and joy of freedom, never motivated by hatred or anger.

“They do believe that dying in that positively motivated way leads to a better rebirth, where they can continue to serve all beings. Their act is the absolute opposite of the suicide bomber who self-destructs with the agenda of hatred in order to kill others.”

In 1998, when Indian police broke up a hunger strike staged in New Delhi by the Tibetan Youth Congress, one of the Dalai Lama’s followers, Thubten Ngodup, set himself on fire in protest.

The Dalai Lama condemned the act, saying, “This is violence, even if it is self-

inflicted. The same energy that can cause someone to do this to himself is very close to the energy that enables someone to kill others in fury and outrage,” said Mr. Thurman.

When the Dalai Lama went to visit Mr. Ngodup on his deathbed in hospital, he was visibly upset, Mr. Thurman said.

“His Holiness was worried about this powerful gesture. But he was pleased that at least he was able to whisper into the ear of the totally bandaged victim, ‘Do not pass over with hatred for the Chinese in your heart. You are brave and you made your statement, but let not your motive be hatred.’”

“Thubten Ngodup somehow signaled that he understood, to His Holiness’s great relief,” Mr. Thurman said.

China drives Tibet’s young to commit self-immolation

By Kate Saunders, *THE SUNDAY GUARDIAN*

From his monastery in exile in Sidhbari, Himachal Pradesh, the 17th Karmapa made a heartfelt statement about the ten Tibetan monks and two nuns in eastern Tibet who have set fire to themselves in recent months — a new and disturbing development driven by the anguish of oppression. “These desperate acts, carried out by people with pure motivation, are a cry against the injustice and repression under which they live,” said the Karmapa who, in his mid-twenties, is the same generation as the young Tibetans who have committed this agonizing act.

The Karmapa — who lives in India after escaping from Tibet in 2000 — went on to appeal to Tibetans to protect their lives: “Each report of self-immolation from Tibet has filled my heart with pain. Most of those who have died have been very young. They had a long future ahead of them, an opportunity to contribute in ways that they have now foregone. In Buddhist teaching life is precious. To achieve anything worthwhile we need to preserve our lives. We Tibetans are few in number, so every Tibetan life is of value to the cause of Tibet. Although the situation is difficult, we need to live long and stay strong without losing sight of our long term goals.”

Most of the self-immolations have occurred in the Tibetan area of Ngaba, known in Chinese as Aba, in Sichuan province (the Tibetan area of Amdo), and have been associated with one of the most important and influential monasteries

in the region, Kirti — once a power-house of learning, education, and religious teaching.

The situation now at this great monastery is comparable to the military occupation of a great university such as Oxford or Harvard. Since the death of 20-year-old Kirti monk Phuntsog, who set fire to himself on 16 March, Kirti has been under almost complete lockdown by Chinese troops.

In India last week, near the Karmapa's monastery, I visited a Kirti monk who had just arrived in exile after a dangerous journey from Tibet. We met in a refugee reception centre run by the Tibetan government in exile and funded mainly by the US government, set in a valley alive with birdsong and lush vegetation.

The 17-year-old Kirti monk had been a close friend of Phuntsog, whose cremation was attended by hundreds of Tibetans chanting prayers for his soul in acknowledgment of his sacrifice. He did not witness his friend's self-immolation, but he was there soon afterwards in Ngaba town, and saw the white chemical marks on the ground where police had extinguished the flames and beaten his friend as he lay there, scarcely alive.

The young Kirti monk told us that after his friend's self-immolation in March, the first this year, repression intensified. A rigorous "patriotic education" campaign was stepped up; monks under political suspicion were dragged from their cells in the middle of the night and returned later, almost broken by torture; others were expelled or imprisoned. Religious ceremonies were not permitted, and monks were not even allowed to burn incense.

It is a campaign of terror by the Chinese authorities, who accuse the Tibetans of "terrorism in disguise". Given the level of provocation and oppression, the actions of Tibetans can more accurately be defined as a rejection of terrorism.

Although those committing these acts are primarily young — with most in their late teens — their context is a shared history over the past half century of grief, dispossession and loss, and now, the most systematic assault against the religious practices and beliefs that are at the core of Tibetan identity.

We do not know the last words of nun Palden Choetso, who walked out of her nunnery on 3 November, doused herself in kerosene, and set fire to herself. But we are told that among them were prayers for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, which seems to be the case for virtually all of the Tibetans who have immolated themselves since Tapey in February 2009.

In the first footage to emerge of a self-immolation, Kirti monk Lobsang Kunchok is seen lying on the ground surrounded by armed troops in riot gear. In the background the chilling scream of a woman, calling the name of the Dalai Lama over and over again, can be heard.

The sense of separation from the Tibetan exiled leader has never been so acute among Tibetans in Tibet, and just as the Chinese authorities refuse to give any hope that he will return, so the dangerous cycle of despair is perpetuated. The self-immolations are a terrible indictment of China's Tibet policy. Just as Beijing responded to the overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across the Tibetan plateau by strengthening the very measures that had led to the unrest in the first place, so their responses to the self-immolations risk the further loss of life and radicalisation among Tibetans.

Tibetan from Ngaba wrote recently that the occurrence of this new type of protest is "because many people cannot see how to go on living." "The Patriotic Education" campaign and violent intimidation being touted as the solution to this issue are just a return to the old patterns of confrontation and will lead only to the creation of new confrontations. To have to relinquish our ethnic-national identity and culture is to relinquish the point of living for Tibetans, so the present repressive and punitive policies are literally tearing out the hearts of the Ngaba people."

Self-immolations shake Tibetan resolve

By Sue Lloyd-Roberts, *BBC Newsnight*, Dharamsala, 18 April 2012

At 76, the Dalai Lama has announced his retirement as a political leader, but retains his role as spiritual leader of some five million Tibetans.

But he has remained strangely quiet on the subject of the self-immolations - 32 of which have taken place in the past year alone.

"Now this is very, very sensitive political issue," he explains with due solemnity.

"If I get involved in that, then the retirement from political power is meaningless. Whatever I say the Chinese government they immediately manipulate."

For more than 50 years now, the Dalai Lama has been pursuing his "middle way" - a policy of advocating non-violence while pursuing a programme of talks between successive Chinese governments and his representatives.

But, he admits, it has been a waste of time. There have been no talks for more than two years.

“Our approach [has been] more or less failure to get some kind of cross understanding with the Chinese government and some kind of improvement inside Tibet. In that aspect [it has] completely failed,” he says.

“These [Chinese] leaders are very foolish, narrow minded, authoritarian sort of people,” he says.

“They use only their mouth. No ear, never willing to listen to others. As far as their government is concerned, they are really very, very hardened.

“They do not understand what is the real Tibetan feeling.”

He speaks with emphasis and anger. It is the most ungodlike behaviour I have ever witnessed from His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, in 20 years of interviewing him.

He is fed up and so are his followers. But for decades, it was considered almost blasphemy to criticise the Dalai Lama and his policies. Not any more.

“I question the current policy and position of His Holiness not to face reality and then forcing Tibetans to commit suicide,” says 60-year-old Lhasang Tsering, a former president of the influential Tibetan Youth Congress.

Karma Chopel, a former speaker of the Tibetan parliament in exile, takes the warning further.

“Non-violence has not worked. Violence could now be the only option,” he says.

Disparate acts

There have been 32 self-immolations among mainly monks and nuns living in the Tibetan areas of China over the past year alone.

Norbu, a Tibetan from Sichuan province in China, braved the perilous journey over the Himalayas to find refuge in India.

“I had to come,” he says, “to tell the world what is happening.”

“I was shopping in Ngaba [Aba] town when suddenly two monks ran down the street in flames. One was holding a Tibetan flag and shouting for freedom of religion and for the return of the Dalai Lama.

“After a few minutes, police, firemen and soldiers arrived, put out the flames and threw the two monks in to the back of an army truck. We were told they were being treated in hospital but no one has been allowed to visit them and so we don’t know whether they are dead or alive.”

The self-immolations witnessed by Norbu took place in September last year. Lobsang Kalsang and Lobsang Kunchok were both 18 years old.

Nearly all of these desperate acts follow the same pattern. The monks and nuns (there have been only two civilians) drink kerosene and splash it over their bodies before setting themselves alight.

Many wrap themselves in barbed wire to make it harder for the police to stop them. All policemen in the area carry fire extinguishers.

If Norbu was so anxious to tell his story, I ask, why did it take him so long to leave Sichuan province?

He explains that there are now three military camps surrounding Kirti monastery, where the majority of those who have self-immolated come from, and “security forces and plainclothes police are everywhere. There are checkpoints on every road.”

“The internet cafes have all been closed and even the public telephone office. It’s as if we Tibetans have been shut up in a room and the Chinese have locked the door.”

The Chinese have forbidden access to the area to outsiders. They believe they are bringing development and modernisation to backward Tibetan areas and blame outside forces - particularly the Dalai Lama - for stirring up trouble.

The only way of finding out what is going on is to watch the horrific YouTube videos of the self-immolations which are regularly posted on Tibetan support websites such as Free Tibet and the International Campaign for Tibet.

Journalists wanting to find out more head to Dharmamsala in India, where the 150,000 Tibetans living in exile with the Dalai Lama monitor the grim events taking place in their erstwhile home.

All the major monasteries in Tibet have equivalents in India. At Dharamsala’s Kirti Monastery, I am directed to two monks, Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe.

While the monastery resounds to the sound of mediaeval prayersong, accompanied by cymbals, bells and giant Tibetan horns, Tsering and Yishe are on their Apple Macs and smart phones.

As I arrive in their cell at the top of the monastery, there's been another self immolation and they are hard at work.

"His name is Lobsang Tsultrim and he's 19 years old," Tsering, with his phone to his ear talking to a monk in Kirti Monastery in China, says to Yishe who is typing fast on his keyboard.

"Did he shout any slogans? What happened?"

They are told the police threw his body into a truck - he was still raising his hand and shouting "Free Tibet!"

"He's not dead yet? You're checking?" He died the next day.

Once they hear from three different sources, they send the news to Tibet support groups and journalists.

The two monks then make their way up and along the narrow staircases and corridors of the monastery to the office of the head of the monastery, Kirte Rinpoche, who is also spiritual head of the monastery in China. His face contorts with pain as he hears the news.

"The recent self-immolations express the suffering not just of the monks but of the entire Tibetan people," he says.

It was Chairman Mao who once said "when there is repression the people will revolt".

In an office in Dharamsala, the current general secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Tenzin Chokey, is sitting at her computer monitoring the pictures coming in from Tibet.

They show demonstrations involving thousands of Tibetans as news of the latest self-immolation spreads through Ngaba [Aba] county in Sichuan province.

"Listen," she says as she leans forward towards the screen to try and hear what the crowds are saying, "people in Tibet have spoken and they want freedom and independence. We're scared. Up until now, it has been non-violent. But it could spiral out of control."

That evening, news of another self-immolation reaches Dharamsala. Monks, nuns and lay people take to the streets for a candlelit procession.

It used to be the Dalai Lama and his team in exile who debated the direction in which his people should go.

Now, Tibetans in Tibet are asserting themselves and those in exile can only respond with candles and prayer.

Self-immolations reflect rising Tibetan anger

By Simon Denyer, *Washington Post*, 2 April 2012

DHARMSALA, India — He walked three times around the rural monastery he had attended as a small child, cycled into town and had a simple vegetarian meal with a friend. Then 22-year-old Lobsang Jamyang excused himself to go to the bathroom.

Inside, he doused himself with gasoline. When he emerged, he was already in flames.

Jamyang then ran a few yards to the intersection at the center of the eastern Tibetan town of Ngaba, faced its huge main Kirti monastery and shouted slogans calling for Tibetan independence from China and for the return of the Dalai Lama, the region's exiled religious leader.

In the tense and heavily militarized town, police first kicked him and beat him with clubs spiked with nails before dousing the flames, according to witness reports compiled by refugee groups here in the Indian hill town of Dharamsala.

Jamyang was one of more than 33 Tibetans who have set themselves on fire in a recent wave of copycat acts of resistance against Chinese rule. The self-immolations are a reaction to what many Tibetans see as a systematic attempt to destroy their culture, silence their voices and erase their identity — a Chinese crackdown that has dramatically intensified since protests swept across the region in 2008.

Before he died, Jamyang had given the friend he lunched with three messages, said a close friend. One was that Tibetans in his village should work harder to preserve their language against the onslaught of Mandarin; the second was that a couple in his village who had recently divorced should reunite.

“The third message was that Tibetans should be very strong to face China, that

Tibetans should not be cowards and should not remain silent,” said the friend, who fled his homeland for Dharmasala but remains in touch with local people. Today, Dharmasala is home to thousands of Tibetans, grouped around the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 as an uprising there was ruthlessly crushed.

In the spring of 2008, as the Beijing Olympics approached, Tibet was once again engulfed in protests and riots in which hundreds were killed and thousands were arrested. The response has been brutal, human rights groups say.

A program to resettle Tibet’s nomads into apartments or cinder-block houses and fence off their vast grasslands has gathered pace, the replacement of Tibetan by Chinese as a medium of instruction in schools has been expanded, and government control over Tibet’s Buddhist monasteries, the center of religious and cultural life, has been tightened.

Yet the crackdown seems to have fueled a renewed sense of Tibetan national identity, according to refugees who have fled the region recently for Dharmasala and those like teacher Kelsang Nyima, who returned to his Tibetan village in the Chinese province of Qinghai this year to visit relatives.

“When I left Tibet in 1998, there was not that much conversation about Tibetan nationalism, although some people talked of the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” he said. “This time I can strongly feel the growing sense of nationalism among Tibetans. It is a huge change.”

Once a week, all across this vast Himalayan plateau, Tibetans wear traditional dress, speak only in Tibetan and avoid shops run by Han Chinese, a protest known as “White Wednesday.”

Scores of writers, intellectuals and artists were arrested in 2008 for overtly political work, but in a powerful resurgence of Tibetan culture, others have doggedly continued. Their messages of freedom and yearning for the return of the Dalai Lama are concealed in subtle metaphors that escape the wrath of Chinese officials.

Others yearn for a more overt expression of their feelings, an expression that has been closed off by China.

The monks’ statement

In February 2009, a young monk called Tapey from the Kirti monastery, among the most influential in the east of the Tibetan region, set himself alight carrying

a homemade Tibetan flag and a picture of the Dalai Lama. He was fatally shot by police.

The monastery, in the Chinese province of Sichuan, had been under growing official scrutiny since 1997, its monks subject to intense sessions of “patriotic reeducation” and those deemed insufficiently enthusiastic thrown out of the order, said Lobsang Yeshi, a monk who has since fled to India but has remained in contact with his old friends.

“The three main monasteries in [the Tibetan capital] Lhasa were the center of Tibetan Buddhism, but now they are more or less for tourists,” he said. “But Kirti monastery is one of the few large monasteries that is still struggling to some extent. The Chinese see it as a threat to their control, and they are trying to eliminate it.”

The monks were divided on how to respond. The older ones, who had lived through the Cultural Revolution, when the monasteries of Tibet were largely destroyed and emptied, “who knew what the Chinese were capable of,” argued for cooperation, said Yeshi, while the younger ones urged resistance.

The 2008 protests effectively ended the debate. Yeshi said that at least 30 people lost their lives in Ngaba, and many monks were detained for their role in the uprising. When a second self-immolation followed in March 2011, the Chinese response was dramatic.

The monastery was sealed off and 300 monks were arrested. Villagers surrounding the monastery in an attempt to protect its occupants were beaten and carried off by the truckload. The teachers and two friends of the monk who set himself afire were sentenced to a decade or more in jail for homicide.

But instead of stopping the immolations, it has only encouraged more, 20 from Ngaba alone, most of them monks or former monks, but also two nuns and two lay Tibetans.

Today, the town feels like a military camp, sealed off by soldiers, barricades and barbed wire on every block, said 26-year-old nomadic herdsman Sugney Kyab, who arrived in Dharmasala this month after a harrowing escape over the Himalayas.

“When we hear about the immolations we feel very helpless, all we can do is cry,” he said. “We have no voice, we can’t even make a phone call, it is so suf-

focusing.”

Kyab and other refugees said the immolators had become heroes to Tibetans, their acts “a clear expression that we can no longer live under Chinese rule.”

It is also, say increasing numbers of young Tibetan refugees, a sign of the failure of the Dalai Lama’s “middle way,” a two-decade-long attempt to conciliate the Chinese and negotiate with them, an avoidance of any talk of independence in favor of a vaguely defined call for autonomy within China.

Exiles’ anguished appeals

China’s response to the self-immolations has been to blame the Dalai Lama, with one state-run Web site recently accusing him of wanting to impose “Nazi” racial policies inside Tibet and build a “‘Berlin Wall’ of ethnic segregation and confrontation.”

The middle way, it said, was strikingly “similar to the Holocaust committed by Hitler on the Jewish.”

The Dalai Lama has said that he does not condone the immolations, but he has largely removed himself from the debate since he retired from politics last year in favor of a democratically elected exiled administration headed by Lobsang Sangay, a former Harvard professor.

With Sangay reduced to seemingly impotent appeals to Tibetans not to take such “drastic” actions, the exile community in Dharamsala, which did so much to keep Tibet in the public eye during the dark years of China’s Cultural Revolution, has been reduced to the role of anguished spectator as Tibetans inside their homeland take up the mantle of resistance.

Jamyang, who came from a desperately poor nomadic family, became a monk at age 5, but at 10 he left to attend a Tibetan school. Just five years later, with his family facing financial problems, he was forced to leave.

His friend remembered him as someone who loved lying in the grass and playing as his family’s sheep and yak grazed.

“That was very funny to me when I reflect on his life,” the friend said.

But if Jamyang was passionate about Tibet’s rolling grasslands, over the years he also became passionate about politics, joining an association in his village trying to preserve the Tibetan language, a move that earned him trouble with the

authorities.

In 2008, when the protests erupted, he warned his brothers that he was going to do something unique.

“His brothers took it as if he was just boasting,” the friend said. “But what I would like to mention is that he is very passionate about whatever he does.”

Not playing with fire

By Tenzin Tsundue, *Hindustan Times*, 25 October 2011

Tibetan Buddhist monk Phuntsok was known among his friends as a shy novice until one afternoon he marched into the street, soaked in kerosene, and set himself ablaze. Police rushed towards him, beat him to the ground with iron rods and doused the flames. By then the 20-year-old had already been consumed by fire.

This was on March 16 in Amdo Ngaba, eastern Tibet, the third anniversary of the 2008 Tibet uprising that killed 17 people. Today, the situation is controlled round the clock by armed police. The relationship between the State and Tibetans is that of fear and suspicion.

Beijing’s armed riot police - the People’s Armed Police (PAP) - tried to remove Phuntsok’s charred body to conceal evidence. Monks, nuns, nomads and farmers immediately formed a formidable wall around it. By evening, the PAP laid siege to Ngaba Kirti Monastery - Phuntsok’s alma mater. This 130-year-old monastery, with 2,500 monks, is one of the most influential centres of Buddhist learning in eastern Tibet and a place that set the trend of self-immolation into motion.

Protest by self-immolation was made iconic by Malcom Browne’s 1963 black-and-white image of a monk in flames during the Vietnam War. Thich Quang Duc’s immolation made history and was quickly emulated by many who later burnt themselves to protest America’s war against Communist North Vietnam. India registers about 1,500 cases of self-immolations annually, its most unforgettable instance being Rajiv Goswami, who set himself on fire on September 19, 1990 to protest against the recommendations of the Mandal Commission.

And then early this year, Mohamed Bouazizi, a poor vegetable vendor in Tunisia was slapped and humiliated by a municipal official. When the governor refused

to meet him, Bouazizi warned: “If you don’t see me, I’ll burn myself”. The next day, he doused himself with gasoline and lit a match. That spark ignited anti-government demonstrations that spread like wildfire throughout West Asia and North Africa, leading to the overthrow of Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, who had been in power for 23 years in Tunisia, and other dictators, like Hosni Mubarak and Muammar Gaddafi, elsewhere.

While Bouazizi’s act of self-immolation set in motion the Arab Spring, the first instance of self-immolation by a Buddhist monk happened in China way back in 397 AD.

India-educated, Canada-based Chinese historian Jan Yun-hua, in his essay ‘Buddhist Self-immolation in Medieval China’, quotes two Chinese biographers from the fifth and 10th centuries and records more than 50 monks attempting - or committing - self-immolation. The concept of wang-shen or yi-shen - literally meaning ‘abandon or lose the body’ - was inspired mostly by the Buddhist Lotus Sutra text imported from India. It relates the story of Bhaisajjaraja, who achieved bodhisattva-hood by setting himself on fire. It’s believed that, due to his deep devotion, the fire destroying his body lasted for 1,200 years.

What was only a theoretical act in India, became a tradition among devout Chinese Buddhists. In 570 AD, to protest against anti-Buddhist Emperor Wu of the Northern Chou Dynasty (557-81), monk Tao-Chi and seven friends starved themselves to death in today’s Sichuan Province. All these cases of self-immolations and hunger strikes happened long before Buddhism reached Tibet from India in the seventh century AD.

Last week, the spokesperson for Beijing’s foreign ministry labelled the Tibetan self-immolations as acts of “terrorism in disguise”. Mao’s Cultural Revolution may have rooted-out Buddhism in China but could not stem the hunger for spirituality among its citizens. Today, China’s youngsters seek Buddhist teachings elsewhere - mostly in Tibet; some even come to Dharamsala.

For a Buddhist, taking life - whether murder or suicide - is forbidden. Therefore, taking one’s own life amounts to destroying what is most sacred. Commenting on Thich Quang Duc’s self-immolation, the world-renowned Buddhist master, Thich Nhat Hanh, said: “Like the crucifixion of Jesus, his act expressed the unconditional willingness to suffer for the awakening of others.”

Igniting the Embers* of Independence

By Jamyang Norbu, *Huffington Post*, 19 October 2011

In mid-December last year, Mohamed Bouazizi, a humble Tunisian street-vendor of fruits and vegetables, set himself on fire to protest the confiscation of his produce and the daily harassment and humiliation inflicted on him by police and local officials. His act set off demonstrations and riots throughout Tunisia which intensified following Bouazizi's death on January 4, leading the authoritarian regime and its leader to flee the country after 23 years of repressive and corrupt rule.

This and the events that followed, called the "Jasmine Revolution" or the "Arab Spring", resulted in a peaceful revolution in Egypt, an armed uprising in Libya (resulting in the fall of its dictator), civil uprisings in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen, and protests in Israel, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Oman and elsewhere, that have yet to run their courses.

Just this year, in Tibet, starting twelve days after the death of Mohamed Bouazizi, we have had nine self-immolations -- so far. And there are unsettling rumors of more to come. The latest took place two days ago. A nun, Tenzin Wangmo, age 20 from Ngaba, set fire to herself on October 17. An earlier self immolation took place after I had just written the initial draft of this piece. The immediacy of it was unsettling. On October 15, 11:50 local time, a former monk of Kirti monastery Norbu Damdul set himself on fire in the central town of Ngaba. "Engulfed in flames, Norbu Damdul raised slogans demanding 'Complete Independence for Tibet' and 'Return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet'".

Two self-immolations took place a week ago, on October 7 "At around 11:30 a.m. Tibet time today, Choephel, age 19 and Khayang, 18, monks of Kirti monastery, set themselves ablaze in the central town of Ngaba district". "Eyewitnesses have told sources in exile that as they were engulfed in flames they called for Tibetans to unite and rise up against the Chinese regime and raised slogans for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama from exile."

Three days before that, on October 3 at around 2 p.m. local time, a very young novice monk "Kesang Wangchuk walked out onto the main street of Ngaba town holding a photo of the Dalai Lama and shouting slogans protesting Chinese rule over Tibet. He then set himself ablaze."

Last month, on September 26, two teenage monks of Kirti Monastery, Lobsang Kalsang, and Lobsang Kunchok, both around 18 years of age "set themselves

on fire in an anti-China protest in the central town of Ngaba. Their whereabouts and condition are not yet known.”

The month before, on August 18, 29-year old Tsewang Norbu, a monk from Nyitso monastery in Tawu, died after setting fire to himself and calling for “freedom of worship, freedom for Tibet, and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet”.

At the beginning of this year on March 16, afternoon, Phuntsog, a 16-year-old monk at Kirti monastery set himself on fire.

Readers should be reminded that two years earlier in February 27, 2009, A Kirti monk called Tapey was shot by police when he set himself on fire. The police immediately took him away. He is said to have survived but his whereabouts are unknown.

All reports and comments in the exile Tibetan world have stressed the “tragic”, “terrible” “heartbreaking” and “desperate” aspects of these actions. Calls for international condemnation and UN intervention have been made by various political and activist organizations as well as foreign support groups. A number of demonstrations, vigils and hunger-strikes have taken place. Some concerns have been expressed that more self-immolations could happen and that a way to prevent or at least discourage such actions should be sought.

All these statements and acts of concern and support have been tremendous, and in fact such responses are crucial to make the world take notice of what is happening in Tibet. They only become somewhat misguided, even unconsciously condescending, if supporters fail to overcome their first natural reaction of dismay and horror, and are unable to view the sacrifices of the monks in the way that those young men wanted them to be seen: as calls to action for the cause of a free and independent Tibet. It is also counterproductive if the actions of these young men are misinterpreted as merely a call for human rights, religious freedom or even “autonomy” within the PRC as has been most bizarrely reported in the British paper, *The Independent*.

There can be no doubt that the men acted not out of despair, not because they could not go on living any longer, and not because they thought it was all over for the Tibetan freedom struggle. The reports on the immolations have been sketchy but what is clear is that they are all clear acts of political protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, with slogans calling for “Tibetan freedom and independence” (*bhod rawang-rangzen*) for Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The last demand must also be understood in its proper historical and political context, since the Dalai Lama has always been regarded, first and foremost, as the sover-

eign ruler of independent Tibet, not only by those who acknowledge him as their spiritual leader, but by Tibetans from other Buddhist sects, by Bonpos, Tibetan Muslims and Christians who have their own distinct spiritual leaders.

It is more than likely that the young men were inspired, as were nearly everyone in the Tibetan world then, by the sacrifice of Thupten Ngodup, former para-trooper and one of the liberators of Bangladesh, who set himself on fire in April 1998. He did it stone cold. He was fit and healthy, of cheerful disposition, with no money problems, and living in a free country, in a small meditation hut surrounded by flowers. But he did it for *bhod rawang-rangzen*, for Tibetan freedom and independence.

The eight young men must also have heard or read of Mohamed Bouazizi, especially after Chinese bloggers and activists, at the beginning of this year, spread the news of the Arab Spring throughout the PRC and began calling on the Chinese people to start their own Jasmine Revolution. Fifteen foreign journalists were arrested on March 6, in “the biggest showdown between Chinese authorities and foreign media in more than two decades.” This call for revolution spread to about thirteen cities (as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan) and definitely alarmed China’s leaders. The Atlantic quoted Hilary Clinton: “They’re worried, and they are trying to stop history, which is a fool’s errand. They cannot do it. But they’re going to hold it off as long as possible.” The New York Times reported that Beijing police had banned the sale of jasmine flowers at various flower markets, causing wholesale prices to collapse. Subsequently thirty-five prominent human rights activists were arrested, the highest-profile arrest being that of the courageous and protean artist Ai Weiwei.

The self-immolations of the eight young monks were revolutionary acts of ultimate sacrifice to rouse the Tibetan people to action, in much the way as Mohamed Buazizi’s self-immolation, woke up the oppressed people of the Middle East from many many decades of fear, apathy, cynicism and weariness -- and goaded them to overthrow their dictators, supreme leaders and presidents-for-life.

* Tibetan historians use the expression “nurturing the embers of the dharma” (*tempae mero solwa*) to describe the lonely but heroic struggle of a few dedicated scholars and teachers who kept the Buddha dharma alive in Tibet after the breakup of the Tibetan Empire, and eventually brought about the second or “later transmission” (*tenpa chidbar*) of Buddhism to Tibet.

China fears the living Tibetans – not those who set fire to themselves

By Dibyesh Anand, *The Guardian*, 19 October 2011

Protest by self-immolation is a new phenomenon in Tibet. Stories of young people burning themselves in protest against the draconian policies and practices of the Chinese government are coming out of the country on almost a daily basis. Unfortunately, both the Chinese government and the Tibetan leaders in exile are responding to this human tragedy solely in terms of a blame game.

The Tibetan exile government as well as the activists ascribe self-immolations to the repressive nature of the Chinese rule that leaves Tibetans with no other option but to sacrifice their lives to remind the world of their pain. The Chinese government blames the Dalai Lama and the exiles for encouraging this form of protest to create more instability inside China and generate international sympathy. This politics of blame marshals the same old adversarial vocabulary that has been the hallmark of Sino-Tibetan relations since 1959 and has failed to achieve any accommodation so far. It certainly falls short of addressing the immediate crisis in hand – the loss of human lives due to the copycat phenomenon of self-immolation.

The fact that Tibet is back in the international news and the exiles in India and the west are galvanising their movement in solidarity with the self-immolating protesters indicates that the acts are already having some impact. But at what cost? Does any of this make the key demand of Tibetans inside Tibet – the return of the Dalai Lama and the right to be treated with dignity – closer to fruition?

Self-immolation is not nonviolent. It is, in fact, a violence against oneself. Harming one's own corporeal being is unjustifiable and goes against most interpretations of Buddhism. It certainly goes against the hard work put by the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan religious figures to equate Tibetan Buddhism and identity with nonviolence. Though violence, as much as nonviolence, was always part and parcel of Tibetan history and culture, the 14th Dalai Lama has been singularly successful in associating the Tibet cause with nonviolence. Won't his lifetime's work go waste if this novel form of political protest spreads like a wild-fire? No community can exercise patience, something that nonviolent resistance demands, in the face of young men killing themselves.

Collective politics, especially at times of stress and in a context of repression, tends to become rapidly radicalised as individuals feel the pressure to perform

in specific ways. Compromise becomes a bad word. And as the performance of patriotism and loyalty toward the Dalai Lama become associated with immolating oneself to protest against the Chinese rule, more Tibetan lives will be lost in the coming days. How does that benefit the Tibetan cause?

International media will soon lose interest for the repetitive deaths are not newsworthy (“what’s new?”) and there is no powerful foreign government interested in rocking the Chinese boat. With the ongoing economic crisis at home and major changes in west Asia and north Africa that are exposing western government’s hypocrisy toward democracy and human rights, it is naïve to believe that any additional pressure would be applied on China. In any case, the Chinese government’s main concern is what people within China feel. Given the almost total censorship of information in the country as well as the widespread Han chauvinism that perceives Tibetans as insolent younger brothers to be taken care of by the more progressive Han Chinese majority, self-immolations will not bring about solidarity with the tens of millions of marginalised Chinese. In fact, the Chinese government will get an opportunity to portray Tibetans as religious fanatics who cannot be reasoned with. The victory of the Tibetan movement in terms of getting international attention will prove to be pyrrhic.

So the exile leadership faces a dilemma and has two options.

Should it use the protests to rejuvenate Tibetans and their supporters all over the world, even if it means indirectly encouraging the attractiveness of this heroic sacrifice for the already-suffering young Tibetans inside China? Or should it highlight the continuing oppression of Tibetans inside China but at the same time discourage self-immolation by publicly calling for, and privately working for, the Tibetans in the affected region to treasure their lives for the survival of the nation? The new political leadership under Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of the government in exile, has so far been to go for the first option.

But it needs to address the disjuncture between the commitment to the middle way of the Dalai Lama (which entails genuine autonomy for the Tibetans within the People’s Republic of China and struggle to seek that through nonviolent means) and the actual reality of a struggle where individual lives are being sacrificed.

However, it is the religious leaders in exile who must take the initiative here. It is they who should go for the second option. The Karmapa, the third highest lama in Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy, has expressed his discomfort with political suicides. Other individual lamas too have expressed their disquiet. But we are still

waiting for the Dalai Lama to make his views known on this. Will he go with the political leadership's strategy of solidarity with self-immolation or will he adopt a less popular but religiously compatible stance of requesting the Tibetans inside China not to indulge in self-immolation? Of all the people, he knows best that China does not fear the dead or the dying monks. It fears the living ones.

HOW ABOUT SOME R-E-S-P-E-C-T?

By Tsering Lama, *Lhakar Diary*, 19 October 2011

A video has just emerged of the Chinese military lockdown in Ngaba. It was shot clandestinely by Agence France-Presse and shows the tense faces of Tibetans living with an overwhelming number of military personnel, trucks and road blocks.

Can you imagine living in such a place? I can't. But we all try to empathize, we try to inhabit that world on some level so we can understand. That's why none of us would dare order Tibetans living in Ngaba or anywhere else in Tibet to stop burning themselves, or to stop protesting, or to stop fighting for what they want.

So where does Dibyesh Anand, a China-India scholar in London, get off advising the Dalai Lama to send such orders? In his Guardian: Comment is free piece, "China fears the living Tibetans — not those who set fire to themselves," Anand gives the following reasons for his advice:

1) Self-immolation is violent and this action goes against Buddhist principles. "Won't [the Dalai Lama's] lifetime's work go to waste if this novel form of political protest spreads like a wildfire?" he asks.

Firstly, he is somewhat disproportionately concerned about the fate of Buddhist principles (FYI, principles don't bleed, people do). But believe me Anand, these monks and nun were acting because of the same concern. Time after time, they called out for "religious freedom" before setting themselves on fire. Their belief in the importance of Buddhism goes back to the fundamental element of Tibetan thinking that a monk or nun does religious practice for the benefit of all sentient beings. And while Anand might have some appreciation for Buddhism, for these monks and nuns, this is their life's meaning.

Self-immolation isn't necessarily violent either. By his definition of 'violence,' fasting is violent, as is wearing a girdle — well, they do hurt. But he's really confusing the fiery nature of the act with its intention. Anyone who knows Tibetans know how much import we place on intention, and the intention of the actions

was not to inflict violence but to express oneself, to release a call of protest and to generate power for Tibetans.

What's more, self-immolation (though very rare in the Tibetan movement) has precedence in Buddhist texts, and was in fact enacted by the Bodhisattva All Beings Delight In Seeing. As written in chapter 23 of Lotus Sutra, the Bodhisattva decides to sacrifice his life as an offering to the Buddha by self-immolating for twelve hundred years.

The sentiments expressed are beautiful, and even gave me some comfort because it made me realize that there is a spiritual component to these young monks' and nun's actions that I never considered:

"By means of spiritual penetration power and vows, he burned his own body. The light shone everywhere throughout worlds in number to the grains of sand in eighty kotis of Ganges Rivers.

[The Buddhas responded] 'Good man, this is called foremost giving. Among all gifts, it is the most honored and most supreme, because it is an offering of Dharma to the Thus Come Ones.'"

2) More and more Tibetans will feel a form of peer-pressure to show loyalty to the Dalai Lama, and thus they will burn themselves.

This is frankly insulting to Tibetans inside Tibet. They don't act to show loyalty. They don't burn themselves because their neighbors did it. This isn't Saved by the Bell and they don't make their decisions the way we decided to take a puff of our friend's cigarette in the back of our high schools. Anand is trivializing the Tibetan crisis here and actually giving Tibetans the intelligence of infants.

3) Nobody cares about Tibet. The international media will get bored of the repetition of self-immolations, and Chinese people will think we are just as savage as they've always thought we are.

There's a basic egocentrism here that presupposes that Tibetans inside Tibet are acting to send a message to Westerners, or Han Chinese. I don't know. Maybe they are thinking about those audience demographics when they are getting ready to act, maybe not. But I'm going to suggest that these actions are probably also meant for the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile, and also for the Chinese government and military personnel actually living in Ngaba.

Ananda's presumption is based on another presumption. That the Western world and Han Chinese are the power-holders in this situation and so they are the targets Tibetans would want to get on our side. I would venture to think that Tibetans inside Tibet see things closer to the ground, see the power passing

hands from them to the Chinese authorities, and back and forth. I won't get into theories of power, but power exists as a moving thing within groups, not inherently in any entity. It is a constant negotiation where members of the group must give power to someone within that group, or (in this case) try to take it away.

I believe that Tibetans inside Tibet (across the plateau, not just in Ngaba), as evidenced by the Lhakar movement, are seeing that the power is truly within their grasp. They are working strategically to take that power back from the Chinese authorities through economic, social and political non-cooperation.

So...this all gets me to the main reason why this article irked me to the core. It is condescending towards not only the 9 brave young Tibetan monks and nun who chose to do something for their people and nation, but towards all Tibetans, including His Holiness.

But to be fair, this isn't something that Anand does alone. It's symptomatic of a long-standing attitude from some Western scholars, politicians, corporations, and our Chinese oppressors alike: that they know what's best for Tibetans. In all of this, it feels that no one really wants to listen to the Tibetans inside Tibet. Anand is essentially sympathetic to Tibetans, and probably sees himself as an ally of sorts. But Tibetans have taken much patronizing from our 'patrons' in the past.

Now it's time to listen to Tibetans inside Tibet. And it's time for us to answer their call.

Self-immolations on the rise in Tibet

By Emily-Anne Owen, *Aljazeera*, 04 November 2011

A Tibetan monk set himself on fire last week while shouting slogans calling for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet during a religious ritual watched by hundreds, the advocacy group International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) reported last week.

The monk attempted to burn himself to death following an unprecedented wave of self-immolations in the western Chinese province of Sichuan, which has a large Tibetan population.

Dawa Tsering, a monk in his thirties from the Kardze Monastery in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, set himself on fire on the morning of October 25, according to a statement released on ICT's website - which cites "exiled sources" and "eyewitness" accounts.

The statement claims that Dawa Tsering was participating in the Torgyak ritual,

an annual ceremony in which monks dance and burn food to make offerings for the year ahead, when he set himself ablaze in front of an audience of hundreds of local people.

The monk reportedly was still alive after the flames were put out. However, his whereabouts are now unknown.

The most recent immolation has become the tenth this year. Nine others have set themselves on fire since March in Sichuan's Aba prefecture - the site of an influential monastery - which is located about 100 miles south of Ganzi (known to Tibetans as Kardze).

At least five have died of their wounds, including Tenzin Wangmo, a 20-year-old nun, who set herself alight last month while reportedly calling out for the end of Chinese rule and the return of the exiled Dalai Lama to Tibet.

China, which has asserted its jurisdiction over Tibet since occupying the Himalayan region in the 1950s, claims that the immolations are "terrorism in disguise" propagated by the Dalai Lama and outside Tibetan independence groups.

While Beijing has refrained from whipping up a Chinese nationalist fever over the immolations in the state-run press - as it did during the 2008 Tibetan unrest during the Beijing Olympics - officials have claimed that the self-immolations go against the basic tenets of Buddhism.

'Deeply disturbing'

Tibetan advocacy groups, however, say that Beijing is to blame for its increasingly tight surveillance over the Tibetan plateau region in Sichuan.

"This wave of self immolations is a new development. It is deeply disturbing," said Kate Saunders, communications director for ICT. "The loss of life is indicative of the anguish and desperation experienced by Tibetans in the area under this crackdown that leaves them no space for ordinary life, no space to carry out their religious practice."

"Tibetan Buddhism is at the heart of identity, the core of what it is to be Tibetan," Saunders adds. "So the monks really are at the front line of what they see as a life and death struggle to protect their culture, to protect their identity and to protect what they see to be Tibetan - and this is ultimately what has compelled them to take this stance."

Robert Barnett, a scholar of Tibetan issues at Columbia University, believes

that the increasingly tight surveillance of Tibetan areas of Sichuan has created a “pressure cooker syndrome” leading to the unprecedented immolations.

“We don’t know the exact conditions there, but we can see by looking at the government expenses in Sichuan that the amount of money spent on security in Tibetan areas of Sichuan is about four times higher per person than any other parts of Sichuan - the increase began to become very prominent since about 2006,” Barnett explained.

“It seems that the authorities had already increased security activity in these areas to a very high level, even before major unrest broke out in 2008. It seems that this was a pre-emptive way of putting pressure on that monastery, which has become counter-productive.”

According to a report by the New York-based Human Rights Watch, security measures imposed include armed guards surrounding the monasteries, cutting water and food supplies, and monks being removed for “political education”, where they are forced to renounce the Dalai Lama, considered by Tibetans to be their rightful leader.

Tsering Woeser, the Tibetan activist and author of *Notes on Tibet*, states that the immolations must be seen as a “process of sacrifice” to bring the increasing clampdowns on Tibetans into the public eye.

“People who think these actions are suicides don’t really understand the Buddhist doctrine,” Tsering Woeser explained. “It’s a process of sacrifice. Buddhism is against suicide but those monks didn’t commit suicide for themselves but for all the Tibetan people.

“The monks sacrificed their lives to raise the issue of the Tibetan people to international society. They hope that international society can put more pressure to the Chinese government.”

Burning Desire For Freedom

By Hannah Beech, *TIME MAGAZINE*, 14 November 2011

There are no flowers or memorials to mark the spot where Tsewang Norbu died. On Aug. 15, the 29-year-old Tibetan monk living in the remote Chinese outpost of Tawu gulped down kerosene, bathed his body in the combustible liq-

uid and struck a match. As he burned in the center of town, Norbu shouted for freedom in Tibet and screamed his love for the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader. Two and a half months later, under the cover of night, I visit the bridge in Tawu (or Daofu in Chinese) where Norbu ended his life. The town is under virtual lockdown. New security cameras affixed to lampposts record all movements. Half a block away, a few Chinese police cradle machine guns. Every few minutes, a reddish glow—from the flashing lights of police vehicles on constant patrol—illuminates the site of martyrdom.

Tibet is burning. Since Norbu's fiery death, eight more Tibetan clerics or former monks have set themselves on fire to protest China's repressive rule over Tibetan areas. At least six have died this year, including Norbu, a pair of teenage monks and a young nun whose charred body was seized in late October by Chinese security forces. Tibetan Buddhism is well known for the life-affirming mantras of its smiling leader, the Dalai Lama. But self-immolation is becoming a symbolic weapon of choice for young clerics still living in Tibetan regions in China.

The incendiary displays prove that a new, nihilistic desperation has descended on the Tibetan plateau. Ever since widespread protests erupted three years ago following ethnic riots, Chinese security forces have turned the Tibetan regions, which encompass Tibet proper and parts of four other Chinese provinces, into a razor-wire security zone. Thousands of Tibetans have been jailed. Clerics have been forced to publicly denounce the Dalai Lama. Local officials have been shepherded into propaganda classes. Parts of the plateau have been periodically closed to foreigners.

Instead of cowing Tibetans, the security onslaught has only caused local anger to metastasize. Beyond self-immolation, small-scale protests—a Free Tibet pamphlet here, a slogan supporting the Dalai Lama there—keep flaring, especially in the eastern Tibetan region known as Kham. In mid-October, Chinese security forces shot two protesting Tibetans from Kham's Kardze autonomous prefecture, where Tawu is also located. On Oct. 26, a nighttime bomb exploded at a government building in eastern Tibet. Graffiti scrawled on the building demanded Tibetan independence, and flyers scattered nearby called for the Dalai Lama's return from exile in India, where he sought refuge after a failed uprising in 1959. "We cannot stand the situation anymore," says one young monk from Kardze. "There will be more violence because the Tibetans have lost all trust in the Chinese government."

The Dalai Lama for years has tried to improve relations with Beijing by saying he wants only meaningful autonomy for Tibet, not independence. His attempt at peaceful compromise has been dubbed the “middle way.” Even so, on Oct. 29, he held the Chinese government directly accountable for the self-immolations. “The local leader must look at what’s the real causes of death,” he said. “It’s their own sort of wrong policy, ruthless policy, illogical policy.” Two days later, the Chinese government’s official mouthpiece, the People’s Daily, compared the Dalai Lama and his flock to sect leader David Koresh and his followers who perished in the 1993 siege in Waco, Texas.

This past summer, Beijing celebrated the 60th anniversary of what it calls the “peaceful liberation of Tibet.” The Chinese Communist Party’s version of history goes like this: Tibetan serfs struggling under the feudal yoke of Buddhist god-kings welcomed the socialist liberators, who dramatically raised the region’s living standards. The truth is more complicated. Tibet may have been poor and isolated when the People’s Liberation Army began its invasion in 1950, but it was also a land whose people considered themselves essentially independent. (China says Tibet has been an inviolable part of its territory for centuries.) The Chinese government’s efforts to tame the Tibetans, ranging from brutal crackdowns to economic enticements, have failed. Despite decades of so-called patriotic education, Tibetans still revere the Dalai Lama and see themselves as “completely Tibetan, not even 1% Chinese,” as one Kardze resident tells me.

Over the past few years, a massive influx of Han, China’s majority ethnic group, into Tibetan areas has further inflamed tensions. Tibetans complain that the best jobs and access to the region’s plentiful natural resources go to Han migrants. Police officers tend to be Han, as are many bureaucrats. The highest Communist Party post in Tibet has never gone to a Tibetan. The Tibetan language is taught in some schools, but fluency in Chinese is required for government careers, and official documents are in Mandarin. “If we don’t do something, our Tibetan culture will be extinguished,” says a high-ranking monk at a Kardze monastery popular with Han tourists. “That is why the situation is so urgent. That’s why we are trying to save our people and our nation.”

Kardze, in the Kham borderlands between Han and Tibetan areas, is on the front line of this battle. All the self-immolations to date have occurred in either Kardze (known as Ganzi in Chinese) or the neighboring Ngaba (or Aba) prefecture. Despite Tibet’s peaceful image, the Khampas, as people from Kham are

known, were renowned for centuries as fierce warriors. In the 1950s, the CIA even trained a militia of mostly Khampa resistance fighters that numbered in the thousands. But as Sino-American relations warmed in the 1970s, Washington withdrew its financial support. The Dalai Lama sent a taped message to the guerrillas urging them to lay down their guns. Some committed suicide rather than give up their armed struggle.

More than 60 years after communist forces marched in, the high-altitude grasslands of Kardze still feel like an occupied territory. The prefectural capital's Chinese name, Kangding, can literally mean "stabilize Kham." Giant propaganda billboards loom above grazing yaks and tidy Tibetan settlements. "The police and citizens together share a common purpose to foster development," says one in Chinese, a language that many Tibetans cannot read. "Red flags across the sky," says another. "In the same boat we work together to build a peaceful environment." Police jeeps rumble across unpaved paths past Tibetan nomads with gold-capped teeth, who squint through the swirl of road dust. Monasteries I visit are staffed with plainclothes police officers, easy to distinguish with their buzz cuts and alert eyes. It's not just the thin air of a region that rises well over 13,000 ft. (4,000 m) above sea level that makes moving around here tiring. So many people, one feels, are either pretending not to watch anything or watching too carefully. The attention is exhausting.

Across Tibetan regions, owning a picture of the man Beijing calls "a wolf in monk's clothes" invites prison time. But in Kardze, I see the Dalai Lama's visage everywhere. Each monastery I go to has his picture tucked away somewhere. Maroon-clad monks pull cell phones out of their thick robes to show me snapshots of their spiritual leader. The Dalai Lama's image nestles between packets of peanuts and toilet paper in a small provisions store. A woman wells up with tears when I tell her I have been to Dharamsala, the Indian hill station where he lives.

Despite the locals' reverence, the Dalai Lama's message of nonviolence and compassion--precisely what makes the Tibetan movement so popular abroad--seems to be fraying. All the Kardze monks I ask say they understand why their fellow clerics immolated themselves, breaking Buddhist vows against the taking of life. "They did this not as individuals but for the Tibetan people," says a 20-year-old monk. "I admire their courage."

Monks on fire grab headlines. News of the ritual suicides has traveled fast through Tibetan regions, even as the Chinese government has severed Internet

connections and suspended text-messaging services in certain areas. But when talking with young, rosy-cheeked monks in Kardze, in their dormitory rooms with posters of the Dalai Lama next to those of NBA stars, it is easy to feel the futility of the immolations. The Khampas may have once been proud warriors, yet they are hardly a fighting force now. Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency, ran a story last month about weapons being smuggled from Burma to Tibetan separatists. But rusty guns from a third-world backwater can hardly compete with the technological might of the People's Liberation Army. Those who note that a street vendor's self-immolation catalyzed a revolution in Tunisia must also accept that the Han majority's sympathies do not lie with the Tibetans. The Han have their own frustrations with the ruling Communist Party. The treatment of Tibetans is not one of them.

I talk to a half-han, half-Tibetan government official who grew up in Tawu. He is friendly and polite--and he wants me to know the real situation in his hometown. The Tibetans, he says, are greedy. The government gives them everything from preferential loans to new infrastructure, but still they want more. The Tibetan plateau's lunar landscape is littered with clusters of houses the Chinese government built for nomads. Yet like some American real estate developments abandoned during the subprime-mortgage crisis, many of these houses in Kardze are empty. Few Tibetan nomads want to live in Chinese houses. The government worker does not understand it. They are nice houses, he says, much warmer in winter than a yak-wool tent. "If we were to give the Tibetans independence," he says, "they would starve and have no clothes on their back."

Unlike many Chinese communist bureaucrats who merely mouth the appropriate ideology, the Tawu cadre explains his position with conviction. The Dalai Lama and his sister, who escaped to India with him, are the ones orchestrating all the strife, he says, his voice rising in anger. "When the Dalai Lama dies," he tells me, "all of China's problems with the Tibetans will go away. Younger Tibetans are being educated in the proper way, so they won't cause much trouble."

But from everything I've seen, the opposite is true. First, it is young Tibetans who are sacrificing their lives, even though their schooling is steeped in pro-Chinese propaganda. Second, even among the large community of Tibetans in Dharamsala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile, an intense debate is raging over whether the spiritual leader's middle way of nonviolent negotiation with Beijing has done more harm than good. The Dalai Lama is more moderate

than many Tibetans, who believe Beijing is unwilling to offer any meaningful concessions. In the Kham highlands, passions are rising with every monk who bursts into flames.

When I visited Dharamsala recently, I met Tsewang Dhondup, a trader from Kardze who fled his homeland after the 2008 unrest. That year, riots between Tibetans and Han led to deaths on both sides. The Chinese military's reaction to further rallies by Tibetans left some 150 dead, according to exile estimates. Dhondup was shot while trying to help a monk who later died of bullet wounds. wanted signs with Dhondup's picture were posted in his village, but friends took him by stretcher high into the mountains. Maggots infested his wounds. Dhondup lived for 14 months on the edge of a glacier before escaping to India. His audience with the Dalai Lama, he says, was the most treasured moment of his life. But even he predicts that "once the Dalai Lama is gone, Tibet will explode."

Even now, the Tibetan monks' refusal to disavow their exiled leader has played a role in sparking this wave of conflict. Tsewang Norbu, the monk who set himself on fire in Tawu, lived in the Nyitso monastery, which was prevented from celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday in July. In previous years, locals say, monks could quietly mark the moment without official intervention. But this year was different. For the monks' disobedience, government officials cut Nyitso's water and electricity. The siege went on for weeks before Norbu emerged from the monastery and walked down the hill to the center of town. For a few minutes, he passed out pamphlets advocating Tibetan independence and celebrating the Dalai Lama. Then out came the kerosene.

It is dark when I drive by the Nyitso monastery. Security cameras are everywhere, as are police vehicles and plainclothes agents. The bulk of the monastery looms behind a wall, and I cannot see anything of interest, certainly not any monks. Many have been removed and sent to re-education camps, according to locals and exile groups, just as in the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, which has produced seven monks or former clerics who have self-immolated. The Tawu government worker says some of the remaining monks in Nyitso are spies who have been deployed to monitor the others. All is gray and shadowy. But I finally see something bright against a wall just inside the monastery. It is not, as I had hoped, a monk in maroon robes. Instead, it is a fire extinguisher, shiny and red and new.

Tibet rocked by wave of self-immolation

By Andrew Buncombe, *The Independent on Sunday*, 20 November 2011

A young Tibetan monk who recently escaped from western China has revealed the repression and censorship that drove five of his friends to set themselves on fire in desperate acts of protest. He was present in the aftermath of one of the fatal self-immolations.

The 17-year-old, who asked to be identified as Dontik, said the wave of immolations – at least nine Buddhist monks and two nuns have so far set themselves alight this year – was driven by a growing sense of helplessness among Tibetan youth. He said he too had considered setting himself on fire but claimed he lacked sufficient “courage”.

“All of this is happening because of the government repression in Tibet,” he told *The Independent on Sunday*. “There are no rights of speech or movement. Outside, there are different ways to demonstrate but in Tibet this is the only option, the only choice, for protesting against the Chinese government.”

The testimony of the young man, his eyes raw and bloodshot, provides crucial insight into the wave of self-immolations that have rocked Tibet and delivered a serious challenge to both the government in China and the Tibetan community in exile. Dontik said the increased security operations by the Chinese authorities were exacerbating the situation rather than stabilising it.

While a number of the monks who set themselves alight knew each other, he said he did not believe the immolations were organised. “This is not organised by anyone. After the incidents, the government is cracking down more and more, and so the people are doing it voluntarily,” he said. “They are looking for international support and to get international attention. They want to show the world what is going on in Tibet.”

The struggle for freedom for Tibet dates from the Chinese invasion in 1950 and the subsequent escape of the Dalai Lama to India. Under his leadership, the movement has attracted international attention but failed to deliver results on the ground. Stressing non-violence, the Dalai Lama has sought to pursue a “middle way” policy that has stressed “meaningful autonomy” for Tibetans, especially in regard to religion and culture, rather than outright sovereignty. Some younger Tibetans, represented by groups such as the Tibetan Youth Congress, would prefer

a more direct approach, yet China has shown little flexibility regardless, portraying the Dalai Lama as a “splittist” and heaping personal insults on him. Tibetan envoys have not been invited to China since the beginning of 2010, despite the election this summer of a new Prime Minister, Lobsang Sangay.

The young man I spoke to made his way to the Indian town of Dharamsala – home of the exiled Tibetan community since the Dalai Lama fled China in 1959 – only three weeks ago, and as such his account may include some of the latest information available. His story is especially compelling because he was a novice at the Kirti monastery in Aba, with which most of those who have self-immolated were linked. He knew five of the 11 who have set themselves on fire, three of whom were from his home village.

Dontik, whose family remains inside Tibet, said he had been close to the monastery in March this year when the first of the immolations occurred. He made his way to the scene, unaware who had set themselves on fire and only subsequently learned that the person was a friend and class-mate, Lobsang Phuntsog.

By that point, the body had been taken away, first to the monastery and later to a hospital where the 21-year-old died the following morning, but the monk said he could still see the foam from the fire extinguishers and the box of matches his friend had used to set himself on fire. He reached down and picked it up.

“When I found the matchbox, I did not know who it was who had self-immolated. I knew it was a Tibetan,” said the monk, who said he placed the matchbox in a bowl on a shelf at his family’s home. “I kept the matchbox for remembrance, for me and for the Tibetan people.”

After the self-immolation, the Chinese authorities intensified their security operation at the monastery, which was the scene of an uprising in 2008. Hundreds of monks were sent back to their villages; others were forced to undergo “patriotic re-education”.

The friends and family of Lobsang Phuntsog were questioned and detained. An uncle was charged and jailed for three years. His father remained in detention, said the monk.

At that point, the monk said he decided to renew his efforts to leave Tibet. He declined to explain how he got to India, other than to say he first made his way to Nepal, as most of the scores who flee every year do. It was while he was in Nepal that he learned of the immolation on 26 September of another two

monks from Kirti, Lobsang Kalsang and Lobsang Konchok, who were both aged 18 and related to Lobsang Phuntsog. The monk said he knew both of them as they were also from his village. “I used to play with Kalsang and Phuntsog in the monastery. We would wrestle. Sometimes we would play with a ball,” he said.

The teenager said he also knew two other monks who set themselves on fire. One was 18-year-old Khayang who self-immolated on 7 October with a colleague, Choephel. Both died. The other was Norbu Dramdul, a 19-year-old former monk who set himself alight on 15 October in the main market in Aba after shouting: “Freedom for Tibet.” His condition and whereabouts are unknown.

The wave of immolations has presented a difficult challenge to the Tibetan community. While the sacrifice of those giving their lives is recognised, the religious and political leadership has called for it to end. The Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, was among the first to call for an end to what was happening. “The situation is unbearably difficult, but in difficult situations we need greater courage and determination,” he said in a statement. “We Tibetans are few in number, so every Tibetan life is of value to the cause of Tibet. Although the situation is difficult, we need to live long and stay strong without losing sight of our long-term goals.”

The Dalai Lama and Tibet’s Prime Minister, Lobsang Sangay, have both asked that the immolations cease. The Dalai Lama last week told the BBC: “The question is how much effect [the self-immolations have]. That’s the question. There is courage – very strong courage. But how much effect? Courage alone is no substitute. You must utilise your wisdom.”

Campaigners say the wave of immolations is unprecedented. And at the same time, Tibetans such as the young monk continue to flee Tibet. “Their main drive is to leave Tibet or else send their children into exile,” said Stephanie Brigden of Free Tibet, a London-based NGO.

There is also agreement that what happens next will depend largely on what action China takes. Dontik, who intends to stay in Dharamsala, said: “If the Chinese government keeps cracking down on the Tibetan people, more will burn themselves.

The Geopolitics of Politico-Religious Protest in Eastern Tibet

By Andrew M. Fischer, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Published in *Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology*, 2 April 2012

It is clear that the recent wave of self-immolations and protests taking place in southern Amdo and northern Kham in eastern Tibet is a reflection of an extreme form of defiance in response to an increasingly repressive atmosphere. The atmosphere is epitomized by the intensification of patriotic education campaigns in monasteries and is framed within a broader political context of discriminatory rule by authorities who generally see only variants of assimilation as the solution to the so-called 'Tibet Question.' However, it is less clear why this particular form of protest – self-immolation – is happening in this particular part of Tibet. The explanation is probably not found in differences of governance styles across this eastern Tibetan region, which has been fragmented, absorbed and ruled by the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and the Tibet Autonomous Region. Additionally, there are large Tibetan areas in these provinces, under similar conditions of rule, where self-immolations have not taken place. Rather, local histories in these Tibetan areas need to be carefully considered, especially with respect to the evolving fusion between religious faith, political dissidence, and rapid dislocating social change.

As a starting point, one obvious conditioning factor that is distinctive to this region of Tibet – on both sides of the Sichuan-Qinghai border – is that it has been the focal point of nomad resettlement programs over the last decade, in large part due to their ecologically-strategic location as part of, or adjacent to, the Three Rivers Source area (Ch. *sanjiangyuan*, located in southern Qinghai). Admittedly, there has been a lot of confusion about these resettlements regarding the numbers involved or the degree to which they are forced or voluntary, coercive or incentivized, complete or partial, permanent or reversible. There has also been conflation between these resettlements and the much more lenient 'Comfortable Housing Program' in the Tibet Autonomous Region, which does not necessarily involve resettlement. Nonetheless, the resettlements in this region, especially in the Three Rivers Source area and also in adjacent counties in Gansu and Sichuan, have been of the most severe variety – partial or full relocations of pastoral communities to semi-urbanized settlements in small towns – and it is striking the degree to which the occurrence of self-immolations has corresponded, with a few exceptions, to this zone of intensive resettlement.

As far as we know, those who have immolated themselves so far have not made any explicit connection to the resettlements, although we also lack testaments from all but two of these individuals. Regardless, it is clear that the resettlements have been profoundly disruptive to local communities in this region and have added to the already-existing pressures for young people to move out of farming and herding and into small towns where employment conditions are dire and social problems worsening. In this context of dislocation and alienation, it is understandable that the ordained – as vanguards of an indigenous moral order – might feel the need for extraordinary measures.

Parallel to such developments, this remote region of northern Kham and southern Amdo has also been a site of a vigorous local revival of Tibetan Buddhism since the 1980s, led by charismatic leaders who have often emerged from outside of the traditional Buddhist hierarchy. Especially notable was the Serthar Institute in Serthar County, led by the extremely popular late Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, who was considered by many Tibetans throughout this region to be the greatest living lama of Tibet next to the Dalai Lama. This institute was targeted by the Sichuan authorities in 2001, leading to demolitions of most of the informal settlement and mass expulsions of thousands of devotees, including many mainland and overseas Chinese.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok passed away in January 2004 in a military hospital in Chengdu and there were widespread rumours that he had been poisoned in the hospital. While doubtful, it is the power of popular belief rather than precise truth that matters in such instances. These combined events galvanized grievance in this region, which subsequently manifested in a variety of tensions and outbursts.

Similar tensions have been apparent on a variety of fronts for many years in this region even before the outbreak of widespread protests in spring 2008. Indeed, when I interviewed four Chinese Sichuan government officials in 2007 who were responsible for keeping track of developments in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan, they admitted then that although their economic strategies had been thus far a success (from a government perspective), their political strategies of creating stability had been a dismal failure. The protests of 2008 were testament to this failure and the underlying tensions have continued to worsen with the various tactics of the government since then, especially the intensification of patriotic education campaigns in many monasteries.

Patriotic education might have been applied so fervently in this region precisely because the strength of this religious revival has been coupled with a strong sense of Tibetan nationalism and supported by a vibrant local business community. Nationalist expressions have not necessarily been secessionist, but they have involved strong support for local revivals of identity, language, culture and religion, as well as many locally initiated efforts to advance education. In particular, Ngawa (Ch. Aba) County, which appears to be the epicentre of the current self-immolations, is known for its successful business networks stretching across the plateau, from Golok and Chengdu to Lhasa, which in turn have been valuable sources of funding for local monasteries and for locally-run projects such as schools. To give one example, during my research in Ngawa County in 2004, a businessman was arrested and his successful primary school with over one thousand students – fully funded by him – was closed by the authorities because of suspicions regarding his patriotism (or so it was officially claimed).

There are also strong ties with the exile community in India via many of the monasteries in this region, which explains the fervor of the authorities. Kirti Monastery in Ngawa County – which has been the largest single source of self-immolations so far, whether by monks from the monastery or by people in the community connected to the monastery – has a large monastery in Dharamsala, where many of its monks have gone to study and its head lama resides. Several monasteries that I visited in Kardze (Ch. Ganzi) or Draggo (Ch. Luhuo) counties have similar connections.

However, there are also very strong ties with mainland and overseas Chinese devotees through monasteries in this region. Indeed, such Chinese devotees have been an important source of funding for the religious revival, as has been particularly evident in the boom of monastery construction across Eastern Tibet. Such fusions of religion, nationalism, and subaltern economics serve as an archetypal microcosm for the changing dynamics of pan-Tibetan nationalism more generally, which, as noted by Tsering Shakya (2008), reflect interesting synergies within pan-Asian religious solidarities, ironically centred in China but in support of indigenous and traditional forms of Tibetan leadership.

On the question of the form of protest, although Tibetans do not appear to have a tradition of self-immolation, as is often noted, the spirit of self-sacrifice is nonetheless celebrated in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly when no harm is done to others. This derives from the bodhisattva ideal within the broader Mahayana

tradition of Buddhism – the tradition shared with the Buddhisms of China, Japan and parts of Vietnam. It is not surprising that this ideal could be extended to self-immolation as a politico-religious act of resistance against a perceived oppressive and anti-religious foreign rule, particularly given the potential of this act to influence public opinion through hyper-communicative technologies. Nor is it surprising that monks and nuns would be leading this form of protest given that they have regularly been at the forefront of dissident activity since the 1950s and have generally conceived of their self-sacrificial role as a fusion of religious and political duty. It is a moot point whether the idea in this particular instance was inspired by the recent self-immolation in Tunisia in December 2010, or by the famous cases of self-immolation by monks in Vietnam in the 1960s, or else, more likely, by the fairly common practice of self-immolation as political protest in India, including one exiled Tibetan ex-monk who immolated himself in India in 1998.

Indeed, from the guru-devotional tantric perspective that these monks and nuns practice, the requirement to denounce the Dalai Lama (most likely their lineage lama and possibly even their actual direct lama) in the patriotic education campaigns is tantamount to the most cardinal of sins, condemning one to countless eons of ‘vajra hell.’ This undoubtedly makes the option of self-immolation appear as a far more lenient and briefer form of suffering, if not a virtuous act preserving one’s sanctity while also defending Buddhism in the face of oppression.

Given the current lack of access to the region and the fact that most of the immolators did not leave testaments or letters explaining their gesture, we might never know the precise triggers that set off these particular events in this specific region. However, there is no doubt that a certain breaking point was reached among certain religious communities and, arguably, among the wider population, who remain a deeply devout people. In the face of this breaking point, the Chinese authorities have obviously kept applying ever more hard-line policies with their own version of fervor, albeit one completely disconnected from the local population and derogatory towards its faith. The resultant resistance is not an issue of material deprivation, which is precisely why the strategy of the government to win the heart and minds of Tibetans through assimilationist material development is so fundamentally ill-conceived and will likely continue to fail in the near future.

In The Light Of Bodies Aflame

By Topden Tsering, *Outlook India*, 3 April 2012

The string of self-immolations inside Tibet—started in 2009 by a Kirti Monastery monk Tapey and which most recently on March 30 claimed two monks in Barkham County—sees no sign of letting up. On the contrary, despite one of the harshest crackdowns unleashed by the Chinese government in response—with the state paranoia more acute and the military repression more penetrating than during the clampdown on the 2008 uprisings— and despite the abysmal response from the international community, there seems to be an incredible wind fanning across the occupied Buddhist country that is at once frightening and pregnant with hope. Just as with the hardened earth onto which have collapsed the 33 self-immolators, 32 of them since last year alone, the landscape of the Tibetan freedom movement now stands irreparably scorched and irredeemably altered. Outside the Buddhist country, 27-year-old Jamphel Yeshe's self-immolation on March 26 at a protest site in Delhi, from which he died two days later, on the eve of Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to India for the BRICS summit, was the second exile martyrdom. The first was in 1998 when, on the same Jantar Mantar ground, an elderly Thupten Ngodup set himself on fire to protest the Delhi Police's forcible interruption of a hunger strike organised by the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) on its 53rd day. In between, two other Tibetan protestors have attempted self-immolations: one in Bangalore and another outside the Chinese embassy, in the Indian capital.

As Jamphel Yeshe's self-immolation flashed across the world in the most shocking images yet of such self-sacrifices, the Indian government, in a shameful capitulation to Beijing, responded by throwing Tibetans in jails en masse. Blanket seals were imposed on the Tibetan colony, Manju Ka Tilla, Tibetan students' hostel in Rohini, and other such establishments. Delhi Police, it seems, was taking no chances: those with the slightest resemblance to Tibetans — Indian citizens from the northeast as well as from other regions— were picked up from the streets and thrown in jail.

Dislocation of Context

Analysts and observers have attempted various explanations for the horrific protests unfolding at an alarmingly accelerated rate. Many have argued the self-immolations to be anti-Buddhism, citing the spiritual tradition's strong stance

against taking one's life. Others have pointed to the altruistic motivation of the self-immolators whose fiery protests sought to bring justice to their suffering compatriots inside China-occupied Tibet.

A recurring point of reference has been the Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Duc whose burning profile in meditation pose photographed in 1963 remains one of the most iconic images of self-immolation as a protest form. The Vietnamese self-immolator was protesting against the then President Ngo Dinh Diem's Roman Catholic Administration for its religious persecution of the country's Buddhist population. Thich Quang Duc and those who followed him were all from the monastic community. The same, to a great extent, is true with Tibetan self-immolators; majority of those who died on the spot and those who survived and were captured by Chinese authorities were monks or nuns.

The parallel, however, stops here.

Stripped of such philosophical rhetoric, the self-immolations seem to bring home three undeniable truths:

1. The Tibetan freedom struggle is way past its breaking point.
2. The fiery protests are a natural embodiment of the movement's radicalisation that was a long time coming
3. After the Dalai Lama's resignation from political leadership—anchored in his reconciliatory yet failed Middle Way Approach Policy—the Tibetans inside Tibet, through actions that urgently mirror their tragedy, have reclaimed their role as the true drivers of the Tibetan freedom struggle.

The Politics of Religion

A few commentators have peddled a dangerous distortion of the self-immolators' intent. Pointing to the monks and nuns who make up the majority of the self-immolators, and their common slogan, "Let the Dalai Lama Return," they insist the protestors were only demanding greater religious freedom. A common exercise, in that vein, is to cite traditional Tibetan usage of such words as *Tendra* (Enemy of Faith), as was used for Communist China, and *Tensung Thanglang Maggar* (Force for the Defence of the Faith), by which the Tibetan resistance fighters from 1950s through early 1970s were known.

Such arguments ignore the wider historical and etymological context that engendered such uniquely dichotomous and paradoxical native vernacular. In the olden

Tibet, right up to the eve of the 1949 Chinese invasion, due to the dominant role played by the three seats of Tibetan Buddhism (Gelug, Sakya and Nyingma) and the institution of the Dalai Lamas, Tibet's religious identity was promoted at the cost of all national and political sovereignty-consolidating initiatives. As Historian Tsering Shakya says in his *Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*, the final blow to Tibet's efforts to garner international support came in the form of its non-existent international personality.

Furthermore, such a simplistic reading discounts the complex role Tibetan monks have played on the national stage, both during factional infightings and in armed struggle against Communist Chinese aggressors. The trenchant rivalry in the early 1940s between the Regent Redring and the incumbent Tagthra, who at various times fronted the Tibetan administration when the Dalai Lama was a minor, saw monks from the two establishments engage in fierce battles. Melvyn Goldstein quoted a witness in his *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951: The Demise of the Lamaist State*, as saying about the skirmishes: 'gunfire rang incessantly over the Lhasa city.'

Monks, and not just the Great Thirteenth Dalai Lama, played a pivotal role during the battles for Tibet's independence in 1912-13 when the last of the Chinese soldiers were driven out of the country. *Outlook*- Crossword award-winning author Jamyang Norbu has written about the monk-cabinet minister Jampa Tendar who had disrobed and taken up a gun to lead the Tibetan army, and who had, upon Tibetan victory, to a demoralized group of surrendered Chinese soldiers, offered philosophical consolation along the lines of victory and defeat being two sides of the same coin, before packing them off along a safe route back home.

One of the most unforgettable lines from *Shadow Circus*, Tenzin Sonam and Ritu Sarin's documentary on the CIA-backed guerrilla resistance in Tibet, belongs to a former monk-freedom fighter who describes the experience of killing Chinese soldiers: "Each time we pulled the trigger and a Chinese soldier fell, we said Om Mani Pedme Hung!"

To say that to those or former monks politics was secondary to religion would be inaccurate. It was just that the language for political identity as defining an individual or a nation was not celebrated. In a vocabulary-rich civilization in which a mere title for a reincarnate lama could fill up pages, the term politics at best stood for administration, or a system to support the flourishing of Buddhism. It warrants mentioning that in olden Tibet while flags and banners of every re-

ligious stripe were ubiquitous on rooftops of every monastery and select households, similar hoisting of the Tibetan national flag, outside the military exercises of the ragtag Tibetan army, became popular only after the Tibetans were forced into exile.

This however cannot be construed to mean the Tibetans didn't hold paramount their allegiance to the nation's political sovereignty. Just as it is wrong to argue that in their call for freedom for Tibet, or even return of His Holiness, the self-immolators were not staging a pointed political defiance to end the 53 years of China's bloody occupation.

Rage and Rejection

However horrific or gruesome, self-immolation is, in essence, an act of conflating one's body with space. In the case of self-immolators inside Tibet, if any religious connotation comes close, it seems to be the concept of *Lu ski Chonme Phul wa* (offering one's body as flame) in that by burning themselves these courageous protestors were shedding light on the sufferings of the larger Tibetan population under the boot heel of China's tyrannical regime. By turning themselves into human bonfire, they were projecting the most visible, the most visceral face to tens of thousands of others who, following more traditional forms of resistance (protests, pamphleteering, posters-circulating et al) are inevitably arrested, imprisoned and tortured, their subsequent fate unanimously sealed between deaths in prisons or release, after many years, back into the society as empty, broken shells.

Self-immolation, on the other hand, grants the protestor greater control over his body and a precious finality to his expression of resistance. One burns, one dies, refusing his tormentors any claim over his body. It bequeaths the protestor an unequivocal rejection of the oppressor state: the Communist Chinese government. Instead of languishing in another construct of colonialism such as a lock-up or a prison, one collapses and returns to the uncorrupted land of his birthright. His body on fire is his slogan, as are his vocal utterances for freedom for Tibet and return of His Holiness, which once released the expectation is that there will be no revocation, of the kind normally extracted by Chinese soldiers through intense torture.

While guided by the Buddhist motive of benefiting others, the self-immolators seem to be equally driven by anger at the Chinese government, and not just for

its unrelenting religious persecutions, most recently through the state-enforced patriotic re-education campaign instituted in 1994, which makes it mandatory for a monk or a nun to, among other avowals, pledge allegiance to the Communist Chinese government, denounce the Dalai Lama as a counter-revolutionary and a separatist, and accept the Chinese -appointed Gyaltsen Norbu as the 11th Pan-chen Lama over the candidate chosen by the Dalai Lama; Gedun Choekyi Nyima was abducted, at age six, in 1995 and his whereabouts have since remained unknown.

To the monks, perennially exposed to arrests and expulsion, torture and deaths, for simply wanting to practice Buddhism in its true form, China's oppressive policies toward their religion are recognizable for their singular message: Buddhism and Communist China simply cannot co-exist.

Conversely, this realization lays bare the contradiction inherent in the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach, which hopes for a scenario in which Communist China would allow for Tibet cultural autonomy as a reward for giving up its independence. It doesn't seem impossible, hence, that the self-immolations are also a direct response to the failure of the Middle Way Approach Policy, which frames dialogue with China an end in itself, as opposed to being a means to an end. If this passive strategy required its proponents to wait and bide its time, the self-immolators have demonstrated it to be an unviable option.

In a note left behind by one of the early monk-self immolators, he had written: "Let alone living under the Communist China for one more day, I can not even live for one more minute."

The Unspoken Communication

The acceleration of self-immolations became noticeable a week after Dr. Lob-sang Sangay assumed office of the exile Tibetan government's prime minister in April 2011, following the Dalai Lama's announcement of complete retirement from the political scene. The first self-immolation in Tibet had taken place in February 2009 when a young Kirti Monastery monk Tapay had set himself on fire; Chinese soldiers shot at him and took him away. A second one, involving Phuntsog from the same monastery, occurred two years later, full five months before the historic shift in exile polity. At the swearing-in ceremony, the new Kalon Tripa intoned, "Let me be clear: the Tibetan Administration does not encourage protest (in Tibet) in part because we cannot forget the harsh response Chinese

authorities hand down in the face of free and peaceful expression.”

Within a week, a third self-immolation was reported from inside Tibet.

Since then, on an average, three to four such protests every month have taken place in Tibet, mostly concentrated in erstwhile Kham and Amdo provinces. The fiery self-sacrifices have prompted massive gatherings, which have, on at least two occasions, erupted in open revolt; in January, Chinese soldiers shot into two protests, killing at least ten protestors.

When Lobsang Sangay, in his speech, reminded the exile Tibetan gathering that it was not to him alone the Dalai Lama had devolved his power, it might have been the self-immolators who took his concluding refrain to heart: “Let us never forget: during our lifetime, our freedom struggle will meet the fate of justice or defeat. Tibet will either appear or disappear from the map of the world.”

This synchronicity of events is not accidental. An invisible communication line connects the Tibetans inside Tibet and their exile counterparts. The dialogue is unspoken and it is cryptic. No instructions, no orders, no appeals are involved. Over the Himalayan divide at least, no overt call to action is made. Given this scenario, China’s allegation of the Dalai Lama and the exile Tibetan government being behind the self-immolations is absurd. During the 2008 uprisings in Tibet, when hundreds of Tibetans were killed or were reported missing, the best advice the exile leadership had for the remaining others who risked similar fate was to exercise “restraint.” Still, a slight movement in Dharamsala continues to affect events inside the Chinese-occupied region, just as it does in the opposite direction.

The uprising between 1987 through 1989 serve as a good example. The revolts, which began with a protest on September 27, 1987 outside the Jokhang Cathedral in Lhasa, had their roots in a more sombre event halfway across the world: the Dalai Lama’s address to the U.S Congressional Human Rights Caucus. The Tibetan leader had never before been accorded such a high-level platform which opportunity he used to introduce his Five Point Peace Plan, the last of which items, “Negotiations on the future status of Tibet and the relationship between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples should be started in earnest,” was the first hint at what would later become his Middle Way Approach Policy.

As Jampa Tsering, one of the first monk-protestors from the nearby Ganden Monastery, said, “We knew the risks were enormous, but we had to do some-

thing. We felt staying silent would be construed to mean we agreed with China's defamation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama." The exiled Tibetan leader's recent global spotlight had irked Beijing and its propaganda had stepped up its denunciation campaigns, accusing the Dalai Lama of colluding with "Western Imperialists" to carry out their "splittist" designs on Tibet. And so, one September morning, Jampa Tsering and his 20 fellow monk-protestors took three rounds of the famous shrine, then took out their hand-drawn Tibetan flags and shouted slogans demanding independence for Tibet. Within minutes Chinese soldiers showed up, beat up the protestors and drove them away. But the façade of calm that had reigned for less than last three decades had cracked. This unprecedented defiance sparked off a series of open revolts and thanks to images smuggled out by western tourists Tibet was yet again in newspaper headlines. The 2008 uprisings that shocked the world had begun with a procession by some 300 monks from Drepung Monastery to Lhasa's city centre. The monks' main demand was the release of Drepung monks who had been detained in October of the previous year for whitewashing a wall in celebration of the conferment of the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama. The protest kicked off a wave of uprisings that spread across the entire Tibetan plateau, with an unprecedented participation by not only monks and nuns, but laypeople of all ages and backgrounds; the Chinese paramilitary crackdown that followed spawned the bloodiest reprisals the country had seen since the 1980s uprisings.

The exile Free Tibet movement responded in kind. Activists across the world successfully stripped the Chinese Olympics Torch Relay of its perceived glory and turned Beijing's bid for international legitimacy into a magnet for epic shame. A renewed vigour was injected into Tibet's struggle for freedom; a new sense of hope prevailed. Hundreds of exiles and supporters embarked on a walk to Tibet and when the Indian police forcibly stopped the return march, just outside Tibet's border with India, their collective spirit had already set foot on the Tibetan soil. In India, in Nepal and elsewhere in the world, activists from Tibetan Youth Congress, Students for a Free Tibet, Tibetan Women's Association, and other organizations, forged an unbroken link of protests and other campaigns, including hunger strikes, which pulled any illusion of respite over its occupation of Tibet from under Beijing's feet.

For the exile administration of former Prime Minister Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, waiting for Beijing to talk seemed to the endgame; the Free Tibet activists had brought the fight to China's door. The only autonomy being realized,

across the diaspora, was a certain decentralization of the Tibet movement. While Tibetans' spiritual allegiance to His Holiness remained unwavering, every second Tibetan on social network sites such as Facebook had a new middle name: "Rangzen (independence)."

The Birth of Second Exile Martyr

Against this background, the self-immolation in Delhi by Jamphel Yeshi assumes immeasurable importance. The recent escapee from Tibet, by all accounts an unassuming youth with a devout bend of mind and an indefatigable appetite for Tibetan history, bolted across the Tibetan protest site, in a raging cloud of fire. If, on account of the media blackout in Tibet, the 30-odd self-immolators' sacrifices were relayed through a few grainy and obscure images, Jamphel Yeshi's searing figure more than filled up the naked eye of the camera.

Just as the self-immolators inside Tibet had projected a visible front to the tens of thousands of other traditional protestors whose actions, as well as their fate, had been rendered invisible by China's strong arm, Jamphel Yeshi, in one single stroke, amplified the new radicalisation of the Tibetan freedom struggle. The Tibet self-immolations had been given an intimate face. By the time he succumbed to his burns two days later, his blazing profile was captured by the major national and international media. The massive 2008 uprisings made it to the cover of the *New York Times* only once; the featured image was that of Chinese soldiers behind plastic shields. When Jamphel Yeshi reclaimed the attention in the same paper a day after his self-immolation, the image was that of a man on fire, as befitting the country he stood for.

Comparisons, in the case of Tibet self-immolations, have been drawn to the Tunisian fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, whose self-sacrifice triggered the Arab Spring. It is, however, more likely that when the Kirti Monk Tapey self-immolated in February 2009, he had been inspired by Thupten Ngodup, the 1998 Tibetan self-immolator.

Martyr Jamphel Yeshi only helped draw the circle full.

Behind self-immolations, a mosaic of despair

By Ananth Krishnan, *The Hindu*, 4 May 2012

Jetsun Dolma, a Bodhisattva and female deity known for her compassion, is said to watch over the square that sits at the entrance of the sprawling 700-year-old Rongwo monastery in Tongren. A golden statue of Dolma stands at the square's centre, drawing the gaze of pilgrims and passers-by who mill around the edges of the plaza, which looks out over a quiet valley surrounded by the snow-capped peaks of the Tibetan plateau.

A small crowd of worshippers offered prayers to Dolma on a recent afternoon, prostrating themselves in front of her golden feet. Nearby, elderly pilgrims walked unsteadily towards the monastery's gates, turning prayer wheels as they chanted hymns.

At Tongren

Just weeks before, on a cold March morning, Jamyang Palden, a 38-year-old Tibetan monk, had walked out of the monastery's old wooden gates, past the pilgrims, and stood at Dolma's feet. There, witnesses said, he doused himself in kerosene and then set himself on fire. An old man who sat counting prayer beads on one of the two wooden benches that line the square's far side leapt towards the monk, hugging him in a tight embrace and trying to douse the flames that covered his body.

Jamyang was the 28th Tibetan to set himself on fire this past year. Three days later, his friend Sonam Dargye, a poor farmer employed at the monastery, followed in his footsteps to become the 29th. Their two acts shook Tongren — or Rebkong, in Tibetan — a quiet monastery town nestled among the mountain ranges of the Tibetan plateau in China's southwestern Qinghai province. The two protests have brought a tight security clampdown: today, there is a permanent police presence in front of the Rongwo monastery. Black vehicles, marked SWAT, stand parked near its gates while paramilitary policemen, guns in hand, patrol the town's crowded streets, walking among monks and pilgrims.

More than 30 self-immolation protests have taken place in the past year in monasteries and towns across the vast spread of the Tibetan plateau. The immolations show no signs of abating. On April 19, two Tibetans set themselves on fire in Aba, a prefecture in Sichuan that lies a short drive from across the provincial

border and has witnessed most of the protests.

Much of the recent unrest has taken place in the regions known to Tibetans as Amdo and Kham — stretching across the provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu. Around half of China's six million Tibetans live here. There have been fewer reports of protests in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), whose monasteries have been under tighter control following riots in 2008.

The string of self-immolations has worried Chinese authorities. Officials have hit out at the monks and nuns as “criminals” and “bad elements,” blaming a “political plot” orchestrated by the exiled Dalai Lama. Overseas groups, on the other hand, have seen the incidents as reflecting resentment against the Chinese government and as calls for independence which they say have widespread support. In interviews with monks, local residents and the acquaintances and relatives of three Tibetans who have set themselves on fire in Qinghai and nearby Gansu — a monk, a farmer and a 20-year-old student — a more complicated picture of the immolation protests emerged, one that defied easy description. The three stories, however, had one common thread: they were stories of ordinary people being driven to an extraordinary act by different despairs.

Ground zero at Rongwo

Rongwo is a 14th century monastery that is among the most influential for the Gelugpa or Yellow Hat sect, for whom the most important figure is the Dalai Lama. Tibetans, old and young, prayer-beads in hand and prayers on their lips, travel from far and wide to come to Rongwo.

The monastery lies a few hours' drive from Qinghai's provincial capital, Xining. Police and paramilitary vehicles can be sighted regularly on the narrow mountain road that runs to the town, through deep valleys and along the upper reaches of the Yellow River. Checkpoints have been set up outside the town and the monastery, inspecting cars for Tibetan passengers and journalists.

This correspondent managed to enter Rongwo on one April afternoon. The monastery was deserted, with many of its 600 monks back at home during the Lunar New Year break. Those present were at first reluctant to talk about Jamyang Palden's protest. “We have been warned not to speak,” said one monk in his early twenties. “There is a lot of tension here,” he said, speaking in hushed tones and staring at his feet.

A video shot on a mobile phone by one monk showed dozens gathering to

protest at Dolma Square a day after Jamyang's self-immolation, some calling for the return of the Dalai Lama. In another grainy video, the body of 44-year-old farmer, Sonam Dargye, is seen lying on a street outside Rongwo, covered in flames, as passersby look on in horror. Little is known about what drove Sonam to his death. Those at the monastery said he was in financial distress, and left behind four children and an ailing wife.

While there was wide sympathy for Jamyang and Sonam, their actions did not, however, appear to have the support of many monks. Several monks even expressed strong concerns as to whether the self-immolations would be counter-productive by bringing a harsh response from the government.

"After 2008 [when there were protests and riots across many Tibetan areas, including Tongren], things were improving," said one monk, pointing to a portrait of the Dalai Lama, whose image is banned in many Tibetan monasteries, adorning a main hall of the monastery.

In Rongwo, the Dalai Lama's images are displayed prominently at the centre of every hall – a rare sight, monks said, in many monasteries in TAR. Authorities acquiesced to their demands to restore his images as part of a general easing of restrictions aimed to win the backing of monks and restore stability after the unrest in 2008.

Other measures included moves to release some detained monks and to improve facilities in Rongwo, where a new living quarters has recently been opened. But new security restrictions imposed after the self-immolations began last year in Aba, including a greater deployment of police, new management rules for monasteries and enforced "patriotic education," have appeared to once again stoke tensions, monks said.

Rongwo's monks also appeared to be divided on the questions of whether the self-immolations were the right way to express grievances and whether they would improve the situation.

"If the situation is bad, we must do something to change it," said one monk, who like others declined to be named. "But our teachings," he added, "tell us to respect life. We must not give it away."

Protests, Self-Immolation Signs Of A Desperate Tibet

National Public Radio (NPR), 21 February 2012

Monks swathed in crimson robes chant under silk hangings in a murky hall, heavy with the smell of yak butter. Photos of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama — seen by China as a splittist — are openly displayed, as if in defiance. But security forces have tightened their grip on the Tibetan plateau, while monasteries appear to be emptying out, gripped by an atmosphere of fear and loss.

In this town, the monks refused to set off fireworks at Chinese New Year at the end of January, boycotting normal celebrations as a mourning gesture. “Too many of our people died this year,” one monk says, referring to nearly two dozen Tibetans who have set themselves on fire as a protest against Chinese repression. Identifying details have been removed to protect those who talked to NPR.

Police cars patrol the town’s streets, and on the morning of the new year, security forces took preemptive action.

“Paramilitary forces from elsewhere were sent here,” says the monk. “There were tanks too.”

Another monk says security forces closed off all the exits to their monastery and didn’t let them leave. The paramilitary police withdrew afterwards, but monks say plainclothes police remain inside the monastery. The monks listen secretly to Voice of America (VOA) news every night, despite feeling an almost physical pain at the bleak news. Despite a Buddhist prohibition against violence or suicide, they are of one mind on the self-immolation protests.

“What they did was great”, says the first monk. “Yes! Yes! Yes!” says the second. “That’s why we didn’t mark the new year. Because of them.”

Those who have set themselves on fire include a 42-year-old tulku, or living buddha, Sonam Wangyal Sopa Rinpoche. He ran an old people’s home and an orphanage in Darlag, Golok prefecture, Qinghai province, and left behind a crackly audio recording of his last message, where he says:

“This year in which so many Tibetan heroes have died, I am sacrificing my body to stand in solidarity with them ... I pray that the Dalai Lama will return to Tibet.”

On Jan. 8, standing in front of a police station in Darlag, he drank kerosene and then set himself alight.

A Sign Of The Times

It's a sign of Tibetan desperation, and Tibetan radicalization, with the anger bursting into a number of peaceful protests in Qinghai province. In neighboring Szechuan province, two gatherings have ended in bloodshed. Exiled groups say at least seven Tibetans have died in clashes with the security forces.

China accuses the Dalai Lama of instigating unrest. A foreign ministry spokesman blames what he called the "Dalai Lama clique", saying its behavior in not condemning the self-immolation protests is "a disguised form of violence and terrorism, as the group has actively tried to pursue separatism by harming people."

The last time the plateau was in such turmoil was in 2008, after race riots between Tibetans and Han in Lhasa left 18 dead. Since then, Beijing has tightened its controls on the monasteries it sees as the crucible of unrest.

At Ta'ersi monastery, also known as Kumbum, only a handful of monks are visible, selling tickets or sweeping floors. Officially 600 monks live here, but that's less than half the monastic population before the unrest in 2008. Across the plateau, monasteries are depleting as the authorities used administrative controls to send "unregistered" clergy home after the unrest.

Official Chinese reports show the number of monks at Sera monastery in Lhasa has been reduced to just 460, less than half what it had been before 2008. In Drepung monastery, another major teaching center, the number dropped to 600, after the management sent home 700 visiting monks.

"The population in monastic institutions has decreased tremendously," says Lobsang Nyandak, the representative of the Dalai Lama in the U.S. "The number of monks and nuns has declined, primarily ... they have been expelled for not obeying Chinese commands. Many voluntarily left the monastic institutions, because they cannot tolerate the repression the monks and nuns have to undergo."

These include submitting to new monastery committees headed, for the first time, not by monks but by government officials. A new system put in place last November offers incentives to monasteries such as paved roads, electricity and piped water, but also places full-time government cadres inside the monasteries.

“This is much more significant than incidents of unrest,” says Robbie Barnett a professor of modern Tibetan studies at Columbia university. “This is for the long term. It’s a real indicator of policy change. The use of force and troops has been a panic reaction in the past four or five years.

“It is also unprecedented in that it completely changes the relationship between state and society,” Barnett says. “For thirty years there’s been an effort to ensure the party is not involved in religion — that’s all gone now.”

Government Control

In Ta’ersi, ticket machines beep as tourists swipe through. This monastery is one of the main schools of the Dalai Lama’s sect, and it’s also become a major tourist attraction, with groups of Chinese paying almost \$13 a head. There are no pictures of the Dalai Lama here; testament to Chinese efforts to use “patriotic education” to divorce Tibetan Buddhism from its spiritual leader.

The Tibetan tour guide doesn’t want to talk about the reasons why.

“Lots of tourists ask me, but the monastery doesn’t allow us to talk about these things,” she says. “We’re supposed to talk about the history and culture of the temple, the artworks, the lives of the monks, their food and customs.”

In a different monastery on the Tibetan plateau, wooden prayer wheels creak as pilgrims spin them in prayer. Police cars drive up and down outside the monastery. Inside, there’s no security presence. All appears calm, tranquil even. But this place has seen unrest. And panicky conversations show the underlying terror.

“We don’t have the right to speak freely,” one monk says. “We are scared. If we talk to you, they’ll arrest us.”

Another man butts in saying simply speaking with the monks makes them truly scared.

“They could get shot,” he says. He makes the shape of a gun with his fingers, and puts it to his head, pulling the trigger. Then, in case of any misunderstanding, he repeats the gesture.

It’s a sign of how sophisticated the apparatus of control has become. Parts of the Tibetan plateau like Aba in Szechuan, the epicenter of unrest, have become heavily militarized, with riot police armed with spiked clubs and fire extinguishers on every street.

In other monasteries where monks still chant and pilgrims still pray, the repression is largely invisible and internalized. Ultimately, this will only serve to strengthen Tibetan identity and build resentment, pushing China's Tibet problem further into the future.

Why are Tibetans burning In Tibet and starving in New York?

By Matteo Pistono, *Washington Post*, 21 March 2012

China is on high alert in Tibet every March due to sensitive political anniversaries. Tibetans commemorate the March 1959 uprising against Chinese rule and the flight into exile of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Beijing annually deploys a massive military force to discourage Tibetans from demonstrating any form of dissent, peaceful or otherwise.

2012 has been different.

The entire Tibetan region has been effectively under martial law for months as China rolls tanks and stations paramilitary throughout the region.

Tibetans are burning themselves to death in protest of China's iron grip on their homeland.

These fiery protests are because Tibetans feel their identity, language, and religious faith is under assault by the Chinese government.

The method of self-immolations has been essentially the same. Dousing themselves in gasoline, Tibetans set themselves alight standing in town squares and in front of Chinese government buildings. As they become a human torch, they shout, "Return the Dalai Lama to Tibet," "Freedom in Tibet," and "We want human rights." Most have succumbed to a gruesome death; others have been taken away by Chinese security personnel.

Self-immolations as a form of protest had not occurred in Tibet until two and a half years ago. Since then, thirty Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire.

These extreme forms of protests are a response to China's extreme repression of Tibetans. For a Mahayanist Buddhist perspective one can examine a letter written over fifty years ago by Thich Nhat Hahn, a leading Buddhist monk from Vietnam, to Martin Luther King, Jr. explaining the self-immolations by Vietnam-

ese monks in 1963. These searing images haunted the world, and Nhat Hahn's words offer insight into the mind of the protestor.

"The Vietnamese monk, by burning himself, says with all his strength and determination that he can endure the greatest of suffering to protect his people. What he really aims at is the expression of his will and determination, not death. To express will by burning oneself, therefore, is not to commit an act of destruction but to perform an act of construction, that is to suffer and to die for the sake of one's people."

The self-immolations have a pattern. They have occurred where China has spent the most money on security, which is attempting to strangle Tibetan nationalism, and where China is implementing stringent patriotic re-education in monasteries. This "education" promotes loyalty to the Chinese party-state and vilifies the Tibetans' leader, the Dalai Lama, as nothing other than a terrorist in a monk's saffron robe. In other words, where Tibetans have been pushed to the edge, some have decided to jump into fire.

Graphic video smuggled out of Tibet and China has shown policemen standing over still smoking monks and nuns with their skin charred black, still alive, waiting to make arrests. In two cases, according to the International Campaign for Tibet, police have reportedly beaten, and even shot, monks after extinguishing the flames.

China's Foreign Ministry has condemned the self-immolations and accused the Dalai Lama and Tibet support groups in the West of encouraging them. Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu has called such alleged support "violence and terrorism in disguise."

The Dalai Lama has said China's "ruthless policy" in Tibet is driving Tibetan monks and nuns to such extremes measures.

The Tibetan government-in-exile in India has described the self-immolations as tragic, and called for pressure from the international community on Beijing to open a dialogue on its policies in Tibetan regions of China.

Demonstrating solidarity with the Tibetans in Tibet, three Tibetans in the U.S. began a hunger strike on February 22 outside the United Nations headquarters in New York asking for the UN to send a factfinding mission to Tibet, among other demands.

After two weeks, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed his concern for the health of the hunger strikers, but said nothing of the situation in Tibet. A few days earlier, Assistant Secretary General Ivan Simonovic met with the three hunger strikers who told him they want “concrete action” by the Chinese authorities to ease the ongoing crackdown in Tibet before they would consider ending their hunger strike. Mr. Simonovic said he would convey the group’s concerns to Geneva.

This Monday, day 27 of the hunger strike, the New York Police Department removed one the eldest of the protesters, Dorjee Gyalpo, and admitted him to a hospital. Gyalpo pleaded unsuccessfully with the police to allow him to continue his hunger strike until the UN responded.

As Shingza Rinpoche and Yeshe Tenzing, the two remaining hunger strikers in New York, approach nearly a month with no food, the tepid UN response has not convinced them to stop their protest.

Tibetans who are lighting themselves on fire, and the few Tibetans refugees who are willing to starve themselves to death in front of the UN, are under no illusions that international pressure will succeed. Yet, they continue.

Sobha Rinpoche, an esteemed Tibetan teachers who died on January 8, 2012 after drinking gasoline and self-immolating in eastern Tibet, left an audio testament in which captures the essence of the latest protests in Tibet, and in New York.

“I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering.”

Matteo Pistono is a writer, practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, and author of “In the Shadow of the Buddha: Secret Journeys, Sacred Histories, and Spiritual Discovery in Tibet.”

Circling the Issue: South Asian connections to Tibet

By Iona Liddell & Samdup Tenzin, *Southasia Journal*, 5 July 2012

The town was under complete lock down that cold January day when two young Tibetan men ducked into the courtyard of a hotel, doused their bodies in kerosene and set themselves alight. Running out into the streets of Ngaba in Sichuan province they shouted “His Holiness the Dalai Lama must return to Tibet” and

“May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for 10,000 years!” as they burned. Tennyi, a monk of Kirti monastery, died of his injuries that same day, and Tsultrim, thought to be an ex-monk of the same monastery, passed away the next day.

Tennyi and Tsultrim’s self-immolations were the first of 2012 in Tibet. There have been 23 more since then, taking the total number of self-immolations since 2009 to 38. Over that time, the image of the burning Tibetan – most often a monk or a nun, but also lay people, the young and the old – has been seared by the media into the world’s consciousness. Struck by the poignant horror of such acts, and unable to conduct field research, there has been a certain reticence amongst commentators to deal with their meaning analytically. But the self-immolations are clearly messages. Although an exhaustive statement cannot be made about what each of the self-immolations ‘means’, at the very least it can be concluded that the Tibetans who self-immolated were not content with their lot and, as the immolations were public spectacles, this discontent was sourced outside of themselves in the local socio-political context. It can thus be speculated that their acts embodied the concerns of many people in the same area.

A large majority of Tibet’s self-immolations have been carried out in Sichuan province, outside the Chinese-designated Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). At a talk on the 18th May of 2012 at the London School of Economics (LSE), Tibetan scholar Tsering Shakya argued that this is in part due to relatively more liberal security policies outside of the TAR as well as the specific dynamics at play in that “very localised context”. After protests had covered large swathes of the Tibetan areas in 2008, the Chinese government identified Ngaba town as a sensitive area due to the existence of Kirti monastery – a stronghold of Tibetan culture and religion with substantial sway in the surrounding areas. The resulting security clampdown on the town is still ongoing, with military checkpoints every 30 to 40 metres along the street. Monks and nuns have been forced to undergo intensive patriotic reeducation classes during which they are pressured to regularly denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Frequent news stories in the local press also serve to malign him publicly. Shakya believes it is highly plausible that these local dynamics have engendered the spate of self-immolations. At LSE he stressed that reading the self-immolations as part of a pan-Tibetan struggle – as many have, including audience members that day – is too assumptive an analysis at present, likely more suited to exile Tibetans’ desire to see a political movement building than to the, as yet unstudied, lived realities on the ground.

But, just over two weeks later, on the 27th of May 2012 two self-immolations in Tibet's capital, Lhasa, significantly changed the dynamic. They were carried out at the heart of old Lhasa outside the Jokhang temple— an important place of pilgrimage for Tibetans from across the plateau, which has also been the site of previous protests by Tibetans against the Chinese rule. In March 2008, a group of monks staged a non-violent protest there which spread to Tibetan areas outside the TAR and triggered a nationwide uprising. In a place like Lhasa where ideas of Tibetan identity and political autonomy coalesce, the overt political symbolism of these self-immolations could not go unnoticed. In their aftermath, Tibetologist Robert Barnett told media that Lhasa was in a “boiling situation” with the Chinese authorities “really worried” because of the sense that these acts were clearly “driven by an idea, a political goal.” Such concern led them to arrest over 600 Tibetans in the self-immolations’ tense aftermath.

The Lhasa self-immolations have brought the act beyond local contexts, revealing it to be part of a wider social and political struggle by Tibetans both against the oppression of the Chinese state, and for an assertion of their cultural and political identity, manifested in calls for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet. Thus, the on-going cycle of self-immolations can no longer be detached from the larger socio-political context and downplayed as a local phenomenon triggered by local circumstances. The dynamics which have led to their form and occurrence are in part regional. From the historical to the political to the social, these self-immolations involve South Asia.

For centuries prior to the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1951, the inhabitants of the Himalayas had met across the present-day borders, trading, inter-marrying, exchanging cultural practices and religious beliefs. A famous shared son of the Himalayas was born round 2500 years ago, in what is now southern Nepal. Siddhartha Gautam travelled, learned, meditated and finally gained enlightenment as the Buddha in present-day northern India. 1000 years later, his teachings crossed the Himalayas to Tibet, to the court of King Songtsen Gampo. It is said that Gampo's two wives – Chinese and Nepalese princesses – encouraged the King to adopt Buddhism. So began a series of religious exchanges that were to extend over centuries as a result of journeys undertaken by Indian and Tibetan monks and sages, bringing depth, widespread adherence and, at times, resurgence to Tibetan Buddhism throughout the Himalayan range. Compassion is a central tenet of the teachings. In one incarnation, the Buddha came across a starving tiger and, seeing she was on the verge of eating her young cubs, sacrificed his own life

instead, his pure intentions overriding the sin of suicide. In testimony to this flow of ideas, prayer flags now fly from the lake sides of Ladakh in the north of the range, to the bridges of Bhutan in the south. Cultural practices that developed alongside the religion and as a result of intermarriage along trade routes left a sense of shared identity amongst the inhabitants of the Himalayas. So it was that in 1910 the 13th Dalai Lama, when threatened by the then neighbouring Chinese administration, was able to take temporary refuge in a sympathetic India. In 1959, after a failed uprising against Chinese rule, the 14th Dalai Lama and thousands of other Tibetans fled Tibet, and were granted refuge in India by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Since then, on average between two to four thousand Tibetans have escaped repressive Chinese rule annually. Thanks to Nehru's initial support for the Dalai Lama, Tibetans have been able to establish a government in exile and set up substantial refugee settlements with the support of the host countries and a range of international nongovernmental organizations. The exile government estimates that today around 109,000 Tibetans live in South Asia – making it the largest concentration of Tibetans outside Tibet. The circular motion of ideas and actions that occurred between Buddhist scholars back at the forging of Tibetan Buddhism now finds repetition in a circle of ideas which move between Tibet and South Asian countries who play host to Tibetan refugees.

News of self-immolations is most often broken to the world's media from the Indian town of Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh – Tibet's capital in exile. There Tibetan monks and laypeople work hard against China's firewalls, radio jamming and phone surveillance and black-outs in order to maintain communication with those inside Tibet. For example, Kirti monastery's sister establishment in India, populated mostly by monks from Tibet, has become a lifeline for information regarding the self-immolations in Ngaba. When it comes, the news prompts mass mourning and international media coverage. But the self-immolations are not restricted to Tibet. On 26th March 2012, Jamphel Yeshe fatally self-immolated on Indian soil on the eve of Hu Jintao's visit to Delhi for the BRICS summit. In 1998, again in Delhi, Thubten Ngodup was the first recorded Tibetan to self-immolate, doing so to bring awareness to the Tibetan situation – this time in the context of a Tibetan hunger strike in Delhi which was being broken up by India authorities. As such, it is important to view Tibetan self-immolations as part of a continuing Tibetan struggle. This is reinforced by the fact that the few recorded last statements of some of the self-immolators compellingly call for a wider sense of Tibetan unity. Respected Buddhist Lama Sopa Rinpoche, 40 years and

thus one of the older self-immolators, said:

“To all my spiritual brothers and sisters, and the faithful ones living elsewhere: You must unite and work together to build a strong and prosperous Tibetan nation in the future. This is the sole wish of all the Tibetan heroes. Therefore, you must avoid any quarrelling amongst yourselves...You must maintain unity and strength.”

Jamphel Yeshi, originally from Eastern Tibet but who set himself alight in Delhi, had this to say:

“My fellow Tibetans! If you care about your happiness and future, you must have the spirit of patriotism. Patriotism is the soul of a nation. Moreover, it is the confidence in search of truth; and also the harbinger of a happy future.”

As UK-based Tibetan scholar Tsering Topgyal propounds, the self-immolations can be seen to exist at one end of a spectrum of strategic resistance – predominantly nonviolent – that Tibetans have been engaging in for decades, and increasingly so from 2008 onwards. “Whether [Tibetans in Tibet] are self-immolating, writing poems, taking to peaceful protest on the streets or posting a blog, they are mostly speaking about Tibetan rights, they have the same goals and aspirations.” With Chinese authorities clamping down heavily upon conventional protests and demonstrations, especially in the aftermath of the pan-Tibetan uprising of 2008, a large number of disaffected Tibetans in the TAR and the adjoining Tibetan areas, have turned to forms of defiance which are largely non-confrontational and centred around a sense of their common heritage and identity.

This home-grown national self-awareness and non-cooperation movement, popularly known as *Lhakar*, is aimed at countering Beijing’s intensified efforts in recent years to systematically undermine Tibetan people’s distinct culture, language and identity.

The Tibetan word “*Lhakar*” literally translates as “White Wednesday”; Wednesday is an auspicious day for Tibetans because it is, according to Tibetan astrology, the Dalai Lama’s soul day (*lab-sab*). As *Lhakar* provides a discreet avenue for people to express their loyalty towards the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan cause in an implicit manner without attracting harsh punitive consequences, Tibetans from all walks of life have enthusiastically embraced it as a form of strategic nonviolent resistance against what they see as Chinese government’s relentless onslaught on everything Tibetan under the sun.

Thus, Wednesdays for Tibetans have, in many ways, become synonymous with their struggle for survival as a nation and culture. An increasing number of Tibetans, especially the youths, are now asserting their “Tibetan-ness” by donning Tibetan attire and promoting Tibetan cuisine. Whilst some Tibetans are adopting vegetarianism and keeping fasts, many others are taking pledges to converse and write in the Tibetan language on a regular basis, and avoiding the use of Mandarin with fellow Tibetans. Intellectuals and individuals with creative skills are using social media, blogs and music to explicate what being a Tibetan means and entails today. One such example is a composition by a young musician from eastern Tibet which has become somewhat of an anthem amongst Tibetans on either side of the Himalayas:

We are the kin of the same parentage

We are the inheritors of one nation

O ruddy faced Tibetans!

Though seemingly benign, these are gestures of profound symbolic significance for Tibetans both within Tibet and without. And what they have cumulatively done is further consolidate the sense of unity and common purpose fostered by the 2008 uprising.

Notably, in many Tibetan areas, *Lhakar* has sparked other acts of civil disobedience. For instance, early last year, Tibetans in Nangchen county, Qinghai province decided to completely boycott Chinese vegetable and grocery stores to protest against skyrocketing prices of commodities. Locals there are now reportedly purchasing all their supplies from delegated Tibetan vendors and at much lower prices. There have been reports of such boycotts spreading to adjoining Tibetan areas as well. Similarly, in a show of open defiance, Tibetan monks in Lithang county, Sichuan province ignored orders from local authorities and enthroned a life-size portrait of the Dalai Lama during a religious gathering in July 2011 attended by more than 5,000 devotees representing all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon tradition. Likewise, in October 2010, between 5,000 to 9,000 high school students from six different schools took to the streets of Tongren, Qinghai province to protest against the Chinese government’s plans to curb the use of the Tibetan language in their classrooms. Since then similar language protests have occurred in other neighbouring Tibetan areas, with the latest protest reported in March of this year. Also worthy of mention here are the mass

burnings of garments made from animal fur in various parts of Tibet in response to the Dalai Lama's appeal in 2006 against the use of tiger and leopard skins by some Tibetans for ornamental purposes which, conservationists say, was spurring illegal trade in animal fur and adversely affecting wildlife projects in South Asia and elsewhere. These mass fur-burnings were much less about ecological concern and much more about being able to demonstrate allegiance to the Dalai Lama over the Chinese State.

This ongoing identity-driven, civil disobedience movement inside Tibet – which is seen by many as a new chapter in the Tibetan people's five-decade old struggle for greater freedom – has ample historical antecedents in South Asia, in particular the Indian independence movement. It is not hard to see the parallels between Lhakar and Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi movement launched in 1921. For one, both these movements were initiated in the aftermath of two very similar historical events – the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919 and the pan-Tibetan uprising of 2008. Tibetans inside Tibet appear to be coopting elements of Gandhi's non-cooperation and Satyagraha movements and employing them to remonstrate against the PRC's oppressive policies in their land.

Given that there has always been a two-way dissemination of ideas and influences across the Himalayas, it is hardly surprising that, in the face of oppression, Tibetans inside Tibet are emulating the path of strategic nonviolent resistance which was pioneered against colonialism by a highly esteemed South Asian leader. This two-way dissemination of ideas, in recent decades, has been facilitated by the sizeable Tibetan Diaspora in South Asian countries such as India, Nepal and Bhutan. In fact, the exile community in South Asia has often acted as a conduit for the diffusion of various socio-political trends from across the globe through communication devices, news output or through the many Tibetans who have returned to family in Tibet after education or time spent in exile. With regard to the Lhakar Movement in Tibet, one could argue that certain acts of non-cooperation such as the boycott of Chinese businesses by Tibetans in Qinghai province may have been inspired by similar campaigns to boycott "Made in China" products launched by the leaders of the exile community in the early 1980s. That said, it must be emphasized that Lhakar, as a movement, has its origins inside Tibet. It was only after the movement started gaining momentum within Tibet that the Tibetan Diaspora in South Asia and elsewhere began initiating parallel campaigns to express solidarity with their compatriots back home. Incidentally, this has sparked a hitherto unseen fascination regarding Tibetan culture and identity

especially among third generation Tibetans, and engendered an analogous cultural resurgence outside Tibet.

Such resurgence is reflected throughout the democracies of Himalayan South Asia, where, in stark contrast to Tibet, Himalayan cultures and languages have been able to flourish. In late 2011, Himalayan Buddhists gathered for a conference on the Nepali plains, at Lumbini, birthplace of the Buddha. Australian Tibetologist Gabriel Lafitte noted its significance in creating a renewed sense of “heartfelt” identity amongst Himalayan peoples of Tibetan origin “and thus to a wider concept of Tibet as the spiritual home”. Significantly, the conference had the support of 17 members of Nepal’s parliament, including the Deputy Prime Minister, Vijay Kumar Gacchadhar, who attended as Chief guest. Events like this are manifestations of a growing sense of awareness in recent years among Himalayan peoples such as Sherpas, Tamangs, Bhutias, Ladakhis, Spitians, Bhutanese, Dompos, Monpas and others about their shared Tibetan heritage. Not surprisingly, these peoples, along with thousands of non-Himalayan Nepalese and Indians, form the core support base for Tibetans in South Asia. The Burmese people, with whom Tibetans share both cultural traits and a history of oppression, have also been very forthcoming in their support for the Tibetan cause. In fact, just days after protests broke out in Lhasa in March 2008, the All Burma Monks Alliance, an underground monk’s organization inside Burma founded in September 2007 during what is dubbed as the “Saffron Revolution”, and the International Burmese Monks Organization issued separate statements in support of Tibetan monks and condemned the Chinese government’s brutal crackdown on Tibetan demonstrators.

Of all the South Asian states, the public level support for the Tibetan cause may well be most vocal in India. Given that the Tibetan movement has such strong similarities with the Gandhian ideas and strategies of India’s independence movement, a large number of Indian citizens can identify with it. For instance, during the recently concluded BRICS summit in New Delhi, many prominent Indians especially from the Himalayan region and the North East expressed their outrage over racial profiling and preventive custody of Tibetans and “Tibetan-looking” Indian citizens by the authorities. In a show of sympathy, Union Minister Agatha Sangma who hails from the Indian state of Meghalaya in the northeast told reporters that Tibetans like everyone else should have the right to protest peacefully on Indian soil. Similarly, in 2008, Bhaichung Bhutia, the then captain of the Indian National Football team refused to carry the Olympic torch during

the India leg of its journey to voice his support for the people of Tibet and their struggle.

Yet despite the public-level solidarity which is extended to Tibetans in South Asia, this has not translated into real political support. The Chinese government is sensitive to the fact that recognition of strong shared cultures and histories across the Himalayas negates its meta-narrative that Tibet has always been a part of China. This sensitivity is greatly increased by the fact that, until recently, Tibetan refugees residing in South Asian countries have been able to use their relative freedom to non-violently call for change in the Tibetan situation. The Tibetan uprising in 2008 sparked solidarity protests across the world, led by Tibetan exiles. These reached a height in Delhi, Dharamsala and Kathmandu where, daily, Tibetan refugees raised their voices against the regime on the other side of the Himalayas. Beijing is well aware that despite its closed borders and restricted communications, furtive connections on telephones and the internet, international news broadcasts, as well as refugees and returnees enable ideas to cross the physical and technological barriers that surround Tibet, allowing those inside, and the refugees outside to share in and shape one movement.

Shaken by the 2008 uprising, Beijing has since viewed Tibetan refugee activity as a serious threat to China's political integrity. In a conscious move to mitigate this threat, China has firmly centred its political negotiations with northern South Asia on the issue of Tibet. Indeed, China's interest in joining SAARC as an observer state, prominent Tibetan commentator Bhuchung K Tsering notes, is to be able to have more leverage on how South Asian countries deal with Tibet. Both politically and geographically, China now meets South Asia through the prism of Tibet.

China's rise to the echelons of superpower means that over the past few years, the democratic ideals of Nepal, Bhutan and India have been strongly tested by a Chinese government keen to see adherence to a 'One China' policy, wherein states publicly support the concept of China's territorial sovereignty. In order to prove their commitment to this policy, China uses considerable political pressure, soft power and financial incentives to encourage states bordering Tibet to stem the Tibetan refugee flow, and silence Tibetan refugee communities. As a result, where once they were safe havens, India, Bhutan and Nepal have become increasingly restrictive in their treatment of Tibetans.

This is most evident in Nepal, which is the least stable of the three Himalayan

states, and receives the majority of new arrival Tibetan refugees. A decade-long conflict that ended in 2006, and the years of political turbulence which have followed gave Beijing opportunities to assert itself in Nepal's internal affairs. After the conflict, China switched from providing arms to the Nepal Army to funding infrastructure projects and providing aid. In return, China asks for only one thing, a demonstrated commitment to stopping "anti-China" activities, in adherence with a One-China policy. The freedoms which Tibetan refugees once enjoyed in Nepal have been dramatically reduced as a result. In correlation with China's funding of Nepal's security forces, with the express command to quell "anti-China" activities, the rates and lengths of detentions of Tibetan refugees have soared. Tibetans report being harassed and detained by police at protests, but also at cultural events and, often, seemingly, for no reason at all but political expediency. In January 2012, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao touched down into Kathmandu for a state visit – the highest level such visit in a decade – that lasted less than 5 hours. On the day before the visit, over 200 Tibetans were rounded up and detained, only to be later released without charge. While these Tibetans languished in detention, Wen Jiabao made clear China's determined engagement with Nepal by announcing an increase in development aid to \$119 million this year. The figure was just \$128,200 in fiscal year 2005/6.

Though a stronger state, India too has often capitulated to Chinese pressure with regard to Tibetans. This was apparent in the run up to the BRICS summit in April this year when the Indian authorities cordoned off Tibetan colonies and hostels in and around Delhi and preemptively detained hundreds of Tibetan activists and students. But India has always walked a fine line on the issue of Tibet, its actions largely motivated by long-standing geopolitical concerns. A major factor in Sino-Indian relations is the 3,380 km long shared border that is disputed by both sides and along which numerous Chinese incursions have been reported in recent times. India claims that China has illegally occupied the Aksai Chin area bordering Tibet in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and China in turn lays claim on the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which it refers to as "South Tibet", and also parts of Sikkim. Ironically, much of this border was already demarcated via a bilateral agreement between British India and the then independent state of Tibet in 1914. India inherited this agreement on its independence in 1947 but the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1951 complicated the equation. So, to resolve this longstanding border issue, the two Asian giants have had several rounds of talks since the 1980s. But China has often made its participation in such talks

conditional upon New Delhi restricting the activities of what it calls “splittist” elements from its territory. For example, in November 2011, Beijing pulled out of what was to be the 15th round of border talks between the Special Representatives of the two countries when New Delhi refused to call off a congregation of religious leaders and scholars in the Indian capital that was to be addressed by the Dalai Lama. Thus, India’s imposition of increased restriction on the political activities of exiled Tibetans in recent times should be viewed within this larger geopolitical context. Tibetans still greatly benefit from India’s hospitality, but are increasingly becoming a pawn in their political game with China.

In contrast to India, other less developed South Asian states like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma have readily echoed China’s position on Tibet and helped further Beijing’s agenda in South Asia. But these countries themselves are not immune to the adverse consequences of China’s presence in Tibet. The livelihoods of millions of people in South Asia depend upon rivers originating in Tibet. Chinese proposals to divert these rivers and build multiple dams on them are likely to hit them the hardest. As such, Beijing’s mismanagement of Tibetan rivers has the potential to disrupt economic activity in the whole of South Asia and trigger unprecedented social unrest in the region, far beyond Tibet.

Which brings us back to the messages that are the self-immolations. Taking into account all the connections, Tibet is, in many ways, a South Asian nation. South Asians, having had such close connections with Tibetan people, are perhaps better equipped than most nations to ‘read’ the situation inside Tibet. But as South Asian states respond to the current geopolitical context by strengthening economic and political relationships with China rather than speaking up for their oppressed brethren, the trade-off is increased Chinese influence over their internal and external policies. Given that China also exerts control over South Asia’s water and threatens its northern states’ borders, that some Tibetans have gone to the lengths of setting themselves on fire to draw attention to their plight under Chinese rule is both a warning and an appeal, which South Asia – both public and political – would do well to heed.

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Tibet, cynical Sinicism and the tragedy of self-immolations

By Robert D. Sloane, *East Asia Forum*, BU & Tibet Justice Center, 9 May 2012

In a recent article, Barry Sautman ascribes recent self-immolations in Tibet to a few disgruntled monks at a single monastery.

Their complaints, he says, reflect general social and economic issues rather than a genuine concern for the Tibetan people's political and religious rights. Sautman borrows liberally from China's tired propaganda book, which characterises all dissent from China's occupation of Tibet and the massive human rights abuses against its people in the past half century as the work of terrorists or 'splitists'. In this view, all dissent is instigated by the Dalai Lama and his 'clique', including suitably unidentified foreigners, who aim to restore a feudal theocracy in Tibet — never mind that the Dalai Lama has expressly relinquished his political authority to the fully democratic Tibetan government-in-exile.

The immediate impetus for Sautman's editorial is that in the past three years 35 Tibetans have chosen to set themselves on fire to protest China's continuing occupation of Tibet, demand freedom and human rights for Tibetans, and call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Of the 19 incidents since January 2012, nine have taken place since the beginning of March. Most happened in historic Tibet, but in late March, Jampel Yeshe, a young Tibetan who fled Tibet in 2006 and lived in exile in India, died after self-immolating amid 600 demonstrators protesting President Hu Jintao's visit to Delhi, bringing to four the known number of recent attempts at self-immolation by Tibetan exiles.

As for the nature of earlier self-immolation protests, it is true that a simple majority (about 60 per cent) of the incidents took place in and around the Kirti monastery, particularly in Aba (Tibetan: Ngaba), which is now part of the Chinese province of Sichuan. But it is false and misleading to suggest, as Sautman does, that the 'vast majority' took place there or, even more to the point, that this somehow shows that the acts do not reflect the sentiment of Tibetans throughout the 'Tibetan Plateau'. In fact, Tibetan self-immolations have taken place not only in Aba, but 600 miles west in Chamdo (in the 'Tibet Autonomous Region'), and in Tawu, Kardze, Themchen, Darlak, Machu and Rebkong (all eastern Tibetan areas now incorporated into Chinese provinces).

Doubtless many will find it hard to fathom what could lead people to douse

themselves in gasoline and die agonising deaths to make a political or moral statement. But Sautman's cavalier dismissal of these acts as irrational 'suicide politics' is deeply misguided. Tibetans who self-immolate appreciate the consequences, and likely also the futility, of their actions in simple political terms. The real question we need to ask is why these Tibetans have resorted to self-immolation — and why they are doing it now, some 60 years after China invaded and illegally purported to annex Tibet.

About one-third of the Tibetans who have self-immolated were under the age of 30, belying China's frequent claim that these and other protests against China's occupation of Tibet are organised in support of the old 'feudal' regime of the Tibetan theocratic aristocracy, led by the tyrannical Dalai Lama. It is telling that none of the Tibetan self-immolators have pleaded for the restoration of a feudal theocracy in Tibet. At least two of the self-immolators left behind clear messages that describe their motivations, including their belief in the universal value of and human right to freedom. Jamphel Yeshe, for example, issued a written message of unity declaring that 'freedom is the basis of happiness for all living beings'.

The real reason for this recent spate of self-immolations is precisely that which Sautman denies. He claims that 'there is no repression of Tibetans simply for being Tibetan', and indeed that 'Tibetans receive a range of preferential policies'. Anyone who has actually travelled in Tibet (and managed to escape the Orwellian eye of China's police state) knows that this is an utter façade. In practice, China has long treated Tibet and Tibetans in a manner that, for all intents and purposes, cannot be distinguished from how a coloniser treats a colonised people — a tragic irony given China's own (legitimate) grievances about pre-World War II Western and Japanese colonialism.

True, as Sautman says, China does not oppose religion per se; its interest is only in religious views that threaten the elite's monopoly on political power. But China's treatment of the Tibetan people is a special case in this regard. Since China illegally annexed Tibet in 1949–50, the Chinese government has targeted Tibetan Buddhism because, more than any other cultural or historical factor, it — and its personification in the Dalai Lama — binds Tibetans together as a distinct people with a distinct national identity. This threatens China's efforts to integrate Tibet into the PRC, an objective that China continues to regard as vital to its national pride, historical identity, economy (Tibet has abundant natural resources and territory), political stability, and development.

In one of its more recent attempts to regulate Tibetan Buddhism, China passed a law requiring all tulkus (Tibetans thought to be the reincarnation of famous Buddhist lamas) to apply to the officially atheist Chinese state for a 'licence' to reincarnate. The absurdity of such a law might be comical were it not part of a systematic, long-term, and widespread campaign to absorb and Sinicise the nationally, racially, ethnically, linguistically, culturally and religiously distinct people of Tibet. Indeed, some Chinese regard Tibetans as primitive 'barbarians' and fail to understand why Tibetans are not grateful for their supposed 'liberation' and 'modernisation' by China.

In moral terms, it bears emphasising that unlike a suicide attack, self-immolation does not harm others. It respects civilians' right to life, without distinction. To be clear, this is neither to condone nor to condemn the practice. But self-immolation must be morally distinguished from suicide bombings and attacks on civilians of the occupying state. We would also do well to recall a more recent example of this form of protest: Mohamed Bouazizi literally and figuratively ignited the Arab Spring when he self-immolated in response to repeated harassment by corrupt Tunisian bureaucrats.

Given this precedent, is it any wonder that China has responded to Tibetan self-immolation with escalating brutality, including beatings, torture and 'patriotic re-education'? The Chinese government has also escalated its propaganda campaign, describing the peaceful protestors as 'terrorists', and not only accuses the Dalai Lama of instigating the self-immolations but describes his views as tantamount to 'Nazi racial policies'. China goes so far as to equate the Dalai Lama's mere compassion for those who have lost their lives in the self-immolations with 'the uncontrolled and cruel Nazi during the Second World War'.

In reality, the self-immolations manifest the Tibetan people's unwavering determination to resist China's neo-colonial treatment of Tibet for the past half century. At tremendous personal risk, as many as 3000 Tibetans flee their homeland every year as a direct result of China's oppressive policies. Nothing about 'Chinese oppression' deserves the scare quotes in which Sautman places that phrase. If China truly believes that most Tibetans do not feel oppressed by its occupation, why not allow a UN-supervised referendum on Tibet's status or the wishes of its people? Why not allow journalists, diplomats and scholars to visit Tibetan regions without a Chinese 'guide'? Tibetans have resorted to self-immolation to demand the fundamental human rights to political and religious freedom and

self-determination, and in a desperate attempt to draw the world's attention to their sadly neglected plight. To trivialise this situation is a shameful blend of political cynicism and neo-colonial Sinicism.

How many Tibetans must burn to death before we wake up?

By Shobhan Saxena, *Times of India*, 26 March 2012

Today at 7am, Jamphel Yeshi passed away. He is survived by his mother and four siblings, all in Tibet.

On Monday, the young Tibetan had set himself on fire at a protest rally organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress at Jantar Mantar in the heart of the Capital. The Tibetans were protesting against the forthcoming visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to India, when Jamphel Yeshi suddenly emerged at the site, with his body covered in flames. Even as the fire ate his flesh and hair, the 27-year-old ran for about 100 metres and fell as some Tibetan activists and Delhi cops tried to douse the leaping flames. As Jamphel was being carried to Ram Manohar Lohia hospital in a vehicle, the people at Jantar Mantar could see his badly burnt feet and flesh peeling off with the burns.

Jamphel Yeshi escaped from Tibet to India in 2006, and he has been living in New Delhi for the past two years. In a letter he wrote before he went to Jantar Mantar, Jamphel wrote that freedom “is the basis of happiness for all living beings. Without freedom, six million Tibetans are like a butter lamp in the wind, without direction. My fellow Tibetans from Three Provinces, it is clear to us all that if we unitedly put our strength together, there will be result. So, don't be disheartened.”

“What I want to convey here is the concern of the six million Tibetans. At a time when we are making our final move toward our goal – if you have money, it is the time to spend it; if you are educated it is the time to produce results; if you have control over your life, I think the day has come to sacrifice your life. The fact that Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st century is to let the world know about their suffering, and to tell the world about the denial of basic human rights. If you have any empathy, stand up for the Tibetan people,” Jamphel wrote in his will addressed to Tibetan people.

Jamphel committed self-immolation as Tibetan activists from all over India had

gathered here to “urge the international community to intervene in the ongoing critical situation in Tibet and also protest against Hu Jintao’s upcoming visit for the 4th Brics summit”. Heads of states of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa are in Delhi to take part in the Brics summit hosted by India as a member of the group of emerging economies.

It’s difficult to say if Tibet will be on the minds of the five leaders, including our Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, when they meet to discuss important economic and development-related issues here on Thursday. But it’s certain that Hu Jintao (who is known among the Tibetans as the ‘Butcher of Tibet’ for his reign of terror as the governor of Tibet Autonomous Region in the 1990s) will flex his muscles to make sure that no one utters the ‘T’ word at the multilateral meeting.

But there are a few things the other Brics leaders should know about the ground situation in Tibet. Since March 2011, at least 29 Tibetans, mostly monks and nuns, have set themselves on fire to protest the Chinese government’s policies in Tibet. In an appeal to the United Nations recently, some Tibetan organizations asked the world body to look into the situation in Tibet. “We the people of this world are deeply concern about the condition of people in Tibet and therefore we called for a UN-led fact-finding mission to observe the situation in Tibet,” they wrote in an appeal to the international community. But the world leaders, busy with their war mongering against Syria and Iran, have chosen to ignore the plea of Tibetans.

In past one year, the situation in Tibet has turned from bad to worse. According to a western tourist who recently returned from Lhasa, “Tibetans are disappearing; everyone is terrified about the bloodshed which seems inevitable.”

In a report to the Tibet News Network, the tourist wrote that, “Lhasa consists of approximately 1.2 million Han Chinese and approximately 200,000 Tibetans. The majority of these Tibetans live in an area which is now almost entirely enclosed by military compounds with walls between 10-16 feet; some with barbed wire. This isolation gives the impression of what the Warsaw Ghetto was like. Inside the “enclosed” area groups of armed soldiers, S.W.A.T. teams, and police patrol the streets 24 hours a day. Military drill songs can be heard throughout the day. S.W.A.T trucks and rows of 6 to 15 armored vehicles (tanks?) come through the area on a daily basis. Each vehicle has 3 to 4 soldiers at the opening turret, armed with assault rifles or machine guns aimed at the Tibetans.”

“All Tibetans must carry identification at all times. Tibetans residing in Lhasa are required to register with the police. There are approximately 134 new Police station checkpoints in Lhasa for random searches of pedestrians and vehicles. In addition to the military compounds in and around Lhasa, permanent military posts holding 1-10 armed soldiers have been established throughout the city.”

If this situation is not alarming and not as bad as what's happening in Syria, then what is? Why are the world leaders silent on these crimes against Tibetans? Why has the world left Tibet to its fate? Why don't they see a threat to the ideas of democracy, freedom and human rights in what's happening in Tibet?

The people inside Tibet know that they are on their own. And they are refusing to give up despite the terrible situation they are in despite the fact that reports and footage coming out of Tibet has failed to shake the conscience of the international community. Recently, a video of self-immolation by Palden Choetso, a nun from a Tibetan area in southwestern China's Sichuan province, made it to the outside world. In the video, the nun stands as the flames engulf her body and she later falls to the ground.

But this video didn't get the coverage that was given to the footage of an Iranian girl, Nada Hosain, who was shot by unknown gunmen on a Tehran street during disturbances there in 2008. At that time the western media -- with support and guidance from their governments -- tried to convert the tragic death of a young girl into a symbol of rebellion against the Iranian government. The 'Wag the Dog' tactic didn't work and the so-called Iranian rebellion died down in a few weeks. The world's top TV channels and newspapers had no hesitation in running an amateur video on their network as an authentic image; they didn't bother to verify what exactly happened. But when it comes to the image of a burning Tibetan nun, they raise their journalistic standards.

Of course, nobody wants to rub the Chinese the wrong way. China may be a one-party dictatorship whose brutality has few parallels in modern history, but it's also the last hope of global capitalism, which is sinking by the day. It's the world's factory and bank with hard cash.

But ignoring what's happening in Tibet will only bolster the Chinese regime, which is a dangerous combination of predatory capitalism and orthodox communism.

It's time a world leader showed courage and mentioned Tibet at an interna-

tional forum. It's time the world told China that its crimes against Tibet will not be tolerated anymore. Recently, Tibetan Prime Minister in-exile Lobsang Sangay expressed concern over rising Chinese military repression against Tibetans and urged the United Nations to send a fact-finding delegation to China to investigate its hardliner policies. "We urge the international community and the United Nations to send fact fighting delegations to Tibetan areas and the Chinese government should also do their own investigation, an objective, truthful investigation which will clearly reveal that their hardliner policies is not working and is ought to be revised and (they should) introduce more moderate policies towards the Tibetan people," Sangay said.

This week, India voted against Sri Lanka for its war crimes against its minority Tamil populations. Can we expect india to show similar courgae against China?

After all, how many Tibetans have to burn themselves to death before the world wakes up to their plight?

Tibetan Self Immolation: A Cry in the Wilderness?

By R. S. Kalha, *Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis*, 4 April 2012

When most people in India saw Jamphel Yeshi, a young 27-year old Tibetan, setting himself on fire to protest the arrival in India of the Chinese leader Hu Jintao, they could not but have pondered over the sad fate that has befallen a forgotten people. Born in Tibet but living in India, Jamphel Yeshi was an activist with the Tibetan Youth Organisation who, before self immolating, left a poignant and a heart rending hand written note. Yeshi wrote, 'the fact that the Tibetan people are setting themselves on fire in this 21st Century is to let the world know about their suffering.' Yeshi is not alone in this regard; the number of Tibetan self immolations in China has crossed over thirty. But is the world listening?

Predictably, as if on cue, the Chinese authorities put the blame on the Dalai Lama. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei accused the Dalai Lama of 'masterminding' the series of self immolations and blandly asserted that 'the Dalai group is sparing no efforts to incite Tibetan independence activities by creating various troubles.' Predictably also, the Chinese officials 'complimented' the Indian authorities for their 'handling' of the situation. Apart from officials, not many in India would be enthused to receive such a compliment!

And yet the Chinese refuse to take a second look at what is actually causing such unrest in Tibet. Areas inhabited by Tibetans are under harsh security cover. Many new road check points have been built and they are manned by heavily armed Para-Military Police wearing flak jackets and often carrying small fire extinguishers. The Chinese have also instituted 'monastic management' plans in order to control religious life. About 21,000 Chinese officials have been deployed to 'befriend' Tibetan monks and dossiers have been created on most of the latter. Compliant clergy are rewarded with extra health care benefits, pensions, television sets and other facilities. In addition, over a million national flags and Mao portraits have been distributed; monasteries have to compulsorily hang Mao portraits. Such heavy handedness is causing great disaffection amongst the general Tibetan population.

The Tibetans are a gentle people. Before Buddhism arrived in Tibet from India during the 11th century, the Tibetans were animist by religion, savage by nature and revelled in military exploits. Buddhism changed all that for it preaches against killing any living being and the Tibetans, being avid followers of the Buddha, became gentle by nature. Soldiers faded away and Tibet thereafter never threatened anyone. There is the Tibetan belief that Tibet is a special land protected by the Buddha. Tibet had a unique gentle civilisation that meant no harm to anyone. As the Tashi Lama was reported to have once said, 'we know nothing and we do nothing, but read and pray.' Although Tibet's ethnic boundaries have often not been congruous with its political boundaries, Tibet is surrounded by two countries only; namely India and China.

Sadly for the Tibetans, apart from human rights activists, no country has spoken up for them or for their obvious suffering. When a Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi self immolated in Tunis on 17 December 2010, he actually helped launch the so-called 'Arab Spring' which led to widespread changes in the Arab World. Unfortunately for Jamphel Yeshe, nothing similar seems to have happened in Tibet. Even when the Chinese occupied Tibet in 1950 and the Tibetans took their case to the UN, no major country including Nehru's India supported their case. It took little El Salvador in far away Latin America to sponsor a hearing for the Tibetans at the UN, but which eventually petered out. Led by the UK and India even the UN was disinclined to recommend any action. While most are demonstrably anxious about the goings on in Syria and critical of the killings of innocent civilians there, as they are of the blood bath that followed the defeat of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, few if any are prepared to shed a tear for the

hapless Tibetans. Even the UN Human Rights Council has failed to act and the UN Human Rights Commissioner, the South African Navi Pillay, so alert on the Syrian issue, has failed to notice any human rights violation.

The reasons are not far to seek. No one wishes to annoy the Chinese. The People's Republic of China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It is the second largest economy in the world after the United States. The Chinese market is indeed a very valuable one. Its military power is growing steadily, as is its huge expenditure on defence. Recently the US was pushed into taking a review of its military posture to meet the growing Chinese military strength. The review, as approved by President Obama, underlines the fact that the emergence of China as a military and economic power has indeed become a 'contentious' issue. Unfortunately for the Chinese, they were bracketed in the same paragraph as the 'threat' from Iran. There is no doubt in the minds of US policy planners that in the long term, China's emergence as a regional power will have the 'potential' to affect the US economy and security in a 'variety of ways'. While recognising that the two countries have a stake in the maintenance of peace and stability in East Asia and in building a 'co-operative' relationship, the review demanded that China must 'clarify its strategic intentions' in order to avoid friction in the region. What was left unsaid was whether China would 'co-operate' with the US as it pursues its policies in the region or adopt a strategic profile hostile to US interests. Perhaps that was the meaning of the phrase, 'clarifying its strategic intentions'. Thus it was clear that a dual track US policy has emerged from the review. The US will continue to work with China and at the same time keep a wary eye on its 'intentions'. Meanwhile the unsaid US Administration policy would be that nothing should be done to un-necessarily rile the Chinese. To be fair, however, the US Senate has taken the lead and passed a bi-partisan resolution that 'mourns the death of Tibetans who have self immolated and deplores repressive policies that target the Tibetans.'

However, all is not lost for the Tibetans. With the evolution of the new media and social networking websites such as Twitter, Face book, etc., the suffering of the Tibetans is now known worldwide. Millions all over the world who saw the self immolation of Jamphel Yeshe could not but have failed to be moved at the gruesome sight and at the plight of the hapless Tibetans. As more such self immolations take place, the revulsion for Chinese policies in Tibet will grow exponentially. It is time for the Chinese leadership to take note.

Dalai Lama should condemn Tibetan self-immolations

By Stephen Prothero, *CNN.com*, 12 July 2012

When the Vietnamese monk Thich Quang Duc immolated himself in Saigon in 1963 to protest the persecution of Buddhists by the South Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem, the world took notice. Malcolm Browne's photograph of the monk becoming a martyr won the Pulitzer Prize, and Diem's Roman Catholic regime fell before the year's end.

Today, Tibet is witnessing an epidemic of self-immolations. In fact, since March 16, 2011, more than 40 Tibetans have followed Thich Quang Duc's lead, setting themselves on fire to protest the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Westerners react with revulsion to sati, the Hindu practice of widow-burning outlawed by the British in 1829, and of course to Islamist suicide bombers. The New Atheists are right to protest all this killing in the name of God (or the Buddha) – the way believers both prompt violence and justify it in the name of some higher good.

So where are the protests against these Tibetan protesters?

When asked about the recent spate of self-immolations in Tibet, the Dalai Lama has offered the response of no response. In a July 9 interview, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people said he wanted “to remain neutral,” telling *The Hindu*:

This is a very, very delicate political issue. Now, the reality is that if I say something positive, then the Chinese immediately blame me. If I say something negative, then the family members of those people feel very sad. They sacrificed their own life. It is not easy. So I do not want to create some kind of impression that this is wrong. So the best thing is to remain neutral.

I know it is impolitic to criticize the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who is revered as a bodhisattva by many Buddhists. But he deserves criticism in this case. Why not “create some kind of impression” that killing is wrong? Why not use his vast storehouse of moral and spiritual capital to denounce this ritual of human sacrifice?

If the Dalai Lama were to speak out unequivocally against these deaths, they would surely stop. So in a very real sense, their blood is on his hands. But the bad karma the Dalai Lama is accruing here extends far beyond Tibet and these

particular protesters.

In an important article on suicide in the *Boston Globe*, Jennifer Michael Hecht has noted that suicides beget suicides. “One of the best predictors of suicide is knowing a suicide,” she writes. “That means that every suicide may be a delayed homicide.”

And so it goes with self-immolations. The suicide by fire of Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi is widely seen as a key catalyst of the Tunisian revolution and the wider Arab Spring. Less well known is the fact that over a hundred Tunisians later set themselves on fire in copycat incidents.

I understand that there is a tradition of self-immolation in Buddhism dating back at least to the fourth century. But there is also a strong ethic of compassion. So where is the compassion here?

The Dalai Lama isn’t just a Nobel Peace Prize winner. He is also a man of peace. It is time in this crisis that he started to act like one

Why the Dalai Lama cannot condemn Tibetan self-immolations

By Tenzin Dorjee, *CNN.com*, 18 July 2012

In a crass display of moral blindness, Stephen Prothero’s blog post on Tibetan self-immolations blames the victim instead of the bully.

Tibetans are stuck in one of the world’s last remaining and most brutal colonial occupations. It is through this lens, more than anything else, that we must understand the self-immolations.

Since 2009, at least 44 Tibetans — monks, nuns and lay people — have set themselves on fire to protest China’s rule; 39 self-immolations have occurred this year alone. Every one of these acts is a direct result of China’s systematic assault on the Tibetan people’s way of life, their movements, their speech, their religion, and their identity.

Instead of responding to China’s oppression with revenge — a path far more tempting to the basic human instinct — Tibetans have chosen a means far more peaceful. Without harming a single Chinese, they set aflame their own bodies to shine a light upon the atrocity taking place in their homeland. They sacrifice their own lives not in the name of “God” or “Buddha,” as Mr. Prothero so dismiss-

sively suggests, but in an altruistic intention of alerting the world to their people's suffering.

By demanding that the Dalai Lama condemn these individuals who have shown compassion beyond our imagination, Mr. Prothero has betrayed a colossal indifference to the courage and circumstances of those fighting for the same democratic freedoms and human rights that he himself enjoys.

How can the Dalai Lama condemn the self-immolators when their motivation was evidently selfless and their tactic nonviolent? Would we ask Gandhi to condemn activists in the Indian freedom struggle who were killed while lying on the road to block British police trucks? Or the hunger strikers who were starving themselves to death in order to protest the injustices of British rule in India?

By every measure, it's the Chinese leaders and not the Dalai Lama who are responsible for the self-immolations in Tibet. They have the power to ease tensions, reverse restrictions, and stop the self-immolations overnight. But instead of seeking a lasting solution to the Tibet issue, they continue to aggravate the situation by intensifying the repression.

No one is more tormented by the self-immolations than the Dalai Lama, whose bond with the Tibetan people goes deeper than language can express. In fact, it is the singular calming influence of the Dalai Lama that has kept the movement nonviolent to date.

As a universal icon of peace, the Dalai Lama's spiritual influence goes well beyond the Buddhist world. Nevertheless, his moral authority is not an infinite resource. There is an invisible moral rope with which the Dalai Lama has bound the Tibetans to nonviolence for four decades. But this rope is wearing thin as China's escalating tyranny drives Tibetans into a corner.

Self-immolation, which emerged as a tactic from being cornered for too long, represents the final outpost in the spectrum of nonviolent resistance. If this last remaining space for expression, no matter how drastic, is taken away, the rope might just snap. Chaos will ensue, vastly increasing the chances of a full-blown ethnic conflict that even the Dalai Lama will have exhausted his moral capital to stop.

From all of Mr. Prothero's accusations, the most offensive is his comparison of self-immolations to sati – a social system in ancient India where widows were pressured to throw themselves into the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands.

Self-immolation – a political act of reason – is the polar opposite of sati – a blind act of superstition.

There is not a single case of Tibetan self-immolation that was prompted by social pressure or religious obligation. Every incident of it, unexpected as it is, shakes the nation, the community, not to mention the family, to its foundations. Every Tibetan prays in his or her heart that the latest might be the last.

The image of a person engulfed in flames is shocking, often disturbing, to people living in the free world. For all our obsession with violent movies, graphic video games, and live coverage of wars, it still rips our hearts to pieces when we see a human in flames.

Rather than indulging in philosophical investigations into the morality of self-immolations, we must see these actions for what they are: urgent pleas for help from a people pushed to the brink by decades of ruthless repression.

One hopes that most people are focused on the real question at hand: how shall we answer this call?

The Ultimate Protest: Women Self-Immolate in Tibet

By E. Sinclair, *World Affairs*, October 2012

This spring marked the fifty-third anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Chinese rule after Beijing took control of Lhasa in 1959 and the Dalai Lama fled to India soon after. One of the untold stories of this period is the role of Tibetan women in five decades of resistance. On March 12, 1959, thousands of Tibetan women organized a nonviolent protest in front of the Dalai Lama's home against what the Tibetan Women's Association describes as "the illegal and forcible occupation of their country by the People's Republic of China." Since then, the TWA has marked every March 12th as "Women's Uprising Day" to remember the many who had been imprisoned, tortured, or executed after that protest, including a woman by the name of Pamo Kusang, who had been married to a low-level Tibetan official at the time of her martyrdom.

I had not heard Pamo Kusang's name before moving to China this year. But according to the Tibet Justice Center, Kusang and others "remained defiant" while they were "brutally tortured and mercilessly interrogated" for years after the event. In 1970, during the high point of the Cultural Revolution, Pamo Ku-

sang organized a protest from behind prison walls. A group of women marched together on prison grounds and chanted anti-Chinese slogans. Kusang was seized by guards and transferred to a notoriously violent prison. Under interrogation there, she repeatedly refused to name names, insisting that she alone was responsible for organizing every protest in which she participated. For her defiance, she was among a group of women sentenced to public execution. According to literature distributed by the Justice Center:

‘The crowd could hardly recognize them for they had suffered beyond imagination from many years of imprisonment. Pamo Kusang herself was crippled and had lost her hearing in one ear as well as her hair which had probably been pulled out by the roots. They were lined up in front of a pit and shot by firing squad in the back.’

But the fate of Pamo Kusang did not silence Tibetan women in the decades that followed. For a time, female Tibetan protests were, by and large, peaceful events focused on bearing witness. But now, as the Tibetan resistance movement enters a new phase, that is changing.

Tibetan women are now setting themselves ablaze to protest Chinese rule in increasing numbers, a radical shift from decades of nonviolent resistance. Since March 2011, some forty Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the name of a free Tibet; as of this writing, seven have been women, all but one of whom died from the self-immolation.

Scant details are available. Tibet remains shut off; very few journalists have been able to get past the many checkpoints sequestering the story from the world. Almost no pictures and every fewer reliable eyewitness accounts have made it into the international media.

The nonprofit advocacy group Free Tibet, which says it relies on a network of well-established sources on the ground throughout the region to promote awareness, shared details of who the martyred women were and how they died.

On October 17, 2011, for the very first time in Tibet’s history, a twenty-year-old female Buddhist nun named Tenzin Wangmo died after setting herself on fire outside the Dechen Chokorling nunnery in Ngaba. A photograph shows a delicate face and a serene smile. She reportedly told fellow nuns on her last morning that she had something of great importance to do. After she set herself on fire, she is said to have walked forward, slowly, until she collapsed.

The second woman was named Palden Choetso. She was thirty-five years old

and had been a nun for fifteen years. She chose a public place, the Chume Bridge in the center of Tawu County, in eastern Tibet, when she self-immolated on November 3, 2011. She was well known in the community; a vigil was later held in her memory. As I learned about her, I couldn't help but note that the name "Palden" means "spontaneously accomplished."

The third nun on this list is an eighteen-year-old woman by the name of Tenzin Choedon. In the photo she left behind, she allows herself a soft smile. She was from the same Ngaba nunnery as Tenzin Wangmo. According to Free Tibet, Tenzin Choedon called out slogans of protest against the Chinese government as she burned.

That the first three Tibetan women to self-immolate were all nuns is not surprising. Carole Devine, in her book *Determination: Tibetan Women and the Struggle for an Independent Tibet*, writes that nuns maintain a unique position in the fight for Tibet's freedom: "Knowing they may be arrested and tortured during their protests, and knowing they do not have children who would suffer as a result of their imprisonment or death, they are willing to be leaders in the independence movement."

There were no such comforts for Tsering Kyi or, more dramatically, a woman only known as Rinchen, the first known lay women to self-immolate.

Tsering was twenty when, on March 3, 2011, she set herself on fire in front of a vegetable market in the village of Tro Kho Menma Shang, in eastern Tibet's Machu County. Days before her death, according to Free Tibet, she had talked about Ngaba, where two of the nuns had self-immolated: "Tibetans are burning themselves. We should do something for Tibet. Life is meaningless if we don't do something for Tibet."

Tsering was followed a day later by Rinchen. Her act was especially momentous because she was the first mother to take her own life. A widow with four children, she set herself on fire in front of a police surveillance station at the main gate of the Kirti Monastery in eastern Tibet, a place widely known as a respected institution of Buddhist thought. As part of the recent crackdown, hundred of Chinese officials moved into the monastery to monitor all activity. Reports are it is now a virtual prison. As flames engulfed Rinchen, she cried out, "Tibet needs freedom and Gyalwa Rinpoche"—the Dalai Lama—"needs to return to Tibet."

On May 30, 2012, another young mother felt compelled to make the same

choice. Rechock, who left behind three children, died at the scene after setting herself ablaze in front of the Jonang Dzamthang monastery in Barma township. Free Tibet reports that she spent her final days tending animals in the countryside before travelling into town to commit her act of protest.

The last woman on this list, as of this writing, may have made the biggest impact. She is Dekyi Choezom, who is also the only woman believed to have survived her injuries. What we know of her reasoning is enlightening in how purely political, as opposed to emotional, her motivation appears to have been.

On June 27th, Dekyi set herself on fire during a protest over land rights in Jyekundo, Eastern Tibet. Jyekundo suffered a devastating earthquake in 2010. Soon after, the government announced plans to confiscate land or “relocate” residents to make way for new government buildings, a decision Tibetan residents are resisting.

“This is the first time a Tibetan in Tibet has set fire to himself alongside a larger protest,” said Stephanie Brigden, director of Free Tibet.

What is striking about Dekyi’s act is what followed. Two of her relatives involved in the protest were reportedly beaten and detained. Several monks, as well as locals, protested for their release with a very specific threat. They declared that they, too, would set themselves on fire if their demands were not met. Later that day, authorities released Dekyi’s relatives. She is believed to be receiving treatment for her injuries in a hospital in Xining.

Up until this point, self-immolations by women had been independent, self-contained acts of protest. Dekyi’s action, within the context of a larger protest, changed that. We can’t know if authorities released her relatives because they feared having blood on their hands. But we do know that her action had a domino effect that did two things. It forced the hand of authorities and, perhaps intentionally, it ended the precedent that self-immolations by women had to be solitary, self-contained forms of protest.

In Hindu mythology, Sati, one of the many wives of the god Shiva, said to be despondent after her father insulted her choice of husband, sets herself on fire and dies. But many Tibetan scholars say to associate self-immolation with despair is incorrect.

“It is a conscious political act,” says Yangdon Dhondup, a scholar of religion at the University of London. “It cannot be compared to suicide, which is not

a Buddhist way of ending one's life." Even Buddha himself sacrificed his own body for the welfare of hungry animals.

The Beijing-based writer and Tibet advocate Tsering Woesser, who lives under near-constant surveillance, told me that there are historical references to self-immolation as an act of devotion and joy; a demonstration of loyalty to the religion. Research shows that the act of self-immolation has been tolerated, even exalted, in the practice of Mahayana Buddhism, which is not a sect but a collection of Buddhist practices and includes Zen and Tibetan Buddhism. Such protest became familiar to Westerners in 1963, when a monk named Thich Quang Duc self-immolated in the middle of a busy Saigon street to protest the South Vietnamese government's imposition of the Catholic religion. In the week following, according to a *Time* magazine story, thirteen other monks followed suit, as "setting oneself on fire rather suddenly became a political act."

Self-immolation may not be unique as an ecstatic political gesture among devout Buddhists, but it moved into a new context when it became part of Tibet's female resistance.

So why are women making that choice?

"Tibetan women have been at the forefront of the protest movement," says Stephanie Brigden of Free Tibet. "They have one of the longest records of non-violent protest in history, but they are feeling absolutely desperate."

Monks and nuns are now being forced by the Chinese to go through endless political re-education camps. They must denounce the Dalai Lama and are under constant surveillance. They are a prime target for the Chinese government because they are so identified with indigenous Tibetan culture.

But then what of Tsering Kyi, the twenty-year-old student from Machu County, in Gansu Province, who set herself on fire in the spring of 2011? Although not of a religious order, she too represented a part of Tibetan identity as a member of a nomadic family. Once central to Tibetan life, nomads are no longer allowed to move freely with their herds; some nomadic communities are forcibly resettled and poverty is rampant among them. Rinchen, the widowed mother who killed herself in apparent support of Tsering Kyi, also came from poverty in one of the areas hardest hit by the Chinese occupation, Ngaba County.

What will the legacy of these women be? Several experts I spoke with told me that the families of those who commit acts of self-immolation often honor their

loved ones as martyrs. In the words of Brigden: “These individuals are regarded as heroes.”

More than one observer of the situation in Tibet shared with me a worrisome theory: that in some areas of Tibet there is a belief that enough incidents of self-immolation will generate much-needed international attention. The additional pressure on the Chinese government, it is believed, will force it to cease its persecution of Tibet. But this seems unlikely given the extent of Beijing’s control and its ability to use its political and economic clout to stifle international interest in the issue.

When China’s leaders gathered in Beijing this year at the Great Hall of the People for the annual NPC, they took turns claiming the stage to announce what the future will hold. A lower GDP, more military spending, promises to fix the housing market—the performances engineered to maintain stability and calm at any cost in the face of a looming transition of power at the very highest levels. One of those who spoke was Wu Zegang, head of the Tibetan region in Sichuan Province, where many of the self-immolations are taking place. He stated contemptuously that these acts were intended “to divide the nation.” As extreme as their choice may be, the women who have set themselves ablaze over the past year seem actually to have accomplished quite the reverse: they’ve brought the nation—as they define it, the nation of Tibet—closer together.

Tibet’s Man on Fire

By Jeffrey Bartholet, *National Geographic News*, 30 November 2012

At the time he decided to set fire to himself, Jamphel Yeshi was living in the Tibetan refugee colony of Majnu ka Tilla, on the northern outskirts of Delhi. The colony was first settled in 1963, four years after the Dalai Lama escaped to India from advancing Chinese forces. The early residents built thatched huts and made a living brewing and selling chang, a traditional Tibetan barley-and-wheat alcohol. As refugees from the roof of the world, they were unaccustomed to the heat and humidity of the low-lying plain. They had no idea how long they’d be staying but imagined they’d return home soon.

Today, about 4,000 people live in the colony, which has been overtaken by the city: A busy thoroughfare runs alongside it, and Indian neighborhoods have

grown up nearby. New construction in the colony is illegal, yet ragged workers continue to dig foundations, carrying rubble and dirt in handwoven baskets balanced on their heads and dumping their contents on the nearby banks of the Yamuna River. They navigate a warren of multistory buildings, a shambolic jumble of several hundred homes with colored prayer flags fluttering from the rooftops. The alleyways, many just wide enough for two pedestrians to pass, are populated by crimson-robed monks and nuns, mangy dogs and barefoot kids, activists and drifters, petty merchants, and beggars with missing or mangled limbs who offer a broad smile and warm thanks for receiving the equivalent of 20 cents. A Tibetan far from home can enjoy familiar scents and tastes here: salty butter tea, steamed dumplings, Tibetan bread and biscuits. (Learn about Tibetan traditions under Chinese Rule.)

Jamphel Yeshi—Jashi to his friends—lived with four other Tibetan men in a one-room, windowless apartment they rented for the equivalent of \$90 a month. The entrance to the room is through a tiny kitchen area, which is separated from the sleeping quarters by a threadbare curtain in a Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck motif. Jashi's mattress still lies on the floor in a corner, below posters of the Dalai Lama and other senior lamas. His mattress and four others form a U-shape around the perimeter of the room, which is illuminated by three fluorescent tubes. A thin cabinet still holds many of Jashi's books, including several well-thumbed collections on Buddhism, Tibetan politics, and history. During the day, the men would store their personal belongings in two tiny alcoves. Jashi's small nylon suitcase remains where it was when he was alive, holding most of what he owned, including three ID cards, two plastic pens, two rosaries, four cotton sweaters, four pairs of pants, a vest, a scarf, a green and a red string, and a small Tibetan flag. (Related: "Buddha Rising, Buddhism in the West.")

On the night before he set himself on fire, Jashi was in a cheerful mood. Two friends were visiting from the town of Dharamsala, home of the Dalai Lama and seat of the Tibetan government in exile, about 300 miles from Majnu ka Tilla. It was Lobsang Jinpa's turn to cook that evening, but he had become distracted at a cybercafé. Jashi called Jinpa on his mobile phone and ribbed him: "Have you forgotten that you have to make dinner? You've become very popular in Dharamsala; maybe you're too big too cook for us now!" Jinpa rushed back; by the time he arrived Jashi had already washed and cut the vegetables. (Learn about the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala.)

Jinpa cooked thenthuk, a traditional Tibetan dish of noodles, vegetables, and mutton. “No one said it was tasty, but everyone ate it,” recalls Jinpa, a former political prisoner who escaped Tibet in 2011. “Jashi ate very well.” The seven young men who gathered that evening talked about the upcoming visit by Chinese premier Hu Jintao and about a protest that was to take place the following day in downtown Delhi against Chinese rule. At one point, Jashi took off his shirt and flexed his muscles, showing off the dragon tattoos on his arms and joking about his physique.

As he often did, Jashi woke early the next morning, before any of his roommates. He first went to the Buddhist temple in Majnu ka Tilla to help serve tea to people attending prayers. Then he returned to the room, where he picked up a small backpack and a large Tibetan flag. He neatly folded his blanket and propped a book by the Dalai Lama and another on Tibetan history on top, so the arrangement resembled an altar. He roused his cousin, Tsering Lobgyal, to tell him he was leaving his mobile phone at home to recharge. If anyone called, Lobgyal should answer it. Then he went to board one of five buses taking protestors to the rally.

As Jashi passed again through the temple square, a friend asked why he was dressed in long sleeves and carrying a pack—it was too hot for that. Another joked about the large flag billowing off his back. “Superman!” the friend yelled as Jashi trotted past. Boarding the bus, Jashi met yet another friend and neighbor, Kelsang Dolma, who was going to the rally with her two-year-old son. Everyone had been talking about an unprecedented series of self-immolations in Tibet since March 2011 and wondering if Tibetans might set fire to themselves at the Delhi protest. Dolma patted the pack on Jashi’s back and joked, “Is this your petrol? Don’t set it on fire!”

Jashi smiled.

Looking back, Jashi’s friends see signs of what was to come. In 2008, he had vowed to set himself on fire and had even purchased a bottle of fuel. His cousins and friends persuaded him to cancel his plan, insisting that he could do much more for the Tibetan cause if he continued to live.

Dolma now recalls signs from the day Jashi self-immolated. On the crowded bus, he was holding a nearly empty bottle of cola and gave it to Dolma’s son to finish off. Then Dolma tried to fling the plastic bottle out the window—common

practice in India—but Jashi stopped her. She thought he was being conscientious. That's the way he was: earnest, devoted to doing the right thing, always volunteering and counseling others on what should or shouldn't be done. In retrospect, she wonders if he needed the bottle to fill with gasoline. Jashi also realized on the bus that he didn't have his wallet and asked to borrow 200 rupees from Dolma, whom he affectionately called "sister." She didn't have change, so gave him 500 rupees, which he reluctantly accepted.

Did he use the money to buy gasoline to fill the bottle? At the time, Dolma had no suspicions: Jashi was upbeat, smiling, and playing with her young son. "At another point during the ride, I opened a bus window to get some air," Dolma recalls. "He said, 'Wow,' and he smiled and opened his arms to the coolness of the air ... I think now that he knew he was feeling that for the last time. But at that moment, I only thought it was a bit strange."

The bus stopped a couple of miles from the demonstration site so the protestors could draw attention to the Tibetan cause by marching through the city. Organizers handed out bottles of water to the marchers, many of whom wore yellow pinnies and badges with a bloody hand superimposed next to the face of Hu Jintao. Jashi told Dolma he needed to buy something for a friend, and they parted company. Video taken a little later contains a brief glimpse of Jashi, alone near the back of the procession, smiling and chanting slogans.

By the time the parade reached Jantar Mantar—a street where Indian protests take place daily—as many as 3,000 Tibetans had massed together. They were led by three horsemen dressed in traditional outfits from the three regions of Tibet. Indian demonstrations were taking place to the right and left—a clamor of noise and sweat, flapping flags, and waving banners. The heat was intense, over 90°F. Dolma and others sought bits of shade under nearby neem trees.

Jashi slipped away through a gate and down a short driveway to an old sandstone building housing the All India Freedom Fighters' Organization and other offices. Under a sign reading "Mehta and Padamsey Surveyors Private Limited, International Loss Adjusters," he poured the gasoline over himself. It ran down his shoulders, over his clothes, and into his shoes. Then he put a flame to it.

Jashi ran about 20 strides, stumbled and fell under a giant Banyan tree. He was still inside the gated compound and wanted to get to the crowd of protestors outside. He pulled himself up and ran again, this time for 50 to 60 strides,

through the gate and into the mass of people, who made way for the human fireball. He was baring his teeth in what could have been a broad smile—or an expression of excruciating pain.

Jinpa was among the many friends who were there that day. He saw the flaming man and then recognized Jashi's face. He yelled out his name.

Pandemonium: Wails, screams, people frantically shaking water from their plastic bottles onto the flames. An elderly policeman tried to beat out the fire with his hat. A friend of Jashi's, Sonam Tseten, began whipping at the fire with his backpack. But then Tseten realized that his mobile phone was in the pack and that the weight of it might be hurting his friend. So he tossed the pack aside and pulled off his shirt. "When I hit the upper side of his body with my shirt, the lower side burned more," Tseten recalls. "When I hit the lower side, the upper side burned more."

Above all of the cries and shouts, several witnesses later recalled most distinctly the roar of the fire: *foh-foh-foh*.

The first Tibetan to self-immolate in the modern era did so in the same location during a 1998 hunger strike. Just as Jashi would, Thupten Ngodup initially survived the inferno. The Dalai Lama paid him a visit at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital a day later. Ngodup tried to sit up to receive His Holiness but was gently encouraged not to. The Dalai Lama whispered through the gauze wrapped around Ngodup's head. According to an account the former gave to Columbia University scholar Robert Thurman, he said, "Do not pass over with hatred for the Chinese in your heart. You are brave and you made your statement, but let not your motive be hatred." The patient indicated that he understood.

"This is violence, even if it is self-inflicted," the Dalai Lama told Thurman. "The same energy that can cause someone to do this to himself is very close to the energy that enables someone to kill others in fury and outrage."

Ngodup's fiery protest was an isolated incident. More than a decade later, in February 2009, another Tibetan self-immolated, then another followed two years later in March 2011. Since then, the numbers have soared: More than 80 Tibetans have torched themselves, one of the biggest waves of self-immolation in modern history. The overwhelming majority of self-immolations, carried out by monks, nuns, and increasingly by lay people, have occurred inside Tibet.

During this wave of immolations, the Dalai Lama has remained mostly silent,

except to say that he must remain “neutral” on the protests. “If I say something negative, then the family members of those people feel very sad,” he told a reporter for The Hindu newspaper in July. “They sacrificed their own life. It is not easy. So I do not want to create some kind of impression that this is wrong.”

The Dalai Lama is widely revered by Tibetans, who regard him as the reincarnation of the Buddha of Compassion. But his “middle-way approach” to China—calling for autonomy for Tibet, not independence, and often opposing even the most benign protest actions against Chinese rule—hasn’t produced results. China now refuses even to meet with Tibetan envoys. Two longtime Tibetan negotiators have quit in frustration, and the situation only seems to worsen. Han Chinese continue to migrate into traditional Tibetan areas, and repression of Tibetan religious institutions deepens. Security cameras are installed in monasteries. Portraits of the Dalai Lama are gouged out. Nomads are forcibly settled, and the Tibetan language is marginalized.

“Every other leader looks after his own country properly even if it means going to war,” fumes a Tibetan scholar in Dharamsala who did not want to be quoted by name. “Here we talk about world peace, about taking care of the whole world. What about taking care of our own country? Our leaders are more concerned about how to present themselves to the rest of the world—peace-loving and kind. If you care about your own country, you have to do everything for it: kill, cheat, lie, steal.”

That is a very extreme view among Tibetans. But it gives voice to a much wider frustration. Young Tibetans, in particular, want to *act*. Among the majority who still cherish non-violence but lack the otherworldly patience of His Holiness, options are limited. So a nun, standing stock still on a road in Tibet last November, becomes a human torch, flames leaping from her head toward the sky. “We need freedom,” yells a passerby, recorded in an amateur video that also captures a woman gently tossing a khata—a silk white scarf, offered in blessing—toward the flames. In another herky-jerky video secreted out of Tibet, a monk named Tsewang Norbu burns in front of a shop on a busy road. Some people gather around the charred and smoking body even as frightened Chinese hurry by without stopping; bicycles and cars pass, honking to move on quickly, as if worried they might get caught up in a security scandal.

Both the nun and the monk were from Jashi’s home area, Tawu. He himself had escaped Tibet in 2006. He had taped a photo of the monk on the door of his lit-

the bookshelf. He had seen the videos. He had watched them most recently a few days before his own self-immolation. They were shown on a screen in the temple square of Majnu ka Tilla—to inspire local residents to attend the upcoming protest. Jashi's friend Sangye Dorji, the caretaker of a small monastery that overlooks the cramped square, was with him. "I was very emotional and depressed," Dorji recalls. "Jamphel Yashi said only that they were very patriotic people." He also had some advice for his friend: "If any Tibetan self-immolates, we should just let him burn," Jashi said. "That person has made a decision to die."

Dorji never made it to the protest, but other friends did. Each acted instinctively. Jinpa, the former political prisoner who served 26 months for filming and distributing video of anti-regime protests in China, tried to push the crowd back. Jinpa recalls that at one point, as everyone was throwing water at the burning man, Jashi yelled out "Agh!"—as if to complain about the effort to douse the flames. "Let the journalists take photos!" Jinpa shouted.

"I was not at all hoping he would be alive with the amount of fire that was engulfing him," Jinpa told me a few months later. "The police just wanted to take the body away quickly. Two police grabbed my waist to pull me back. I resisted and pulled back toward the burning body."

Other friends thought Jashi might survive. The smell of burning was intense—like roasted meat, one friend recalled—but Jashi's face was still recognizable. By the time the flames were out, however, his clothes had burned away, except for the shirt collar around his neck and the elastic bands of his pants and underwear. His skin was hard and crinkly, "like touching a basketball, but very hot," says Tseten. "There was no softness at all." Strangely, Jashi's dragon tattoos appeared more vibrant than ever.

Tseten and several other friends eventually lifted Jashi into the back of a white police jeep. They placed him on one bench, and four of the men sat in a row on the bench opposite, holding him in place so he wouldn't fall off as they sped around corners with the siren blaring. One of the men had painted his face in Tibetan colors, and now sweat, tears, and splashed water that had been thrown frantically toward the flames were all causing the paint to run down his cheeks.

Jashi arrived at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital at 12:45 p.m. and was officially admitted at 1:19. As his friends delivered him through the doorway, Jashi spoke the last sentence any of them would hear from him: "Why did you bring me to

the hospital?”

Speaking those few words must have taken enormous effort. Doctors would soon discover that his insides were scorched, probably because he had inhaled toxic fumes and flames. Burns covered over 98 percent of his outer body. He was given antibiotics, painkillers, and oxygen, and doctors eventually performed a tracheotomy. At one point, the sister of one of Tibet’s highest reincarnate lamas—the Karmapa, head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism—arrived to deliver a “precious pill,” blessed by the high lama himself, to provide spiritual comfort and even healing for a man’s soul. A monk whispered a prayer into Jashi’s ear.

Jinpa wasn’t thinking about spiritual matters. He had shed tears like everyone else, but he wasn’t particularly sentimental. He knew that his friend had set himself on fire to make a statement—to awaken the world to Tibet’s plight. He didn’t want the sacrifice to be wasted.

He was also functioning on almost no sleep. While his friend had been preparing for his final act, Jinpa—who sports a gold earring and a goatee—had been at a party until dawn. Now his mind was racing. “Who has a key to the room?” he asked Lobgyal, Jashi’s cousin. “Don’t give the key to anyone. He might have left something.” Then Jinpa’s phone rang: Indian detectives were poking around the neighborhood, a friend told him, and wanted to get into the room. Minutes later, Jinpa got a call from an officer in the criminal investigation department who wanted to know who had a key to the room. Jinpa professed ignorance and switched off his phone.

As the sun was going down, Jinpa and others made their way back to the apartment from the hospital. The detectives had left. Two men served as lookouts in the alley while Jinpa and Lobgyal rifled through Jashi’s meager belongings. Inside a red cloth sack that also held his IDs and other documents, they found a handwritten letter in Tibetan. It began with a call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet then spoke about the need for loyalty, “the life-soul of a people,” and about freedom: “Without freedom, six million Tibetans are like a butter lamp in the wind, without direction.”

“At a time when we are making our final move toward our goal—if you have money, it is the time to spend it; if you are educated it is the time to produce results; if you have control over your life, I think the time has come to sacrifice

your life.”

The letter ended with a demand for the “people of the world” to “stand up for Tibet.” Jashi had written two copies, both on lined white school paper.

When one of Jashi’s former teachers in Dharamsala first read the letter—which by then had been typed and printed for wider distribution—he was skeptical that Jashi had written it. Jashi had arrived from Tibet as a young man with little education, and his written Tibetan was mediocre. His parents were rural middle class, and Jashi himself was classified as a “farmer/nomad” in the database of the exiled Tibetan government. He had lived in eastern Tibet, in a large house in the traditional Tibetan style, with a satellite dish on the roof and prayer flags flying from the chimney. Cows, yaks, and sheep were housed on the first floor, and the family occupied the upper level. They tended apple orchards and planted potatoes, barley, wheat, and other crops.

Jashi got his education informally, studying an hour or two a day with monks in a nearby monastery. They taught him how to read religious texts but not much more. He worked for an elderly monk in the village, etching Buddhist mantras on stones to be placed on hilltops. He was a good swimmer, and in the winter, he and his friends fashioned small ice sleds out of wood boards and metal rods. They would curl the rods around the wood so they would serve as blades, and then they’d push themselves across icy ponds until their knuckles turned raw.

As he became a young adult, Jashi became politically aware. He told friends that at least once he had ridden his bicycle late at night into the town of Tawu, roughly six miles away, to post political flyers on walls in the predawn darkness. In 2003, he was caught trying to escape Tibet, and later he apparently made some connections or got some tips about how to tap into the Tibetan underground while he served several months in multiple Chinese prisons.

In 2006, Jashi escaped successfully, taking a young neighbor along with him. They made their way first to a safe house in Lhasa, then hooked up with a guide who escorted them on the start of a monthlong trek. One guide handed off to another and then to another, through winds and snow, across plains and mountains, along the skirt of Mount Everest and into Nepal. They hid by day and hiked by night, surviving on a diet of dried yak meat and *tsampa*, a dough of roasted barley flour mixed with water. A few in the 15-person party suffered snow blindness, others horrific headaches; sometimes they had to pause for a day

to allow someone to recover. Jashi had blisters that oozed puss. But they made it to Nepal and eventually to Dharamsala, where every newcomer gets an audience with the Dalai Lama, and everyone gets free schooling. Jashi cried when the Dalai Lama blessed him, touching his head. He couldn't get a word out.

He entered a special school in Dharamsala for Tibetan newcomers aged 18 to 34. Former teachers and staff describe him as responsible and caring—the kind of young man who stayed late in the cafeteria to help the cook clean up. He loved to read and was obsessed with Tibetan history and culture, but he was an unimaginative student. In his essays and even his diary entries, he would often echo boilerplate talking points he had read elsewhere. “I scolded him: You’re not the Dalai Lama, full of wisdom and advice,” recalls Chogo Dorjee, who taught Jashi the Tibetan language. He was also a poor speller.

That is why another teacher, who goes by the single name Dhondup, suspected that Jashi didn’t write his last letter: The spelling in the typed version was correct. Later, however, Dhondup saw the original handwritten copy. It had six spelling mistakes and a missing word in the first four sentences. “I was reassured it was Jashi who wrote it.”

Jashi also left behind—unpublicized until now—two other very short pieces of prose. One is a sentimental paean to his mother. He expresses his unwavering affection for her: “Even in my dreams, I see her often ... No one can separate our love.”

The second piece is entitled, “A Boy Without Direction.”

“The moment I was born from my beloved mother’s womb, I was without basic human rights, freedom to think, and was born under foreign domination. Because of this, I had to part ways with my country and come into exile in India. The place that I live now is a small room in Delhi, where I spend my days and nights. When I get up in the morning and look towards the east, tears roll down, uncontrollable ... These are not empty words like water vapor.”

Jashi died in Ram Manotar Lohia Hospital, 43 hours after he had been admitted. No one ever survives with 98 percent burns. Even his friends, who had been hopeful early on because his face was familiar, lost hope when his head swelled beyond all recognition.

In the months since his death—and a massive outpouring of support and grief at his memorial service in Dharamsala—a monk who had recently escaped from

Jashi's home area relayed information on how the death was received there. The Voice of America and Radio Free Asia had broadcasted the news of Jashi's demise, he says, so it was known right away. That night, many neighbors paid their respects to Jashi's family. The monks of the monastery were forbidden to do so but conducted their own private prayer service the following evening. When Chinese authorities heard about the service, they called the abbot in for questioning.

A neighbor later told the monk that he was with Jashi's mother a few days after her son's immolation. She was cooking on a traditional stove, stoked with firewood, and accidentally touched the hot surface, burning her finger. She sobbed and through her tears muttered, "Imagine how much pain my son felt."

In the neighborhood of Majnu ka Tilla, there's still hope that Jashi's sacrifice will mean something and also dread that it won't. A fruit seller in Tunisia self-immolated in 2010, and that one event set off a cascade of change throughout the Middle East. Nothing like that has happened in Tibet. The world hardly notices when another young man or woman goes up in flames. Some young activists are talking darkly of another possible phase, of how thin the line is between killing yourself and killing your enemies. "The older generation is 90 percent religious and 10 percent nationalistic; they want to spread happiness and make the world a better place," says Tenzin Wangchuk, the 38-year-old president of the Delhi chapter of the Tibetan Youth Congress. "But the younger generation is not a bunch of Buddhas. We are Buddhists but not Buddhas. If you kill evil, we don't think that's bad. We need actions ... One day, who knows? We may raise our issue by bombing ourselves, and if you are going to die, maybe it's better to take some enemies along with you."

That is the fear of older Tibetans who have worked for decades to find a negotiated solution. "The only reason the Tibetans are so committed to nonviolence is purely because of the influence of the Dalai Lama," says Lodi Gyari, who served as chief negotiator with China until his resignation early this year because there was no hope for a return to talks anytime soon. "I have also told the Chinese this. It's a very thin line. One day, somebody may say, 'I've had enough, it's meaningless for me, but I'm not going to go alone ... I'm going to take a couple of Chinese guys with me.' That can happen any day."

Jashi's roommates in Majnu ka Tilla live much as they did before. Two small posters of their deceased friend, "the hero Jamphel Yeshe," are pasted to the white walls. But the adrenaline rush is over. The men try to pick up odd jobs

when they can, but as Tibetan refugees they're not eligible for salaried employment. In the midday heat, several crash on their mattresses, waiting for the sun to go down.

On one occasion when Jinpa visited from Dharamsala, in the months after Jashi's passing, he made the same grim joke as he had in the past when his friend was still alive: "Here I am again with these guys who don't get any girls, don't have jobs—useless men just waiting around to die!" This time, one of his friends perked up. "Are you coming to encourage another one of us to self-immolate?" he said. "Now it's my turn ... But don't worry, I'll prepare everything properly before I go!" It was supposed to be funny but had a different effect. Among Tibetans, nobody really knows who might be the next to burn.

Tibet Is Burning

By Xu Zhiyong, *The New York Times*, 12 December 2012

Around noon on Feb. 19, an 18-year-old named Nangdrol set himself on fire near the Zamthang Monastery in the northeast Tibetan town of Barma. In a note left behind, he wrote, "I am going to set myself on fire for the benefit of all Tibetans." Referring to China's ethnic Han majority as "devils," he added, "It is impossible to live under their evil law, impossible to bear this torture that leaves no scars."

Over the last three years, close to 100 Tibetan monks and laypeople have set themselves on fire; 30 people did so between Nov. 4 and Dec. 3. The Chinese government is seeking to halt this wave of self-immolations by detaining Tibetans it accuses of being instigators. Meanwhile, the scarless torture continues.

I first visited China's far west 21 years ago with college friends. Back then it at least looked peaceful, but now, sad news arrives daily. When I returned in October, a young monk invited me to visit his monastery. Passing a checkpoint where a red banner read, "Stability Maintenance Calls for Fast Response to Emergencies," he told me how he hated the sight of armed soldiers.

Because a road was closed for construction, I had to wait until evening to hitch a ride to Barma, where Nangdrol had lived, about 30 miles away. I was the third passenger in the car; the other two were young Tibetans.

"Are you Buddhist followers?" I asked them. One of them showed me a pen-

dant portrait of the Dalai Lama that he pulled out from his chest. “He is our true Holiness,” he said.

“Have you heard about the self-immolations? Like, burning oneself?” I asked tentatively, finally broaching the topic. They knew about it.

“Pardon me, but do you hate the Hans?” I asked them because Nangdrol had used the term “Han devils” in his suicide note. They’d heard about Nangdrol. When I told them I was there to visit Nangdrol’s parents to express my sadness, they told me more.

They said they’d been to the site, as hundreds of Tibetans had. People had set up white tents at the intersection where he died. “He is our hero,” one said.

It was dark when we arrived in Barma. At a lamppost, one of my fellow passengers asked a man for directions but was waved off. At a crossroads, he asked two men on motorcycles and an argument broke out. A monk came to the window to examine me.

“Sorry,” my fellow passenger said, “they scolded me for taking you here.” A minivan approached. Two men jumped out of it and upbraided him indignantly. Fear and hostility shrouded the place like night.

“We are Tibetans,” he said all of a sudden as we left Barma in silence to spend the night in a nearby town. “We are Buddhists, but we can’t go to Lhasa without a permit.” Years ago, you could see many Tibetans on their pilgrimage to Lhasa, but not anymore.

The next day, I returned to Barma. I asked a young monk, on his way to fetch water, about Nangdrol. He took me to a hall where a middle-aged monk sat cross-legged in a corner. Since I didn’t have Nangdrol’s photo with me, he said he couldn’t help me.

A teenage monk asked several of his peers but got no answers. Passers-by shook their heads. At a construction site, no one had heard about him either. In the town’s elementary school I asked an armed soldier guarding the gate. I’d read that Nangdrol was a student. The soldier suggested that I check out the nearby compound where a Chinese flag flew, but people told me the town had no secondary school.

The road back from Barma was open only from noon to 1 p.m. I had to leave. Along a creek, a row of poplars basked in the golden sun, and a group of young

monks in crimson robes were holding a class. Reluctantly, I climbed into a cab. I had been to many places over the years but never felt so lost.

I stopped the driver a mile or so down the road when we passed by a village on a slope. After my repeated pleadings, the roadside shop owner gave me directions to Nangdrol's home. Up on the slope, an old couple pointed to the house.

It was a small mud-plastered house enclosed in mud-brick walls, and five tall sutra streamers flew on one side of the property. The iron gate was locked.

A middle-aged woman with a boy, passing by, said she had known Nangdrol. His parents now live on a faraway cattle farm, she said. The day of his death, she told me, he wore new clothes, and he was freshly bathed, with a fresh haircut. He asked people whether he was handsome.

I didn't know how else to express my sorrow. I asked the woman to give 500 yuan (about \$80) to Nangdrol's parents, letting them know that a Han Chinese man had come to pay his respects.

I am sorry we Han Chinese have been silent as Nangdrol and his fellow Tibetans are dying for freedom. We are victims ourselves, living in estrangement, infighting, hatred and destruction. We share this land. It's our shared home, our shared responsibility, our shared dream — and it will be our shared deliverance.

** Xu Zhiyong, a lawyer and human rights advocate, is a founder of Gongmeng, the Open Constitution Initiative. This essay was translated from the Chinese by Yaxue Cao.*

Last-words analysis – Why Tibetans Self-immolate?

By Wang Lixiong, *Phayul*, 27 December 2012, Translated by Ogyen Kyab

Now, the question of Tibetan self-immolations involves multiple issues that nobody knows how to handle.

Firstly the increasing frequency of the self-immolations – 97 cases in Tibet (excluding 5 outside Tibet) so far (till December 11, 2012), out of which 1 in 2009; 12 in 2011 and 84 in 2012, 28 Tibetans self-immolated in November alone. Calls to stop self-immolations have not worked, nobody knows what to do.

Secondly it is a dilemma – so many people have set themselves on fire, so negating the self-immolations would be unfair to the self-immolators and hurt their families; on the other hand, reporting, praising, holding praying ceremonies,

paying condolences and donations etc would be seen as encouraging more to self-immolate.

Thirdly the government criminalises the self-immolations which have been caused by its own repression, and keeps repressing and even intensifies it. This makes those who try to stop self-immolations on humanitarian grounds find themselves tangled with the government.

Fourthly outsiders sympathise the self-immolators but they cannot understand it as they cannot see self-immolations effective. After the initial shock, with increasing cases of self-immolations, they become numb.

Fifthly the Tibetan elites complain about the silence of the international community and Chinese intelligentsia. This is actually due to lack of theoretical support to the self-immolation movement. However, the Tibetan elites besides merely affirming the self-immolations subtly, they lack the substantial insight to lead.

Sixthly all governments take evasive stand towards the Tibetans for their own selfish interests. In a world where economy rules, it is not surprising to see such rationale of economised men. Though Tibetans get a lot of attention as compared to the other nationalities (condition of the Uyghurs is worse), the feeling of being abandoned is never less.

To resolve this issue, or at least to know how to respond, we have to first know what are the aspirations of the self-immolators and what they are seeking. There are different interpretations regarding this, people even interpret the way they want. I think with no ample information available about the self-immolators, a statistical analysis would enable us move closer to seeing a complete picture of the self-immolations.

Since the first self-immolation by Tabei in Tibet in 2009, Woese has always been simultaneously recording each and every case of the self-immolations, consolidating all the cases and updating her blog *Invisible Tibet* every now and then. In this article, information used in my statistical analysis has been taken from her record.

Another thing to clarify here is that the main responsibility for the self-immolations lies with the Chinese government and there is no doubt in this. I'm not going to repeat this fact; instead, I want to do some constructive discussions.

Distribution by number of self-immolators and months

When the monthly number of self-immolations for 2012 is shown (see the graph below), we see two tallest bars for March (10 cases) and November (28 cases).

In March, there were many anniversaries such as Tibetan National Uprising Day (March 10), anniversary of 2008 pan-Tibet protests (March 14), anniversary of mass killing of protesters in Ngaba (March 16), the Chinese government-invented “Serf Emancipation Day” (March 28), so we can reasonably suspect that the tall bar for March has to do something with these occasions, generally they were protests against the Chinese ethnic policies. To protest was the main motive.

The tallest bar falls in November in which the 18th Party Congress of CCP was held. The bar before that, for October, is as tall as for March, 10 cases each, this should also be related to the Party Congress, which was widely rumored to be held in October. Frequent self-immolations around the Party Congress can be understood as inducing the new generation of Chinese leaders to change its policy on Tibet, making self-immolations as actions to push for change – this should actually be the key to understanding the self-immolations.

Classified analysis of self-immolators’ last-words

Analysing the self-immolators’ last-words is another way to further understand their motives and aspirations. All the last-words I’m going to analyse were left behind by the self-immolators before self-immolating, which were manually written pieces, voice recordings and also those that were verbally told their relatives and friends. So far last-words of 26 self-immolators are known. Besides this, slogans shouted by many self-immolators have also been recorded and these slogans are more or less consistent, most of them are “Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet”, “Free Tibet” etc. Comparatively, the last-words left carefully before self-immolating are more comprehensive in contents than the slogans shouted while burning; hence they are worthier of special analysis.

I have classified the last-words into seven categories by contents (see the table below). Each last-word may not necessarily have only one type of content, there are different types in many of them (a more detailed classification can be seen in the notes at the end of this article). This is my approach to attempt understanding the self-immolations; anyone is free to use one’s own approach to do the same.

Classification table of last-words

(Last-word classification) (No. of last-words involved) (No. of self-immolators)
(Ratio of no. of self-immolators to no. of those who left last-words (%))

1. (Because it's unbearable) (5) (5) (19%)
2. (Expressing courage and responsibility) (8) (9) (35%)
3. (Protests and demands) (5) (5) (19%)
4. (Demanding attention from the international community) (1) (1) (4%)
5. (Praying for the Dalai Lama) (9) (10) (38%)
6. (Demanding Tibet's independence) (5) (5) (19%)
7. (As an action) (12) (14) (54%)

Note: As there are cases of 2 self-immolators leaving 1 last-word, so the no of self-immolators who left last-words is not the same as the no of last-words

- Self-immolations are actually not out of desperation

Commonly interpreted – including the officials of the Tibetan government-in-exile – that the self-immolations are desperate acts caused by the unbearable conditions, we cannot deny this claim, but it's only 19%, the weightage falls in the lower part in the seven classifications.

- The self-immolators inside Tibet are not invoking support of the international community

Another widespread view is that the self-immolations are acts of appealing for the attention of the international community. However, except writer Godrup, none of the last-words mentioned this and so this has the least weightage in the list. This reveals that the Tibetans inside Tibet do not actually rely on the international community as people think for granted. In fact, it is the self-immolators outside Tibet (not included in the table above) who seek international support, Jamphel Yeshe mentioned it twice in his last-words and Sherab Tsendor called for international attention for the Tibet crisis. To seek the support of international community has actually always been the main objective of the Tibetans outside Tibet; it is where they focus even today. This is the major difference between the Tibetans in and out of Tibet.

- Protests and demands in the self-immolations are known

19% of the last-words express protests and demands, but while self-immolating, those who shouted slogans like “Let the Dalai Lama return to Tibet”, “Free Tibet”, “Release the Panchen Lama”, “We want language rights” etc, are also expressing protests and demands and thus should also be counted. Besides, majority of the self-immolators, though have not left any last-words, the acts of self-immolations themselves are acts of protests and demand, this cannot be clearer.

- Those that best reflect Tibetan national spirit and courage

Out of all the last-words, 35% express courage and responsibility. This category is actually not directed towards others (neither the authorities nor the international community), but rather more of a reflection of heroism in the personality itself, it is a nirvana-like self-sublimation performed by defending dignity, sharing pain, inspiring courage and expressing solidarity. Typical last-words are “setting on fire for the dignity of the Tibetan nation” (Bhenchen Kyi), “They think we are afraid of the repressions, they are mistaken” (Phuntsok) etc, reflect the most precious power of spirit of the Tibetan people.

- As acts of religious dedication

Self-immolations as acts of praying for the Dalai Lama (meanwhile protests against the authorities) account for 38%, second in the list of classifications. There are cases in this category that also have elements of expressing courage and responsibility; these are dedications and offerings with religious nature. For example: Sopa Rinpoche said in his last-word that he would be offering his life and body to the Dalai Lama and even the entire sentient beings. It is not easy for non-religious people to understand this – setting one’s own body on fire as an offering for nothing else but merit.

- About Tibet’s independence

Four self-immolators clearly call for independence of Tibet in their last-words, another one says to “defend the country Tibet” by self-immolating (Tamdin Thar), this category has 19%. Several others also shouted for Tibetan independence while self-immolating. Since 2008, sense of independence has spread widely among the Tibetans. However, the Tibetan exile writer Jamyang Norbu equates all those who demanded for return of the Dalai Lama with demand for Tibet’s independence (see MAKE IT A BURNING ISSUE), the analogy is far-fetched.

- Self-immolations as actions

14 self-immolators in 12 last-words call their immolations as actions. This category has the highest weightage (54%), like the most frequent cases of self-immolations during the 18th Party Congress, the self-immolators expected that their sacrifices would help realising the goal, not merely express protests and desperations. They were actually not sure if the self-immolations would really help realizing their goal; Tenzin Phuntsok has said in his last-words that he “cannot live to wait in vain”. These really sad words should actually be the key to understanding the self-immolations, worth thought over.

Tibetans inside Tibet have finally realised that the struggle has to be on their own

The Tibetan issue has not progressed for so many years. Tibetans have always been hoping that others would do something for them – Tibetans inside Tibet pinned their hope on those outside Tibet and those outside Tibet initially pinned their hope on the international community and then on the Chinese government. The basic strategy has always been hoping that the international community to put pressure on the Chinese government to make concessions.

The Dalai Lama’s success in seeking the support of the international community has been widely acknowledged. He has become a universally celebrated global star and people in the West are overwhelmingly sympathetic of Tibetans. But as far as seeking support of the outside world is concerned, this is all, no more can be expected. Even when China was in dire need of western assistance in 1980’s, it did not make any concession on the Tibetan issue, the chances are slim to expect the west to put pressure on the today’s already “risen” China to make concessions.

China resumed the stalled Sino-Tibetan dialogue in 2002 and thereafter held series of talks with the Dalai Lama’s envoys till 2008 but that was, from the start, China’s design to appease the western world for the successful hosting of the Olympic Games. However, the exile Tibetans took it as a rare opportunity finally arrived and expected excitedly to obtain some substantial progress out of it. Tibetans in Tibet too patiently waited in optimism. Eventually at the eve of Beijing Olympics, the Dalai Lama announced in his speech on the occasion of March 10 Uprising Day, “My envoys held six rounds of talks with the Chinese government, but sadly, no substantial result has come on basic issues, in contrary, the Chinese

government even intensified its repression on the Tibetans in Tibet.”

The Dalai Lama’s announcement should be his last attempt to call for international pressure on China before Olympics, but anyone who knows the CCP would know that there would be no concession on Tibetan issue even if the Olympics could not be hosted. As expected, the subsequent actions by the west proved ineffective, even the toughest French softened its stance in the end. These inconveniently prove that the Tibetan exile government’s strategy – to gain concessions through international community – has never worked.

On the other hand, the Dalai Lama’s announcement awakened the Tibetans inside Tibet. Their patience finally wore out in their endless waiting, during which Panchen Lama was imprisoned, Karmapa fled, the Dalai Lama were constantly defamed and demonised, and so many years of waiting had produced “no substantial outcome”. When the Sera monks first heard the announcements, someone immediately said, “We must rise up now”, and the monks took to the streets of Lhasa with snow-lion flags in the hands and started shouting slogans. This was the first cry of the 2008 pan-Tibet protests. In the afternoon of March 10, hundreds of Drepung monks protested and the Chinese so-called “March 14 Incident” that rapidly spread across the Tibetan plateau.

According to Woesser, the current self-immolation protests are continuations of the 2008 pan-Tibet protests. In fact, continuations of the first Sera monk who stood up and said, “We must rise up now”.

How Self-immolation becomes movement

People who are not organised and lack in resources cannot do much, what we can imagine is the kind of 2008 street protests. When the public is frustrated, a tiny spark can ignite a raging fire of mobs to quickly converge and expand. In small-scale societies, adequate scales of mob protests may be able to force out changes, but in such huge-scale societies like China, minorities cannot achieve this. In 1989, when tens of millions of Chinese took to the streets in many parts of China, the regime did not hesitate with repression and shed blood. Tibetan population merely accounts for a tiny fraction of Chinese, how can they be an exception? When soldiers and policemen are deployed everywhere to suppress, public protests become all the more difficult and “must rise up” can only be an individual behavior. How can a tiny individual resist the mighty power of the state? After the 2008 Tibetan protests ended in repression, many lone Tibetans

continued to take to the streets, shouting slogans and distributing leaflets, the outcome was always the same – they all quietly disappeared. How can individual actions burst out of this disappointing submersion? That is to resort to more extreme ways of protests, as the writer Godrup says in his last-word, “Let’s intensify our peaceful struggle.” Self-immolation is the most extreme act of struggle an individual can resort to.

The frequency of self-immolation cases is indeed rising with an alarming speed. The self-immolations are seen throughout the world and reported, recorded, prayed for, paid condolences, and the other Tibetans see this and think that this is an effective individual action to protest and thus follow the examples, with more and more Tibetans setting themselves alight, it becomes a self-immolation movement.

Like monks leading the 2008 Tibet protest, self-immolation movement was also started by monks. Since Tabey from Kirti monastery setting himself on fire in February 2009, all the initial 12 self-immolators were monks (Note: I consider those who were expelled from their monasteries after 2008 pretests as monks). It was in December 2011 that the first layperson self-immolated. In the first quarter of 2012, 15 out of those 20 self-immolated were monks; in the second and third quarters, laypersons were already in majority; in the first 70 days of the fourth quarter, 50 self-immolated and 43 of them were laypersons.

When I was thinking why the ordinary Tibetan people joined the self-immolation movement, I recalled what a Tibetan woman once said to me, “Except giving birth to couple of more children, I’m not capable of doing anything else for our nation.” Similar feelings can be seen in the last-words of Tenzin Khedup and Ngawang Norphel – “We are neither able to contribute anything for our culture and religion, nor do we have the ability to help the Tibetan people economically, so wechoose to self-immolate.”

61-year-old Dhondup repeatedly called for the monks and young Tibetans not to self-immolate and retain lives so that they could contribute to the nation’s cause in future, signaling only the older generation should self-immolate. Once the ordinary people come to know that apart from knowledge and wealth, self-immolations too work for the cause, they would be aroused to resist the authorities and courageously go forward to self-immolate.

At such times, it is not surprising that Karmapa Rinpoche’s appeal to them not

to self-immolate due to life being precious did not work, as they exactly wanted to sacrifice what were most precious to them. Woesser, Arja Rinpoche and the poet Kathup Tsering also attempted to call Tibetans not to self-immolate and said that being alive could only be possible to do something effective. Their attempt too failed because the self-immolators did not know what they could do by being alive but self-immolations could at least break the prevailing silence. Therefore these brave Tibetans need to be told what they could do besides self-immolations, not to be asked to remain alive to be merely mute spectators waiting in vain.

Self-immolations are not only protests against the oppressors, but also criticisms against the leaders

I don't feel comfortable about what I'm going to discuss now, digging out the in-depth meaning of the self-immolations should actually be done among the Tibetans themselves, but seeing so many lives being burnt, I have no option but to leave my own concerns aside.

In the battlefield, blaming the enemy for killing is not wrong but useless. To win, the more valuable thing to do is self-reflection and improvement. Sacrifices of the self-immolators become wastes if they are dealt with by merely confining on condemning the oppressors. Tibetans in Tibet are waiting for the exile government to do something; they are coming forward and setting themselves on fire one after another, the exile government should at least realise from this that the path it has been taking should be reviewed.

The path that the older generation took might be necessary during their times, but now the Tibetans in Tibet are pleading through self-immolations to the new exile leaders not to repeat the same path.

So far, there is no sign that the exile administration realises this. When Sikyong Lobsang Sangay was answering a question asked by the Asia Weekly in an interview that if he was confident of resolving the Tibet Issue through negotiations with the Chinese government, he said, "Of course I'm confident. There was a Chinese scholar who once said that Tibet issue could be immediately resolved if there'd be an open-minded person who figures out how to deal with the issue, I too think that way."

This way of outdated thinking makes people recall of the times of 1980's. After Lobsang Sangay took office, he has been travelling around the world, meeting

political dignitaries, giving interviews to media, attending meetings; everything that he has been doing is absolutely tracing the same path of gaining international support by putting pressure on China to make concessions. As for winning support of the international community, the Dalai Lama has already done it all. It's ok for once and may be even twice, but not the third time, 1989 and 2008, after hitting twice on the wall, the exile government is repeating the same for the third time.

Anyway, perhaps the self-immolation movement in Tibet is seen as a new opportunity, a Tibetan called Weirang wrote at a site overseas, "Tibetans did not self-immolate in vain, recently there were many large-scale Tibetan protests in Amdo, these are the results of the self-immolations.....I believe, one day, like 2008, a massive protests will again sweep across Tibet." So he criticised those Tibetans who appealed not to self-immolate and said, "This is ridiculous, in case the appeal succeeds to stop the self-immolations, then our compatriots have died in vain and our struggle will be halted."

The way Weirang thinks is indeed worrisome. When self-immolation is considered as a means to achieve a political end, one would naturally wish more Tibetans to set themselves on fire. Forget about the moral right and wrong, what Weirang thinks disregards the "moral high ground", as if in politics, only achieving goal should be considered and that goal can be pursued through any means – even if we think in terms of achieving a political goal, self-immolations won't achieve it. Suppose self-immolations can lead to pan-Tibet protests like that of 2008 (given the prevailing tense situation, it is difficult now), and then what? They could ruthlessly suppress the 2008 protests, how could this time be different?

However, politicians, to whom the end goal means everything, may indeed expect such a repression to repeat. Because such repressions would draw international attention, when more blood is shed, more pressure would be put on China by the international community. However, here we've come back to the previous argument, self-immolation is just a different incentive, the outcome would again be the same. An authoritarian power neither would care about the self-immolations, nor scared of shedding blood. The international community didn't turn tough on China for June 4th massacre, this time on Tibet too, they wouldn't. In nutshell, whatever is happening in reality, none is not confirming this very fact – relying on the international support to resolve the Tibet issue is no more than an illusion.

Just because of the increase in the number of self-immolations, it has drawn attention of the international community, but all the governments are avoiding offending the Chinese government, however, meanwhile, they are also giving more support to the exile Tibetans to balance morality and appease their own peoples. But this case, only the exile Tibetans can enjoy this support. However, although getting something is better than nothing, but I don't believe that it is this support that makes the exile Tibetans to expect more self-immolations by the Tibetans in Tibet.

Tibet needs to get out of the crisis. For this, Tibetans outside Tibet need to command the struggle for freedom to make the millions of Tibetans inside Tibet become the main force to join the struggle; when Tibetans in Tibet know where the path is, they would live and advance towards the promising future, not jump into the flames.

Note: Detailed classification of self-immolators' last words

1. Because it's unbearable

Phuntsok – I can't go on bearing the pain in my heart, I'll show the world a signal on March 16, 2011

Rangdol – Unable to continue staying under this harshness, can't tolerate this torture without trace.

Tsering Kyi – Nobody wants to live this way.

Tamding Tso – It's really difficult for us Tibetans, if we can't even keep His Holiness' photos, then we don't have any freedom.

Sangdak Tsering – Tibetan has no freedom, His Holiness is not allowed to return, Panchen Rinpoche has been imprisoned; besides, so many martyrs have self-immolated, therefore, I too don't want to live, there's no meaning in living.

2. Expressing courage and responsibility:

Phuntsok – they think that we'd be afraid of oppression, they are mistaken.

Tenzin Phuntsok – All the khenpos and monks of the Karma Monastery would rather die.

Soepa Rinpoche – All the other self-immolators are also like me, sacrificed their lives for truth and justice I'm too willing to offer my body to support and respect.

Rangdol – Hold your heads high for Rangdol’s dignity.

Choepak Kyab & Sonam – Setting on fire for the basic human rights of Tibetans and world peace; for the nation’s freedom, prosperity of Dharma and happiness of all sentient beings.

Rikyo – Willing to endure pain for all the suffering sentient beings.

Khenpo Thupten Nyendak – Told his family prior to his self-immolation that he would soon make a grand offering to those who had self-immolated for the common cause of Tibetans.

Bhenchen Kyi – Said to her friend before self-immolation, “We have no any freedom. I’m self-immolating for the dignity of Tibetan nation.”

3. Protests and demands

Tapey – New York Times reported Tapey “has left a piece of paper, saying that he would commit suicide in case the government banned the religious ceremony”.

Lhamo Kyab – A Tibetan in Tibet wrote an article saying that Lhamo Kyab had asked prior to his self-immolation that “when would the 18th Party Congress be held?”

Nyingkar Tashi – Release the Panchen Rinpoche, let His Holiness the Dalai Lama return! I self-immolate to protest against the Chinese government.

4. Demanding attention from the international community

Godrup – Unbiased peoples around the world please pay attention to justice; I wish people of the world support us.

5. Praying for the Dalai Lama

Rickyo – For His Holiness to return to Tibet.

Soepa Rinpoche – I want to offer my life and body. It is for the long life of leader of the heaven and earth His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all other spiritual leaders, I offer my life and body as madala to them; may the merit and power of this offering enable all sentient beings attain the Buddhahood in future.

Rangdol – May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live long!

Tamdin Thar – May His Holiness the Dalai return home!

Tenzin Khedup & Ngawang Norphel – We self-immolate for the Tibetan nation,

especially for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live long and return to Tibet as soon as possible.

Godrup – To greet His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return is the weal and woe all people of this snow land share and our collective goal.

Samdup – May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live long; may the light of happiness shine on the land of snows.

Kelsang Jinpa – For equality of nationalities, freedom of Tibet, promotion of Tibetan language, and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return, I've decided to self-immolate.

Nyinkar Tashi – Let His Holiness the Dalai Lama return to Tibet.

6. Demanding Tibet's independence

Godrup – After regaining independence for Tibet, to greet His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return is the wish of all people of this snow land share and our collective goal.

Nyinkar Tashi – Tibet needs freedom, independence.

Tamdin Thar – To defend the country Tibet, I'm self-immolating.

Rangdol – May the Tibetan nation break away from the Han monsters!

Sangay Dolma – Tibetans need freedom and independence.

7. Self-immolation as an action

Tenzin Phuntsok – When I think of Tibet and this year's sufferings of the Karma Monastery, I can't live to wait in vain, when I think of the plight of the khenpos and monks, what is the use of worrying? Let's rise up!

Soepa Rinpoche – Support and respect by offering my flesh and blood.

Choepak kyab & Sonam – Self-immolate for the suffering of Tibetan nation having no basic human rights and for realising world peace.

Rikyo – For His Holiness the Dalai Lama to come back to Tibet.

Tamdin Thar – To defend Tibet country, I'm self-immolating.

Tenzin Khedup & Ngawang Norphel – We are neither able to contribute anything for our culture and religion, nor do we have the ability to help the Tibetan people economically, so we self-immolate for the Tibetan nation, especially for

His Holiness the Dalai Lama to live long and return to Tibet as soon as possible.

Godrup – To testify and propagate the true situation inside Tibet, we need to intensify our struggle, self-immolate to call for Tibet’s independence.

Dhondup – Always appeal to the monks of Labrang Monastery and the local young Tibetans not to self-immolate, they should retain lives to contribute to the nation’s future Only he and other older people should choose to self-immolate.

Samdup – I self-immolate for Tibet.

Kelsang Jinpa – For equality of nationalities, freedom of Tibet, promotion of Tibetan language, and for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return, I’ve decided to self-immolate.

Kalsang Kyab – Before self-immolation, called his cousin brother on the phone and said, “I’m going to self-immolate today for our nation’s cause.”

Lobsang Gedun – Told on the phone before self-immolation, “I have a wish, people from all the three regions of Tibet get united, stop infighting and disputes, only then our wishes will come true.”

‘On Fire I Will Burn’

By Bhuchung D. Sonam, *truthdig.com*, 15 January 2013

Tenzin Wangmo was born in 1991 and joined Dechen Choeckhorling nunnery in childhood. On Oct. 17, 2011, she walked to Sumdo Bridge in Ngaba in north-eastern Tibet and set herself on fire. With this she became the first female Tibetan self-immolator and as the flames engulfed her body, Wangmo called out for an end to religious repression, and the Dalai Lama’s return. She was 20. Ninety-eight people have set themselves on fire since 2009. Their average age is 25.

Beijing’s policies over Tibet’s religion are based on fear and distrust, since Buddhism and its cultural influence bind Tibetans and give them a sense of national identity. The Chinese Communists’ attacks on Buddhism date back to the Long March of 1935, when Red soldiers walking through eastern Tibet destroyed monasteries and confiscated grain stores. After China’s invasion of Tibet in 1959, Beijing imposed one disastrous policy after another, culminating in the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), during which more than 90 percent of Tibet’s monasteries

and nunneries, along with their ancient scriptures, were destroyed. This is akin to wiping out all of the universities in the United States, because Tibet's monasteries functioned as centers of learning and education.

Since the 2000s, Beijing has relaunched and intensified the "Patriotic Re-Education Campaign" throughout the Tibetan Plateau. This is enforced particularly harshly in monasteries and nunneries where monks and nuns are required to study and take written tests to prove that they oppose separatism and to endorse the official line that the Dalai Lama is destroying "the unity of the Motherland." Furthermore, the government distributed millions of red flags and portraits of Mao and other Chinese leaders and made it mandatory for monasteries to display them in place of photographs of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan religious leaders.

In July 2007, the People's Republic of China's State Religious Affairs Bureau issued Order No. 5, a set of regulations for the atheist Communist Party to control the reincarnations of Tibetan lamas. This was the ultimate interference in Tibetan spiritual practice and a gross violation of the freedom of religion as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and China's constitution. Reincarnation is a unique system of successive rebirths of spiritual masters in Tibetan Buddhism. This uninterrupted lineage is essential to transmit the accumulated wisdom of the previous lama to his new incarnation.

For spiritual practitioners such as Wangmo, Buddhism constitutes the very essence of their lives. They have left behind their families and renounced the world to pursue a life of spiritual training and accomplishment. This systematic attack on Buddhism is a fundamental transgression into this sacred realm. The situation is exacerbated by the lack of any civil channels to air their pain. Monks and nuns who sacrifice themselves on fire often feel they have no alternative means to demonstrate their suffering and seek redress.

However, Beijing's restrictions on religion are not the lone cause of Tibetan self-immolations.

On March 3, 2012, Tsering Kyi set herself on fire in Machu, a town on the banks of the Machu River in eastern Tibet. Kyi was born to a small nomadic family and started school at the age of 10. That March day, she emerged from a public toilet engulfed in flames, her fist raised defiantly. As she was running toward the local market, Chinese vegetable vendors blocked her path and pelted

stones at her burning body. Kyi died on the spot. She was 19.

Kyi's self-immolation was inspired by two of Beijing's most insidious policies to destroy Tibetan identity—forcing nomads to permanently settle down, and imposing Chinese as the medium of instruction in Tibetan schools.

Resettlement of nomads started in 1956, when Zhu De, commander in chief of the People's Liberation Army, ordered nomads to settle "to facilitate socialist transformation." However, the permanent settlement of nomads began in earnest in the 1990s. Claiming environmental protection as the rationale for fencing off their pastureland and settling nomads, Beijing imposed a ban on grazing and claimed the nomads' "primitive" and "unscientific" way of life had resulted in soil degradation in pastoral regions.

An estimated 2.5 million nomads inhabit the Tibetan Plateau. For centuries they have skillfully managed their livestock and nurtured the land while adapting to the realities of the plateau's fragile ecosystem. The current crisis in pastoral regions actually stems from Beijing's earlier policies, such as compulsory collectivization, imposition of soaring production quotas and collectivized herding.

The authorities have been implementing large-scale human resettlement, land confiscation and fencing policies for nomadic communities since 2002. These radical rules require the nomads to sell their livestock to Chinese-built slaughterhouses and then force them into concrete-box colonies at inhospitable locations—such as disused prison sites—where there is neither drinking water nor electricity.

Kyi was from one of thousands of families affected by these policies. Although she was still a child, her nomadic family, which traditionally moved between summer and winter pastures, was forced to settle on a small plot of land. Barbed wire surrounded pastures, and so the ancient ways for herds to roam freely over the grasslands ended. Consequently, the knowledge accumulated over 9,000 years of Tibet's mobile civilization is today rendered useless.

For a new generation of Tibetans such as Kyi, the dilemma does not end there. The loss of their traditional way of life is made worse by an uncertain future. Kyi was a bright student and an avid reader. However, her desire to excel in Tibetan language and culture also was coming to an end. In October 2010, the Chinese authorities in Amdo (Qinghai, in Chinese) passed a law to replace Tibetan with Chinese as the mode of instruction at all educational institutions. In response,

more than 3,000 Tibetans, including Kyi, took to the streets to demand freedom for Tibet and the right to their own language. In fact, her school became the center of this activism. The authorities cracked down swiftly. Hundreds were detained and the headmaster of Kyi's school was fired.

For Tibetans, language is the heart of their culture and identity. Like water, it sustains Tibet as a country and Tibetans as a people; like air, it supplies Tibet's religion, music, literature and history. Banning the Tibetan language is meant to finally destroy the region's culture and identity.

A leaked official Chinese document issued in May 2011 focuses on the need to "strengthen education in dialectical materialism and historical materialism in classes on ideological and political theories." In language resembling that of the Cold War era, the document further asks cadres to "deepen the development of resources for political ideological education in various classes. ..." Hence, Beijing's fundamental education policy in Tibet has been to win over the loyalty of generations of Tibetans through mandatory education in Chinese, while deliberately sidelining the Tibetan language. This is highlighted in a recent appeal letter to China's new leader, Communist Party Secretary General Xi Jinping, by members of the international Tibetan studies community. They wrote: "We know the value of Tibet's civilization and we regret that the Tibetan language, which is its fundamental support, is seemingly marginalized and devalued. ..."

As a child growing up in a nomadic community, Kyi experienced the resettlement of her nomadic family firsthand; as a student, she discovered that her language would no longer be taught in school. Deprived of everything that she knew—and feeling that there were no other avenues to express her dissent—Kyi chose the last resort. Two months before she set herself on fire, Kyi told a relative that "We should do something—life is meaningless if we don't do something for Tibet."

And then on May 27, 2012, two young men set themselves on fire in front of Jokhang. This holiest temple in Tibet, located in the heart of the city of Lhasa, is today filled with police and paramilitary forces. Dorjee Tseten, 19, was a chef in a small restaurant called Nyima Ling and his friend Dhargye, 24, was a cashier at the same eatery. As a knee-jerk reaction, Beijing unleashed more paramilitary forces into the city and hundreds of eastern Tibetans who had made their homes in Lhasa were arbitrarily expelled.

In August 2012, three months after Tseten's and Dhargye's self-immolations, state-run CCTV called Lhasa the "happiest city" in China. But as the officials were crowning Lhasa, a large contingent of security forces was setting up checkpoints and scanning every Tibetan coming into the city. Tibetans from other regions wanting to live there are required to obtain special permits, unlike Chinese arrivals.

The Han natives flooding the city bring with them their alien habits and language. Woesser, a Tibetan author based in Beijing, writes that the danger for Tibet may not be China's military threat, but rather the cultural invasion. "Because the imperialist cultural invasion in Tibet can be observed in every little detail," she writes, "the impact and influence of these changes leave you with no option but to give up or adapt. The eventual consequence is likely to be that there is no longer a 'you' left. ... 'You' will vanish in the end."

The fundamental challenge for China is not to identify and foil who might be the next self-immolator in which town, village or nomadic tent, but to recognize that many on the plateau are against Beijing's rule over Tibet, and that every Tibetan could potentially set him or herself on fire. What Beijing can do, meanwhile, is to accept that Tibet is not the "happiest land" and this is the result of six decades of the government's flawed policies. A lasting solution can be found only by understanding messages of self-immolators and addressing their basic aspirations.

My nephew self-immolated for Tibet

By Tsering Kyi, *The Washington Post*, 29 January 2013

The early morning call from my relatives in Tibet woke me in my Washington, DC apartment. I heard people crying, and yelling and sounds of protest in the local dialect of my hometown Amchok in eastern Tibet.

“Boys, don’t be sad, be strong, walk this way, walk forward. Om Mani Padme Hum, think of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.” Nobody was speaking to me. Just confusion on the other end of the phone. I knew something terrible had happened.

I dialed other villagers who told me, “Your brother’s lovely son has passed away.”

“What?”

“Your nephew set himself on fire on Amchok street around 2 pm today.”

On January 12, my nephew Tsering Tashi became the first Tibetan self-immolator of 2013. He joined the nearly 100 Tibetans in Tibet who have self-immolated since 2009 to protest Chinese rule. Their demands are clear: freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The tragic wave of self-immolations epitomize the Tibetan people’s suffering under Chinese rule, and their struggle for a free Tibetan homeland.

How did such an idea occur to my humble nephew? It was only a few days back when we spoke on the phone. He said to me, half joking, half serious, “I see you often on TV but your hair is pulled back so your face looks like a moon. Don’t you have any nice chupas [traditional Tibetan robes] to wear?”

I teased him back, saying he should make me new chupas in Kachigar [Chinese: Linxia]. This was my last conversation with him.

I had not seen my nephew or other family members since 1999 when I escaped the Chinese and fled over the Himalayas, arriving in India as a refugee. I later moved to America where I now work as a journalist.

My nephew Tsering Tashi was only eight years old when I left home. Because I recited the Tibetan alphabet *Ka, Kha, Gha, Nga*, at home, his name for me was “sister Ka-Kha.”

On the morning of the day he set himself on fire, he said to his mother, “I will wear my chupa today. Which one is better?”

“It’s quite cold, so wear the thick one,” his mother said.

Wearing his thick chupa, he asked his fellow herdsmen to look after his yak and sheep.

“I have important work in town. I’ll be right back.” In the fold of his woolen robe, the others did not see the bottle of gasoline he would pour over himself. He switched off his cell phone. And then he lit a match.

My nephew, in his thick woolen chupa, was seen in the town engulfed in flames and calling out the name of “His Holiness the Dalai Lama”. He fell to the ground at least once before getting up again and running until he saw the police and army. Somehow, he then managed to turn away, before he fell again, and died minutes later.

Tibetans threw stones to keep the police and army away from my nephew’s body for as long as they could.

My brother was called to identify the self-immolator. Hardly able to bear looking at his disfigured body, he identified his son by the shape of his face. While some Tibetans went to get a car to transport the body, others continued to keep the Chinese police at bay. Finally, they brought the body home in a procession.

The police blocked the way of monks from the local monastery who tried to come to pray over my nephew’s body. When I called home I was told many police cars were stationed on all roads leading to our village. They turned away anyone who came to offer condolences.

An old member of the family said to me, “They ordered us to have a quick funeral without monks. We have our Tibetan tradition of arranging a funeral: We inform the head monk, then the monks come to pray, and we hold the ceremony and make offerings to the monastery. But the police are coming here again and again, saying we must have the funeral right away.”

How do I live with the fact that my beloved nephew was burned into bone and ashes beyond recognition? How do I console his wife who has become a widow, and his parents whose hearts are broken? How can I console my brother, prevented by Chinese authorities from giving his son a proper funeral?

Through the immensity of his own grief, my brother tried to comfort me.

“Don’t worry,” he said. “I don’t think that my beloved son died without meaning or reason.”

Deep down, I too believe that the flames that rose from my nephew’s body will illuminate our struggle and bring a ray of hope to my suffering homeland.

My dear nephew – your sister Ka-Kha will keep your last words in her heart. Sleep in peace. My dear nephew, now forever separated from me, I don’t know whether this is real or an illusion. I have kept you in my heart for more than 13 years. I will remember your eyes and voice as you called for your sister at home, and I will imagine, my beloved nephew, that you go on living.

Tsering Kyi is a Tibetan journalist, writer, blogger, and a former Miss Tibet. She escaped from Tibet into exile in 1999. This piece has been translated from Tibetan by Dhondup Tasbi Rekjong and Tenzin Dickyi.

Self-immolators in Tibet near 100 as pressure grows from China

The Conversation, 29 January 2013

On January 12, a young Tibetan man, Tsering Tashi, set himself on fire in a nomadic area in China’s Gansu province, while calling for the long life of the Dalai Lama and a free Tibet. Less than a week later, another young man, Drubchog, set himself alight in a nomadic area of Sichuan province. A third young man, Kunchok Kyab, burned himself last Tuesday. All died at the scene of their protest.

These three self-immolations, the first in 2013, follow a month-long pause since the self-burning death of a teenage girl, Wangchen Kyi, in a Tibetan region of Qinghai Province on 9 December last year. Since the first such act in 2009, 97 Tibetans have now reportedly self-immolated in Tibetan-populated areas of China: 12 in 2011, 81 in 2012 and three to date in 2013, most fatally.

As they burned, the self-immolators have each called for a free Tibet and cultural freedoms they believe are under threat, but above all they call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. The Chinese government has blamed the self-immolations and protests on external provocation, specifically instigation and encouragement by outside “hostile forces” the government refers to as “the Dalai clique”. Official spokespeople reject any responsibility for the self-immolations.

Local authorities already deploy massive security forces in the areas where self-immolations have taken place, treating these acts as criminal threats to social stability. Government and security offices utilise additional forms of coercive and punitive measures, including propaganda efforts, blocked communications, and detention of self-immolators' associates.

Despite intensive security and other pressures, self-immolations surged in October-November last year, with 28 reported in November alone. Notably, during that period, the overall profile of self-immolators shifted from a monastic majority concentrated in Sichuan Province to a lay majority located outside of Sichuan, especially in Qinghai and Gansu provinces. From a political and security perspective, the shift to a secular majority and wider distribution poses a significantly more complex challenge to the Chinese government.

As local authorities intensified their crackdown, China's Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security issued a joint legal opinion to align judicial, prosecution and security agencies behind the drive to punish Tibetans who they suspect of having links to self-immolators as criminals, or who express sympathy for them. The opinion sets out parameters for local officials to use to criminalise a range of activities that officials associate with self-immolation, and to treat a number of such activities as "intentional homicide". Other activities, such as gathering a group to mourn or collect funds for a self-immolator, would be prosecuted as crimes under China's criminal law. This represents a more formal and powerful approach than previous measures.

State authorities may hope that such legal measures will effectively deter any further expressions of protest. Official pressures and measures putting family and sympathetic supporters of self-immolators at risk of punishment may have deterred self-immolations in the weeks between the burning deaths of 9 December 2012 and 12 January 2013. But the opinion more likely anticipates sensitive periods ahead, for example Tibetan New Year in February and the anniversary in March of the 1959 uprising in Lhasa when the Dalai Lama fled into exile.

By easing some of the pressures on Tibetans, and considering more effective application of its own system of "ethnic autonomy," Chinese authorities could reduce tensions. But the recently-issued opinion foreshadows no such relief.

Threatening the consequences of non-compliance, public security officials forced Tsering Tashi's family to forego customary Tibetan Buddhist rituals and accept the immediate cremation of his remains. Security personnel took Drubchog's body from the site of his protest and cremated it the same day without informing his relatives. Kunchok's body too was confiscated by authorities: mourners have gathered to perform prayers for him in front of the local government office, despite warnings to desist.

The disturbing probability of the 100th Tibetan self-immolation looms. Amid the strengthening of punitive measures against expressions of Tibetan grievance, the level of Tibetan resentment can only rise.

Tibet's epidemic of self-immolation

By Patrick Brown, Special to *CBC News*, 14 February 2013

In Canada, the recent hunger strike by Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence jolted the country into a national reflection about the issues for which she seemed willing, symbolically at least, to put her life on the line.

In China, a more dramatic and horrifying form of protest has become almost commonplace

At six o'clock on the morning of Feb. 3, Lobsang Namgyal, a 37-year-old Tibetan monk strode up to a police station in Zoege in the Tibetan area of Sichuan province, drenched himself with gasoline and set himself on fire.

It was the hundredth self-immolation since 2009 when this wave of suicides began in the aftermath of widespread protests the previous year. Security in the region is so tight that it took 10 days for news of this grim milestone to reach the outside world.

Eighty-two of the 100, including Lobsang Namgyal, have died. And on Wednesday, police in Nepal, outside China's jurisdiction, reported another Tibetan exile was in critical condition after setting himself alight at the foot of Kathmandu's Boudhanath Stupa, a revered Buddhist shrine.

Far from provoking a national reflection on what life under Chinese rule is like for Tibetans, this wave of self-immolations has met with a predictable reaction from Chinese authorities.

It consists of a propaganda campaign accusing the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, of instigating the protest, as well as ever-tighter security measures, including harsh prison sentences for those accused of abetting the suicides, or trying to stop police from seizing the remains.

When the Chinese parliament meets in a few weeks, Tiananmen Square will be lined with fire extinguishers and police snatch teams.

The chance of another suicide by fire is, in itself, of no particular concern to China's rulers. But they are determined to prevent such an event in the political heart of the country from being captured by the world's media.

Eye-witness account

Publicly committing suicide in this most excruciating and extreme form of protest can have a powerful impact.

Fifty years ago in Vietnam, a Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc became the first person in modern times to burn himself to death for a cause.

He set himself on fire on June 11, 1963, to protest the harsh treatment of Buddhists by the regime of the Roman Catholic president Ngo Dinh Diem.

The New York Times' David Halberstam, the greatest of Vietnam War reporters, witnessed the event and filed this unforgettable report:

"Flames were coming from a human being; his body was slowly withering and shriveling up, his head blackening and charring. In the air was the smell of burning human flesh; human beings burn surprisingly quickly ...

"I was too shocked to cry, too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered to even think ... As he burned he never moved a muscle, never uttered a sound, his outward composure in sharp contrast to the wailing people around him."

Martyrdom?

The images of the burning monk, coupled with the callous and distasteful reaction of the Diem regime, were so shocking to U.S. president John Kennedy that he authorized the removal of Ngo Dinh Diem a few months later.

Since then, politically motivated self-immolations have occurred in dozens of countries. Inspired by Thich Quang Duc's example, a student named Jan Palach set himself on fire in Prague's Wenceslas Square in 1969, a martyrdom

that Czechs see as an important stepping stone towards the overthrow of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia 20 years later.

Two years ago, a Tunisian street vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi became the catalyst for revolution in Tunisia and beyond when he set himself on fire in protest against a life plagued by injustice, harassment and humiliation.

In each of these instances, the unexpected and dramatic death of a single individual — all the more powerful because the violence was directed inward and harmed no one else — had a significant impact on events.

But that is not always the case.

So far, Beijing has remained unmoved by one hundred such deaths in the Tibetan areas of its western provinces, and in Tibet itself, the supposedly autonomous region that China controls.

International awareness of the situation has been muted because many of the areas where the suicides are happening have been closed to foreign reporters for years.

In Tibet, decades of Chinese rule have created a bottomless well of resentment in which Tibetans feel that they lack the freedom to practice their religion, and that their language and culture are under threat.

Brutal paramilitary policing, environmental depredation, careless economic development and an influx of Han Chinese carpetbaggers have made matters worse.

That said, we know distressingly little about the precise motives that have led so many Tibetans to take this drastic and often final step of burning themselves to death. Only a few have left behind a clear statement.

A futile waste

Those few testaments that have been left express a yearning for the return of the exiled Dalai Lama. And they implore their fellow Tibetans to protect their language and religion, but make no specific demands of China.

General discontent is not sufficient to explain the epidemic of suicides.

Very few of the self-immolations have taken place in the Tibetan heartland, which China calls the Tibetan Autonomous region.

Almost all have been in the Tibetan areas of neighbouring provinces, which suggests that regional issues may be playing a role as well.

Many, including the most recent, have been associated with one particular monastery, Kirti, in Sichuan. It's likely that the phenomenon of emulative suicides, known as the Werther effect, named for the wave of suicides that followed the publication of Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, is also playing a role.

In terms of effectiveness, self-immolation is particularly vulnerable to the law of diminishing returns.

One martyr with a clear message provides a rallying point for the cause he or she died for. When a hundred people burn themselves to death, they become, sadly, statistics.

This protest has become a futile waste of young lives.

China's accusation that there is a campaign orchestrated by the Dalai Lama is quite unfounded. The Dalai Lama has said nothing to encourage the self-immolations.

At the same time, by saying nothing more than "what's happening is very sad; it brings tears to my eyes," he has not used his enormous authority to discourage them either. It may now be time for him to do so.

Drupchen's Body Is a Litmus Test for Nepal

By Tenzin Dorjee (Tendor), *The Huffington Post*, 15 March 2013

One of the most enduring Buddhist tales goes like this. In a previous life, when the Buddha was a Nepalese prince, he saw a starving tigress about to eat her own cubs. Overwhelmed by compassion, the prince lay down on the ground and offered his own body to the tigress and her cubs. Takmo Lujin ("Body Offered to the Tigress"), as the site of this sacrifice came to be known among Tibetans, is today one of the most revered destinations for pilgrims and tourists in Nepal.

On February 13, in the heart of Kathmandu, Nepal, a 25-year-old Tibetan named Drupchen Tsering set himself on fire to protest Chinese rule of his homeland. When I heard the news, I couldn't help but imagine him in flames,

surrounded by hungry tigers on the hills of Takmo Lujin. While the Buddha prince fed himself to tigers, Drupchen fed himself to the jaws of oppression, using his fragile human body to blunt Beijing's teeth so that others might be spared. If the Buddha had been born today as a Tibetan watching his people, nation and culture being devoured by a draconian empire, what would he do?

Nepal was for many decades a sanctuary for Tibetan refugees fleeing China's oppression. When I was a child, I used to visit my extended family in Kathmandu during the winter holidays. Takmo Lujin was always #1 on the list of annual pilgrimage trips. The time I spent in Nepal has made me admire, and sometimes envy, the Nepalese people's infectious kindness, their melodious language, and their natural acceptance of all cultures. Nepal is a land where many religions and cultures have coexisted for centuries. In fact, at Swayambunath and many other holy sites, Buddhist and Hindu shrines would often be housed in the same temple.

Over the last decade, amid China's growing hegemony in Asia, Nepal has turned from a sanctuary to a nightmare for Tibetan refugees. This tragedy is embodied in the way the Nepalese government has so far responded to Drupchen Tsering's self-immolation.

After Drupchen set himself on fire on February 13 - joining more than a hundred Tibetans who have self-immolated for freedom since 2009 - his body was seized by the police. In the days that followed, as Tibetans in Nepal scrambled to claim his body in order to perform the essential Buddhist rites and cremation rituals, his body remained locked up in a mortuary. The Nepali authorities consistently rejected all requests to hand over the body to the Tibetan community.

After a person is pronounced clinically dead, Buddhists believe, there is a window of opportunity called the 'moment of clear light' when a trained lama can transfer the deceased person's consciousness into higher rebirth. In the absence of a lama, ordinary monks would sit by the deceased and chant from the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The departing consciousness of the deceased, passing through its most pure and potent stage, can hear the prayers that carry instructions on how to exit one's body and enter a higher rebirth. This window, which could last from a few hours to a couple of days, is considered one of the most precious moments in the cycle of life and death.

As Drupchen's body lay still in the mortuary, day after day, this opportunity slipped away from him. For a Tibetan Buddhist, there is no greater loss.

It must be remembered that the real culprit is the China, whose tentacles stretch deep into the highest echelons of Nepal's government. Beijing's long arm of oppression not only deprived Drupchen of political freedom in his life, but it also stole his final opportunity for spiritual liberation in his death. In facilitating this injustice, Nepal has allowed itself to be used as an instrument of tyranny.

Amid growing international pressure to hand Drupchen's body to the Tibetan community, the Nepalese government issued a warning that if the body is not claimed by family members within 35 days, it would belong to the state. But Drupchen had escaped from Tibet just a month before by walking over the Himalayas, and had no family in Nepal. The Tibetan community was his only family!

What happens next will be a litmus test for Nepal's democracy, its humanity, and its sovereignty. On March 20th, the 35th day since the self-immolation, Nepal will decide whether to give Drupchen a proper cremation by the Tibetan community, or to hand it over to Chinese diplomats, or to secretly "dispose of" the body and subject Drupchen to a second death.

Is Nepal a democratic nation that respects the rights of its Buddhist minorities? Is Nepal a sovereign state centered in Kathmandu or is it a satellite state that outsources its decision making to Beijing? Does Nepal still honor the spirit of generosity and compassion embodied by the Buddha prince at Takmo Lujin?

Whether Nepal passes this litmus test or not, we will know on March 20th.

Challenge China to Free Tibetans

By Elliott Abrams and Azizah al-Hibri, 18 April 2013

(This op-ed appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on 18 April 2013)

When Kal Kyi, a 30-year-old mother of four, set herself on fire in March to protest Chinese repression of Tibet, she joined a grim and growing fellowship of despair. Over the past four years, 112 Tibetans have immolated themselves

in protest against Chinese oppression.

Tibet is burning, and the world community, including the U.S., must speak out. China's new president, Xi Jinping, and the rest of its leadership must be persuaded that its interests lie with respecting human rights, particularly freedom of religion, and to restart discussions with Tibet's exiled leader, the Dalai Lama .

Unfortunately, persuading Beijing is no simple task. China's rulers have dug in their heels on Tibet as self-immolations continue to mount. They have expanded repressive measures while accusing foreign forces of fueling Tibetan grievances.

There remains an extraordinary disconnect between how China and the rest of the world view Tibet. While other nations see desperate protests by a pious and devoted people, Chinese leadership sees its enemies conspiring to disrupt "harmony" and wrest control of the country's remote southeast. Beijing blames the Dalai Lama for instigating the protests.

World leaders should counter Beijing's contention that Tibetans, a mere 0.5% of the population, threaten the power of wealthy and militarily secure China. A domestic armed rebellion has no realistic prospect of success and no outside force threatens to invade China. The U.S. and the international community recognize China's borders. The Dalai Lama continues to call for greater Tibetan autonomy, not independence.

Chinese actions have widened the gulf between the government and Tibetans in recent years. After protests erupted in Lhasa in 2008, Beijing redoubled its efforts to control Tibetan religion, including the selection of Buddhist religious leaders. Hundreds of monks and nuns languish in jail cells for the crime of peacefully resisting this attempted hijacking of their faith.

Self-immolation protests began in 2011 with the monks of Kirti monastery, located in a Tibetan area of Sichuan province. Their acts were meant as a reply to the ramped-up police presence at their monastery, growing control of their religious affairs and increased efforts to destroy their allegiance to the Dalai Lama. This form of protest has spread throughout China and into countries like India and Nepal.

In response, China has clamped down on satellite communication, restricted usage of flammable materials, tightened control over monasteries and increased

police activity at religious sites. Last month, the government also enacted a law that equated assisting in a self-immolation with murder. In February 2013, five Tibetans were arrested and face long prison terms for alleged incitement of immolation protests.

In other words, faced with a rise in self-immolations, China's leaders responded by redoubling the kind of repression that triggered these actions in the first place. Far from stabilizing the region, their policies have deepened Tibetans' hopelessness and despair. Self-immolations have increased over the past six months, and have spread from monks and nuns to young Tibetans like Kal Kyi.

With no end in sight, it is time for the U.S. and other major powers to express plainly to China their deep concerns about its abuses. China cannot hear about global concerns over Tibet occasionally, nor can public meetings with the Dalai Lama and his representatives be avoided if China is to understand that renewed negotiations over Tibetan autonomy are in its interest.

Leaders of free nations should confront Xi Jinping with the fact that Beijing's Tibet policy is a colossal failure. Repression at home damages China abroad by tarnishing its global image.

Silence is inexcusable. We must consistently and persistently call for Beijing to uphold religious freedom for the sake of human rights and stability alike. President Xi must hear repeatedly from U.S. President Barack Obama and other leaders that China's policies ignore mounting evidence that freedom, not repression, creates peaceful and prosperous societies. Such societies are secured by honoring the dignity and worth of people, empowering and encouraging their participation in civil society, protecting their liberties in law and practice, and allowing them the fundamental right to practice their faith and live their lives according to their conscience.

In a country as vast, diverse and globally engaged as China, lasting stability is impossible when people are denied religious freedom. If Beijing guarantees freedoms for all, from Tibetan Buddhists to Uighur Muslims, and from Christians to the Falun Gong, it will help, not hinder, China's quest for security.

Mr. Abrams and Ms. al-Hibri serve as commissioners for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Tibet's Man on Fire

By Jeffrey Bartholet, For *National Geographic News*, 28 APRIL 2013

Tibetans continue to burn. This week, two monks from Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery, Lobsang Dawa and Konchok Woesser, set themselves on fire to protest Chinese rule. A week earlier, a young mother by the single name Chugtso self-immolated, leaving behind her husband and a three-year-old child. Well over a hundred Tibetans have sacrificed themselves in this way since 2009. Yet it's very difficult for journalists to cover the burnings, because Chinese authorities block access to the areas where they occur, and impose punishments on those who provide information to the outside world. The self-immolation a year ago of Jamphel Yeshi, however, took place in India, beyond the Chinese news blockade. National Geographic covered his story in detail:

At the time he decided to set fire to himself, Jamphel Yeshi was living in the Tibetan refugee colony of Majnu ka Tilla, on the northern outskirts of Delhi. The colony was first settled in 1963, four years after the Dalai Lama escaped to India from advancing Chinese forces. The early residents built thatched huts and made a living brewing and selling chang, a traditional Tibetan barley-and-wheat alcohol. As refugees from the roof of the world, they were unaccustomed to the heat and humidity of the low-lying plain. They had no idea how long they'd be staying but imagined they'd return home soon.

Today, about 4,000 people live in the colony, which has been overtaken by the city: A busy thoroughfare runs alongside it, and Indian neighborhoods have grown up nearby. New construction in the colony is illegal, yet ragged workers continue to dig foundations, carrying rubble and dirt in handwoven baskets balanced on their heads and dumping their contents on the nearby banks of the Yamuna River. They navigate a warren of multistory buildings, a shambolic jumble of several hundred homes with colored prayer flags fluttering from the rooftops. The alleyways, many just wide enough for two pedestrians to pass, are populated by crimson-robed monks and nuns, mangy dogs and barefoot kids, activists and drifters, petty merchants, and beggars with missing or mangled limbs who offer a broad smile and warm thanks for receiving the equivalent of 20 cents. A Tibetan far from home can enjoy familiar scents and tastes here: salty butter tea, steamed dumplings, Tibetan bread and biscuits.

Jamphel Yeshi—Jashi to his friends—lived with four other Tibetan men

in a one-room, windowless apartment they rented for the equivalent of \$90 a month. The entrance to the room is through a tiny kitchen area, which is separated from the sleeping quarters by a threadbare curtain in a Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck motif. Jashi's mattress still lies on the floor in a corner, below posters of the Dalai Lama and other senior lamas. His mattress and four others form a U-shape around the perimeter of the room, which is illuminated by three fluorescent tubes. A thin cabinet still holds many of Jashi's books, including several well-thumbed collections on Buddhism, Tibetan politics, and history. During the day, the men would store their personal belongings in two tiny alcoves. Jashi's small nylon suitcase remains where it was when he was alive, holding most of what he owned, including three ID cards, two plastic pens, two rosaries, four cotton sweaters, four pairs of pants, a vest, a scarf, a green and a red string, and a small Tibetan flag.

On the night before he set himself on fire, Jashi was in a cheerful mood. Two friends were visiting from the town of Dharamsala, home of the Dalai Lama and seat of the Tibetan government in exile, about 300 miles from Majnu ka Tilla. It was Lobsang Jinpa's turn to cook that evening, but he had become distracted at a cybercafé. Jashi called Jinpa on his mobile phone and ribbed him: "Have you forgotten that you have to make dinner? You've become very popular in Dharamsala; maybe you're too big too cook for us now!" Jinpa rushed back; by the time he arrived Jashi had already washed and cut the vegetables. (Learn about the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala.)

Jinpa cooked thenthuk, a traditional Tibetan dish of noodles, vegetables, and mutton. "No one said it was tasty, but everyone ate it," recalls Jinpa, a former political prisoner who escaped Tibet in 2011. "Jashi ate very well." The seven young men who gathered that evening talked about the upcoming visit by Chinese premier Hu Jintao and about a protest that was to take place the following day in downtown Delhi against Chinese rule. At one point, Jashi took off his shirt and flexed his muscles, showing off the dragon tattoos on his arms and joking about his physique.

As he often did, Jashi woke early the next morning, before any of his roommates. He first went to the Buddhist temple in Majnu ka Tilla to help serve tea to people attending prayers. Then he returned to the room, where he picked up a small backpack and a large Tibetan flag. He neatly folded his blanket and propped a book by the Dalai Lama and another on Tibetan history

on top, so the arrangement resembled an altar. He roused his cousin, Tsering Lobgyal, to tell him he was leaving his mobile phone at home to recharge. If anyone called, Lobgyal should answer it. Then he went to board one of five buses taking protestors to the rally.

As Jashi passed again through the temple square, a friend asked why he was dressed in long sleeves and carrying a pack—it was too hot for that. Another joked about the large flag billowing off his back. “Superman!” the friend yelled as Jashi trotted past. Boarding the bus, Jashi met yet another friend and neighbor, Kelsang Dolma, who was going to the rally with her two-year-old son. Everyone had been talking about an unprecedented series of self-immolations in Tibet since March 2011 and wondering if Tibetans might set fire to themselves at the Delhi protest. Dolma patted the pack on Jashi’s back and joked, “Is this your petrol? Don’t set it on fire!”

Jashi smiled.

Looking back, Jashi’s friends see signs of what was to come. In 2008, he had vowed to set himself on fire and had even purchased a bottle of fuel. His cousins and friends persuaded him to cancel his plan, insisting that he could do much more for the Tibetan cause if he continued to live.

Dolma now recalls signs from the day Jashi self-immolated. On the crowded bus, he was holding a nearly empty bottle of cola and gave it to Dolma’s son to finish off. Then Dolma tried to fling the plastic bottle out the window—common practice in India—but Jashi stopped her. She thought he was being conscientious. That’s the way he was: earnest, devoted to doing the right thing, always volunteering and counseling others on what should or shouldn’t be done. In retrospect, she wonders if he needed the bottle to fill with gasoline. Jashi also realized on the bus that he didn’t have his wallet and asked to borrow 200 rupees from Dolma, whom he affectionately called “sister.” She didn’t have change, so gave him 500 rupees, which he reluctantly accepted.

Did he use the money to buy gasoline to fill the bottle? At the time, Dolma had no suspicions: Jashi was upbeat, smiling, and playing with her young son. “At another point during the ride, I opened a bus window to get some air,” Dolma recalls. “He said, ‘Wow,’ and he smiled and opened his arms to the coolness of the air ... I think now that he knew he was feeling that for the last time. But at that moment, I only thought it was a bit strange.”

The bus stopped a couple of miles from the demonstration site so the protestors could draw attention to the Tibetan cause by marching through the city. Organizers handed out bottles of water to the marchers, many of whom wore yellow pinnies and badges with a bloody hand superimposed next to the face of Hu Jintao. Jashi told Dolma he needed to buy something for a friend, and they parted company. Video taken a little later contains a brief glimpse of Jashi, alone near the back of the procession, smiling and chanting slogans.

By the time the parade reached Jantar Mantar—a street where Indian protests take place daily—as many as 3,000 Tibetans had massed together. They were led by three horsemen dressed in traditional outfits from the three regions of Tibet. Indian demonstrations were taking place to the right and left—a clamor of noise and sweat, flapping flags, and waving banners. The heat was intense, over 90°F. Dolma and others sought bits of shade under nearby neem trees.

Jashi slipped away through a gate and down a short driveway to an old sandstone building housing the All India Freedom Fighters' Organization and other offices. Under a sign reading "Mehta and Padamsey Surveyors Private Limited, International Loss Adjusters," he poured the gasoline over himself. It ran down his shoulders, over his clothes, and into his shoes. Then he put a flame to it.

Jashi ran about 20 strides, stumbled and fell under a giant Banyan tree. He was still inside the gated compound and wanted to get to the crowd of protestors outside. He pulled himself up and ran again, this time for 50 to 60 strides, through the gate and into the mass of people, who made way for the human fireball. He was baring his teeth in what could have been a broad smile—or an expression of excruciating pain.

Jinpa was among the many friends who were there that day. He saw the flaming man and then recognized Jashi's face. He yelled out his name.

Pandemonium: Wails, screams, people frantically shaking water from their plastic bottles onto the flames. An elderly policeman tried to beat out the fire with his hat. A friend of Jashi's, Sonam Tseten, began whipping at the fire with his backpack. But then Tseten realized that his mobile phone was in the pack and that the weight of it might be hurting his friend. So he tossed the pack aside and pulled off his shirt. "When I hit the upper side of his body with my shirt, the lower side burned more," Tseten recalls. "When I hit the lower side,

the upper side burned more.”

Above all of the cries and shouts, several witnesses later recalled most distinctly the roar of the fire: foh-foh-foh.

The first Tibetan to self-immolate in the modern era did so in the same location during a 1998 hunger strike. Just as Jashi would, Thupten Ngodup initially survived the inferno. The Dalai Lama paid him a visit at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital a day later. Ngodup tried to sit up to receive His Holiness but was gently encouraged not to. The Dalai Lama whispered through the gauze wrapped around Ngodup’s head. According to an account the former gave to Columbia University scholar Robert Thurman, he said, “Do not pass over with hatred for the Chinese in your heart. You are brave and you made your statement, but let not your motive be hatred.” The patient indicated that he understood.

“This is violence, even if it is self-inflicted,” the Dalai Lama told Thurman. “The same energy that can cause someone to do this to himself is very close to the energy that enables someone to kill others in fury and outrage.”

Ngodup’s fiery protest was an isolated incident. More than a decade later, in February 2009, another Tibetan self-immolated, then another followed two years later in March 2011. Since then, the numbers have soared: More than 80 Tibetans have torched themselves, one of the biggest waves of self-immolation in modern history. The overwhelming majority of self-immolations, carried out by monks, nuns, and increasingly by lay people, have occurred inside Tibet.

During this wave of immolations, the Dalai Lama has remained mostly silent, except to say that he must remain “neutral” on the protests. “If I say something negative, then the family members of those people feel very sad,” he told a reporter for *The Hindu* newspaper in July. “They sacrificed their own life. It is not easy. So I do not want to create some kind of impression that this is wrong.”

The Dalai Lama is widely revered by Tibetans, who regard him as the reincarnation of the Buddha of Compassion. But his “middle-way approach” to China—calling for autonomy for Tibet, not independence, and often opposing even the most benign protest actions against Chinese rule—hasn’t produced results. China now refuses even to meet with Tibetan envoys. Two longtime Tibetan negotiators have quit in frustration, and the situation only

seems to worsen. Han Chinese continue to migrate into traditional Tibetan areas, and repression of Tibetan religious institutions deepens. Security cameras are installed in monasteries. Portraits of the Dalai Lama are gouged out. Nomads are forcibly settled, and the Tibetan language is marginalized.

“Every other leader looks after his own country properly even if it means going to war,” fumes a Tibetan scholar in Dharamsala who did not want to be quoted by name. “Here we talk about world peace, about taking care of the whole world. What about taking care of our own country? Our leaders are more concerned about how to present themselves to the rest of the world—peace-loving and kind. If you care about your own country, you have to do everything for it: kill, cheat, lie, steal.”

That is a very extreme view among Tibetans. But it gives voice to a much wider frustration. Young Tibetans, in particular, want to act. Among the majority who still cherish non-violence but lack the otherworldly patience of His Holiness, options are limited. So a nun, standing stock still on a road in Tibet last November, becomes a human torch, flames leaping from her head toward the sky. “We need freedom,” yells a passerby, recorded in an amateur video that also captures a woman gently tossing a khata—a silk white scarf, offered in blessing—toward the flames. In another herky-jerky video secreted out of Tibet, a monk named Tsewang Norbu burns in front of a shop on a busy road. Some people gather around the charred and smoking body even as frightened Chinese hurry by without stopping; bicycles and cars pass, honking to move on quickly, as if worried they might get caught up in a security scandal.

Both the nun and the monk were from Jashi’s home area, Tawu. He himself had escaped Tibet in 2006. He had taped a photo of the monk on the door of his little bookshelf. He had seen the videos. He had watched them most recently a few days before his own self-immolation. They were shown on a screen in the temple square of Majnu ka Tilla—to inspire local residents to attend the upcoming protest. Jashi’s friend Sangye Dorji, the caretaker of a small monastery that overlooks the cramped square, was with him. “I was very emotional and depressed,” Dorji recalls. “Jamphel Yashi said only that they were very patriotic people.” He also had some advice for his friend: “If any Tibetan self-immolates, we should just let him burn,” Jashi said. “That person has made a decision to die.”

Dorji never made it to the protest, but other friends did. Each acted

instinctively. Jinpa, the former political prisoner who served 26 months for filming and distributing video of anti-regime protests in China, tried to push the crowd back. Jinpa recalls that at one point, as everyone was throwing water at the burning man, Jashi yelled out “Agh!”—as if to complain about the effort to douse the flames. “Let the journalists take photos!” Jinpa shouted.

“I was not at all hoping he would be alive with the amount of fire that was engulfing him,” Jinpa told me a few months later. “The police just wanted to take the body away quickly. Two police grabbed my waist to pull me back. I resisted and pulled back toward the burning body.”

Other friends thought Jashi might survive. The smell of burning was intense—like roasted meat, one friend recalled—but Jashi’s face was still recognizable. By the time the flames were out, however, his clothes had burned away, except for the shirt collar around his neck and the elastic bands of his pants and underwear. His skin was hard and crinkly, “like touching a basketball, but very hot,” says Tseten. “There was no softness at all.” Strangely, Jashi’s dragon tattoos appeared more vibrant than ever.

Tseten and several other friends eventually lifted Jashi into the back of a white police jeep. They placed him on one bench, and four of the men sat in a row on the bench opposite, holding him in place so he wouldn’t fall off as they sped around corners with the siren blaring. One of the men had painted his face in Tibetan colors, and now sweat, tears, and splashed water that had been thrown frantically toward the flames were all causing the paint to run down his cheeks.

Jashi arrived at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital at 12:45 p.m. and was officially admitted at 1:19. As his friends delivered him through the doorway, Jashi spoke the last sentence any of them would hear from him: “Why did you bring me to the hospital?”

Speaking those few words must have taken enormous effort. Doctors would soon discover that his insides were scorched, probably because he had inhaled toxic fumes and flames. Burns covered over 98 percent of his outer body. He was given antibiotics, painkillers, and oxygen, and doctors eventually performed a tracheotomy. At one point, the sister of one of Tibet’s highest reincarnate lamas—the Karmapa, head of the Karma Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism—arrived to deliver a “precious pill,” blessed by the high lama himself, to provide spiritual comfort and even healing for a man’s soul. A monk

whispered a prayer into Jashi's ear.

Jinpa wasn't thinking about spiritual matters. He had shed tears like everyone else, but he wasn't particularly sentimental. He knew that his friend had set himself on fire to make a statement—to awaken the world to Tibet's plight. He didn't want the sacrifice to be wasted.

He was also functioning on almost no sleep. While his friend had been preparing for his final act, Jinpa—who sports a gold earring and a goatee—had been at a party until dawn. Now his mind was racing. “Who has a key to the room?” he asked Lobgyal, Jashi's cousin. “Don't give the key to anyone. He might have left something.” Then Jinpa's phone rang: Indian detectives were poking around the neighborhood, a friend told him, and wanted to get into the room. Minutes later, Jinpa got a call from an officer in the criminal investigation department who wanted to know who had a key to the room. Jinpa professed ignorance and switched off his phone.

As the sun was going down, Jinpa and others made their way back to the apartment from the hospital. The detectives had left. Two men served as lookouts in the alley while Jinpa and Lobgyal rifled through Jashi's meager belongings. Inside a red cloth sack that also held his IDs and other documents, they found a handwritten letter in Tibetan. It began with a call for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet then spoke about the need for loyalty, “the life-soul of a people,” and about freedom: “Without freedom, six million Tibetans are like a butter lamp in the wind, without direction.”

“At a time when we are making our final move toward our goal—if you have money, it is the time to spend it; if you are educated it is the time to produce results; if you have control over your life, I think the time has come to sacrifice your life.”

The letter ended with a demand for the “people of the world” to “stand up for Tibet.” Jashi had written two copies, both on lined white school paper.

When one of Jashi's former teachers in Dharamsala first read the letter—which by then had been typed and printed for wider distribution—he was skeptical that Jashi had written it. Jashi had arrived from Tibet as a young man with little education, and his written Tibetan was mediocre. His parents were rural middle class, and Jashi himself was classified as a “farmer/nomad” in the database of the exiled Tibetan government. He had lived in eastern Tibet, in a

large house in the traditional Tibetan style, with a satellite dish on the roof and prayer flags flying from the chimney. Cows, yaks, and sheep were housed on the first floor, and the family occupied the upper level. They tended apple orchards and planted potatoes, barley, wheat, and other crops.

Jashi got his education informally, studying an hour or two a day with monks in a nearby monastery. They taught him how to read religious texts but not much more. He worked for an elderly monk in the village, etching Buddhist mantras on stones to be placed on hilltops. He was a good swimmer, and in the winter, he and his friends fashioned small ice sleds out of wood boards and metal rods. They would curl the rods around the wood so they would serve as blades, and then they'd push themselves across icy ponds until their knuckles turned raw.

As he became a young adult, Jashi became politically aware. He told friends that at least once he had ridden his bicycle late at night into the town of Tawu, roughly six miles away, to post political flyers on walls in the predawn darkness. In 2003, he was caught trying to escape Tibet, and later he apparently made some connections or got some tips about how to tap into the Tibetan underground while he served several months in multiple Chinese prisons.

In 2006, Jashi escaped successfully, taking a young neighbor along with him. They made their way first to a safe house in Lhasa, then hooked up with a guide who escorted them on the start of a monthlong trek. One guide handed off to another and then to another, through winds and snow, across plains and mountains, along the skirt of Mount Everest and into Nepal. They hid by day and hiked by night, surviving on a diet of dried yak meat and tsampa, a dough of roasted barley flour mixed with water. A few in the 15-person party suffered snow blindness, others horrific headaches; sometimes they had to pause for a day to allow someone to recover. Jashi had blisters that oozed puss. But they made it to Nepal and eventually to Dharamsala, where every newcomer gets an audience with the Dalai Lama, and everyone gets free schooling. Jashi cried when the Dalai Lama blessed him, touching his head. He couldn't get a word out.

He entered a special school in Dharamsala for Tibetan newcomers aged 18 to 34. Former teachers and staff describe him as responsible and caring—the kind of young man who stayed late in the cafeteria to help the cook clean up. He loved to read and was obsessed with Tibetan history and culture, but he was an

unimaginative student. In his essays and even his diary entries, he would often echo boilerplate talking points he had read elsewhere. “I scolded him: You’re not the Dalai Lama, full of wisdom and advice,” recalls Chogo Dorjee, who taught Jashi the Tibetan language. He was also a poor speller.

That is why another teacher, who goes by the single name Dhondup, suspected that Jashi didn’t write his last letter: The spelling in the typed version was correct. Later, however, Dhondup saw the original handwritten copy. It had six spelling mistakes and a missing word in the first four sentences. “I was reassured it was Jashi who wrote it.”

Jashi also left behind—unpublicized until now—two other very short pieces of prose. One is a sentimental paean to his mother. He expresses his unwavering affection for her: “Even in my dreams, I see her often ... No one can separate our love.”

The second piece is entitled, “A Boy Without Direction.”

“The moment I was born from my beloved mother’s womb, I was without basic human rights, freedom to think, and was born under foreign domination. Because of this, I had to part ways with my country and come into exile in India. The place that I live now is a small room in Delhi, where I spend my days and nights. When I get up in the morning and look towards the east, tears roll down, uncontrollable ... These are not empty words like water vapor.”

Jashi died in Ram Manotar Lohia Hospital, 43 hours after he had been admitted. No one ever survives with 98 percent burns. Even his friends, who had been hopeful early on because his face was familiar, lost hope when his head swelled beyond all recognition.

In the months since his death—and a massive outpouring of support and grief at his memorial service in Dharamsala—a monk who had recently escaped from Jashi’s home area relayed information on how the death was received there. The Voice of America and Radio Free Asia had broadcasted the news of Jashi’s demise, he says, so it was known right away. That night, many neighbors paid their respects to Jashi’s family. The monks of the monastery were forbidden to do so but conducted their own private prayer service the following evening. When Chinese authorities heard about the service, they called the abbot in for questioning.

A neighbor later told the monk that he was with Jashi’s mother a few days

after her son's immolation. She was cooking on a traditional stove, stoked with firewood, and accidentally touched the hot surface, burning her finger. She sobbed and through her tears muttered, "Imagine how much pain my son felt."

In the neighborhood of Majnu ka Tilla, there's still hope that Jashi's sacrifice will mean something and also dread that it won't. A fruit seller in Tunisia self-immolated in 2010, and that one event set off a cascade of change throughout the Middle East. Nothing like that has happened in Tibet. The world hardly notices when another young man or woman goes up in flames. Some young activists are talking darkly of another possible phase, of how thin the line is between killing yourself and killing your enemies. "The older generation is 90 percent religious and 10 percent nationalistic; they want to spread happiness and make the world a better place," says Tenzin Wangchuk, the 38-year-old president of the Delhi chapter of the Tibetan Youth Congress. "But the younger generation is not a bunch of Buddhas. We are Buddhists but not Buddhas. If you kill evil, we don't think that's bad. We need actions ... One day, who knows? We may raise our issue by bombing ourselves, and if you are going to die, maybe it's better to take some enemies along with you."

That is the fear of older Tibetans who have worked for decades to find a negotiated solution. "The only reason the Tibetans are so committed to nonviolence is purely because of the influence of the Dalai Lama," says Lodi Gyari, who served as chief negotiator with China until his resignation early this year because there was no hope for a return to talks anytime soon. "I have also told the Chinese this. It's a very thin line. One day, somebody may say, 'I've had enough, it's meaningless for me, but I'm not going to go alone ... I'm going to take a couple of Chinese guys with me.' That can happen any day."

Jashi's roommates in Majnu ka Tilla live much as they did before. Two small posters of their deceased friend, "the hero Jamphel Yeshe," are pasted to the white walls. But the adrenaline rush is over. The men try to pick up odd jobs when they can, but as Tibetan refugees they're not eligible for salaried employment. In the midday heat, several crash on their mattresses, waiting for the sun to go down.

On one occasion when Jinpa visited from Dharamsala, in the months after Jashi's passing, he made the same grim joke as he had in the past when his friend was still alive: "Here I am again with these guys who don't get any girls, don't have jobs—useless men just waiting around to die!" This time, one of

his friends perked up. "Are you coming to encourage another one of us to self-immolate?" he said. "Now it's my turn ... But don't worry, I'll prepare everything properly before I go!" It was supposed to be funny but had a different effect. Among Tibetans, nobody really knows who might be the next to burn.

Special Report: The mother who burned herself to death for Tibet

By Sui-Lee Wee, Special Reports *The Reuters*, 6 June 2013

In March, a young Tibetan woman named Kalkyi began making frequent visits to a monastery in Barma, a township in China's Sichuan Province.

The slim, rosy-cheeked mother of four was a devout Tibetan Buddhist, a close relative says. But her visits to the Dzamthang Jonang monastery this spring were out of character. So too were the spiritual mantras Kalkyi had begun to chant several times a day, and the way she had taken to prostrating herself in the monastery at least twice a day.

On the chilly afternoon of March 24, Kalkyi - who like some Tibetans went by just one name - stood outside the monastery gates with about 200 to 300 other worshippers. She doused herself with gasoline and lit a match. Flames instantly engulfed her, and as they did, she shouted words that no one could make out.

Witnesses say it took less than 15 minutes for the blaze to kill Kalkyi. She was 30 years old.

It was the ninth time in just over a year that a Tibetan mother had set herself on fire, an especially startling statistic to emerge from a grisly campaign of suicidal political defiance that shows no sign of ending.

Since 2009, at least 117 Tibetans have committed acts of self-immolation in China in protest against Beijing's policies in Tibet and nearby regions with large Tibetan populations.

More than 90 have perished as a result, with the latest fatality coming on May 29 in Qinghai province. Kalkyi's death was the 39th immolation in Ngaba prefecture, the corner of Sichuan Province where Barma township sits. This majority-Tibetan prefecture is the geographic focal point of the immolation

wave, which increased dramatically in 2012.

The ultimate impact of the Tibetan suicides is uncertain. In 2010, one fruit seller's self-immolation in Tunisia sparked a revolution that would become known as the Arab Spring. But the Chinese government's restrictions on the domestic and international media have limited awareness of the growing number of immolations both inside and outside the country.

Kalkyi's story nonetheless underscores how the movement has reached a desperate new stage, with the suicides moving beyond the Buddhist clerics who launched them and into the lay community. The deaths in the restive Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan parts of China pose a particular challenge to two men: new Chinese President Xi Jinping, and the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. Some Tibetan scholars have criticized the Dalai Lama for not calling for an end to the burnings.

Kalkyi didn't belong to a religious order, long a source of dissent against Chinese rule; nor did she appear to have suffered specific acts of abuse. She was not, in other words, anyone the authorities would have expected trouble from.

An examination of her life provides possible clues to why she set herself on fire. Among them: an emerging fervor among some lay Buddhists for imitating the monks who began the series of self-immolations.

A Reuters correspondent was able to verify Kalkyi's suicide and piece together the first account of her final days by visiting Barma, about 550 kilometers (310 miles) northwest of Sichuan's capital of Chengdu. No foreign journalist had been in Barma before this trip.

Some Tibet experts say the January 2012 shooting of a 20-year-old student named Urgen may have instigated the suicides in the Barma region. Urgen was killed when Chinese security forces fired on protesters in Barma trying to prevent the arrest of another youth, who had published leaflets declaring the self-immolations to be in support of a free Tibet and the return of the Dalai Lama, according to Tibetan advocacy groups.

Tsering Woeser, a Tibetan writer who tracks the self-immolations, considers the shooting a turning point. Since then, six people have killed themselves in Barma alone.

“There is no calm in these Tibetan areas. Each place is a dynamite package with a fuse,” she said. “Once that’s ignited, the anger in these places will explode.”

Officials in Barma could not be reached for comment.

Troubled Region

Violence has flared in Tibet since 1950, when Beijing claims it “peacefully liberated” the region. Many Tibetans say Chinese rule has eroded their culture and religion. They are agitating for the Dalai Lama’s return from exile in India, and genuine autonomy for their homeland. The Chinese government denies trampling Tibetan rights and boasts of having brought development and prosperity to the region.

In 2008, months before the Olympic Games in Beijing, demonstrations about the perceived lack of freedoms for Tibetans broke out across the region, eliciting a brutal crackdown.

The first series of self-immolations began three years later, in 2011. They started with monks, nuns or former clergy and continued for about a year.

As shocking as the first suicides were, the people who chose to burn themselves did so, Tibetan scholars say, in reaction to specific instances of abuse at particular monasteries. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries are often under surveillance and subject to raids by Chinese security forces.

The dynamic began to change in 2012. Of the more than 100 Tibetans to self-immolate in 2012 and 2013, about two-thirds were lay people, according to Tibetan activists and scholars who track the phenomenon.

One of them, a woman named Rikyo, traveled in May of last year to the Dzamthang Jonang monastery, where she set herself ablaze. Word of the suicide note she left traveled far and wide. Rikyo, 33, a mother of one child, wrote that she wanted the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet - a near-universal request from the self-immolators.

“I am willing to bear the suffering of everyone in despair,” Rikyo wrote in her note. “If I fall into the hands of the communists, please do not fight back.”

Beijing intensified its crackdown. It called the self-immolators “terrorists” and arrested people it accuses of inciting the acts. Chinese authorities have detained at least 75 people in Tibetan regions this year. In Barma today, a notice stuck on

a pole in the village offers a 100,000 yuan (\$16,310) reward for any information on those “masterminding, supporting, abetting and coercing others to self-immolate.”

Chinese officials have specifically accused the Dalai Lama, who the government calls a “wolf in monk’s robes,” of providing money to the families of those who set themselves on fire. The Tibetan government in exile, based in Dharamsala, India, says it “categorically rejects” these allegations.

Fine Lines

The escalating suicide toll has put the Dalai Lama in a bind. He has called the acts “understandable,” even as he says he does not encourage them.

Several Tibet scholars have criticized his stance, saying his reluctance to tell his people to stop has strengthened their resolve to continue the fiery protests.

“I am puzzled by the Dalai Lama’s failure to act decisively in this situation, and by his decision not to advise people to consider their dependents before killing themselves,” said Robbie Barnett, director of modern Tibet studies at Columbia University.

The Dalai Lama did not respond to requests for comment.

In an interview, Khedroob Thondup, the Dalai Lama’s nephew, said his uncle is in a “very difficult position.” Even an appeal from the Dalai Lama couldn’t stop the self-immolations, he said. “This is not something started by him and this is not something he can end.”

“He feels these people are protesting because there are no alternatives, that they are desperate,” said Khedroob Thondup. “When they self-immolate, they are asking him to return.”

Lobsang Sangay, prime minister of the government in exile, said in an interview the self-immolations are a political issue. The response should come not from the Dalai Lama but from Sangay’s government, which discourages the suicides. The blame lies with Beijing - and so does the solution, he says.

“All they need to do is reform their repressive policies, and introduce liberal policies towards the Tibetan people, and solve the issue of Tibet peacefully through dialogue,” Sangay said.

That approach, called the “Middle Way” by the Tibetans, seeks a Hong

Kong-style autonomy for the region. But years of autonomy talks between the two sides broke down in 2010. And the growing carnage has added to the frustration some Tibetan activists have with the Middle Way. They seek independence, not just autonomy, and advocate non-violent ways of protest.

Xi, the new president, has said very little publicly about Tibet since taking office in March. His late father, a liberal-minded former vice premier, was close to the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan leader once gave the elder Xi an expensive watch in the 1950s, a gift the senior party official still wore decades later.

The younger Xi has shown no such warmth. During a trip to Tibet last July, Xi vowed to crack down on separatist forces that he said were led by the Dalai Lama.

State broadcaster CCTV aired a documentary in mid-May that blamed the “Dalai Lama clique” for publishing a guidebook teaching Tibetans how to set themselves on fire. The accusation was a reference to a blog post by a former member of Tibet’s parliament-in-exile, who advised would-be suicides to maximize the impact through “military-like” planning, such as having friends film the act. The Tibetan government-in-exile denounced the post as “irresponsible”.

Honor The Community

Political stalemate and a suffocating crackdown are the standard reasons given to explain the rising number of fiery suicides. But some scholars and Tibetans say there may be more to the death of a woman like Kalkyi than that.

Tibetans in China practice what some scholars call an “honor-based” politics. “Many people see themselves as socially insignificant, particularly younger women, so it seems to them more reasonable that they should sacrifice themselves for the honor of the community as a whole - as the community leaders, the monks, had already done,” said Columbia’s Barnett.

As such, the second wave of self-immolations - mostly involving lay Tibetans - has been a way to honor the 2011 deaths among the clergy and give meaning to their sacrifice. What’s worrying, Barnett said, is that they are spreading rapidly among people - such as young mothers like Kalkyi - who had not previously been drawn to overt defiance.

The township of Barma, called Zhongrangtang in Chinese, is remote, poor

and sparsely populated, with only 4,000 inhabitants. Women clad in sheepskin garments hack at rocks with construction tools to make gravel. Few speak Chinese.

One main road runs through the township, which sits 3,560 meters (11,680 feet) above sea level and is surrounded by mountains dotted with pine trees. About 96 percent of the people who live there are herders, according to 2009 data from the website of the local county government.

Kalkyi's husband, Truype, was one of them. A relative of Kalkyi described the family as middle-class for the region. Truype made some money selling his animals. He also built houses. They had sold one home and were living in a second, a traditional, two-story mud-brick structure. A month before she died, according to a relative, Kalkyi said they had just finished work on a third, a modern stone building, but had not yet furnished it.

In the summer Kalkyi and Truype would climb the mountains to gather herbs and fungi to sell. Many Tibetan nomads are skilled at harvesting "caterpillar fungi", a prized ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine, which sells for 225,000 yuan (\$36,700) per kilogram.

The couple had four children, who range in age from one to 10. In the yard of their brick house, Tibetan prayer flags on a long pole now flutter in the wind. A stone carving on the wall in front of her house is inscribed with the Tibetan words: "Om mani padme hum," a traditional Buddhist mantra that is also chanted as a prayer to the Dalai Lama.

Kalkyi was uneducated. The Chinese government shut down Tibetan-language schools in the 1990s, so she never learned how to write, and she never attended the Chinese-language schools the government opened in their place. When she got married at 20, she wanted to learn Tibetan so she could pray, say those who know her. She began going to the Dzamthang Jonang, an imposing structure that consists of three different monasteries, surrounded by large courtyards and smaller buildings.

Her friends and a family member who lived with her for two years describe her as easygoing, a woman who liked chatting with the elderly folk in her village. According to the relative and to Tsangyang Gyatso, an India-based Tibetan who has contacts with Kalkyi's family and friends, her family life was stable and she had no financial problems.

In the weeks and months before she took her life, Kalkyi grew more openly devout, those closest to her say, but she displayed no signs of political radicalism.

“I never had any idea she would set herself on fire,” the close relative told Reuters on condition of anonymity. According to neighbors, her husband Truype was also caught off guard.

Reuters was unable to speak to Truype. Police stopped Reuters reporters en route to his home and detained them for six hours before ordering them to leave for Chengdu, the provincial capital.

In the immediate aftermath of Kalkyi’s death on March 24th, monks from the Dzamthang Jonang monastery carried her body into the main hall, as Chinese security forces and military locked down the area.

Tibetan culture requires a body be kept until an astrologer determines the most auspicious date for a cremation ceremony. But Chinese authorities ordered that Kalkyi’s ceremony be completed by midnight, witnesses say. Even so, despite a large military presence, that evening some 4,000 people gathered on the monastery’s grounds for the ceremony, according to local residents.

The close relative has come to believe that Kalkyi’s decision to sacrifice her life was meant to honor the Tibetan community. “She might have thought that since she didn’t go to school, this was the only way she could do something for her country.”

“Right after her fiery protest,” he said, “I was very sad, but then I was really, really happy, because even a young woman can sacrifice her life for such a big cause, a nation’s cause.”

To the Chinese government’s alarm, they continue to do so.

Less than a month after Kalkyi killed herself, a 20-year-old woman named Chugtso trekked from her home to the Dzamthang Jonang monastery. On April 16, at around 3 p.m., she set herself ablaze, dying in almost the same spot as Kalkyi.

Chugtso was the mother of a three-year-old boy.

(This story corrects the sixth paragraph to make clear that 117 people have committed acts of self-immolation, not died from self-immolations.)

Burning For Freedom: Crisis In Nepal As Tibetan Monks Self-Immolate And China Cracks Down

By Kyle Knight, *International Business Times*, 4 June 2013

KATHMANDU, Nepal -- On the morning of Feb. 13, Drupchen Tsering, a Buddhist monk from Tibet, walked out of a restaurant here in Nepal's capital, dripping with gasoline. In front of the Bouddhanath Stupa, one of the holiest Buddhist shrines in the world, he lit himself on fire.

Nepalese police put out the fire and rushed him to a hospital, but Tsering could not be saved. He died a few hours later, with burns on more than 90 percent of his body. The 25-year old monk was one of dozens of Tibetan Buddhists who have set themselves ablaze over the past months to protest what they say is Chinese oppression of Tibet, but his case quickly became an international cause célèbre.

Self-immolation is not an uncommon form of protest around the world, but in the Tibetan context, it has become the gruesome symbol of a desperate people reacting to Chinese oppression, some argue, by taking the power to decide life and death away from the state. His death triggered mourning across the Tibetan diaspora, but it was what happened after it that really got the world's attention.

While Tsering's body was kept frozen in a Kathmandu hospital, a tense standoff between Tibetan activists and Nepalese authorities mounted. Who could claim the body? How would it be treated? The question would ordinarily be a simple one to answer. Relatives or friends take the body; funeral rites are conducted; life goes on, until the next immolation (112 Tibetans have set themselves on fire in the past four years, according to the Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet, and that's in China alone).

But Tsering's body was a threat to China. And China carries a lot of weight in Nepal, a country with a weak government that depends on aid, much of it from Beijing.

Monks, Spies And Cops

Nepal, wedged between two big, powerful neighbors -- the other one is India -- is home to some 20,000 Tibetans, many of whom fled Tibet after the 1959 invasion by China's People's Liberation Army. Until the mid-1990s, Nepal

issued Tibetans refugee papers, which allowed them to live in the country legally.

That has changed. These days, Tibetans who arrive in Nepal across the Himalaya's high, thinly guarded passes are handled by the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR), which operates a reception center in Kathmandu under an informal agreement with the government. Most of them go on to India. Those who choose to remain permanently in Nepal live in legal limbo, and in constant fear. They know China is watching them.

As Chinese pressure on Nepal's rickety government has risen, life for Tibetans here has become increasingly polluted by rumors, fear of Beijing's spies, and security crackdowns.

So much so that when Tibetans agree to speak with journalists, they often do so anonymously or giving only their first name, like Tenzin, who lives in a small room accessed through a warren of narrow alleys behind the Stupa. The pressure to stay silent, he said, has increased dramatically in recent years.

"It has gotten to the point where we have to choose: Be patriotic and love Tibet, or live a normal and quiet life," he said, explaining that street protests are no longer an option because of constant threats of arrest and the high cost of bail.

Tibetan community leaders do talk regularly with Nepal's police and government, and even with Chinese embassy officials. The interactions, Tenzin said, usually occur before Tibetan holidays, and result in Tibetan leaders urging the community to stay inside and quiet.

Many Tibetans know better than to skirt that advice. "At the stupa, there are cameras and there are police and spies (...) We don't know who we can socialize with, we have to be very careful," Tenzin said.

China has a lot of tools it can bring to bear against them. State media has accused some Tibetan advocacy groups of being terrorist organizations. The Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' spiritual and erstwhile political leader, has never condemned self-immolations, but repeatedly says they make him sad, while denying China's allegations that he instigates them. Yet Beijing portrays him as something akin to a terror leader. Internet advocacy groups have documented cases of Chinese hackers targeting Tibetans. Kathmandu Tibetans report they feel as if they are under constant casual surveillance, echoing Chinese domestic

security measures the New York Times called “the soft fingertips of Beijing’s iron fist.”

“A Litmus Test For Nepal”

Tibetan activists say that repression got worse during the preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when China wanted to look as “harmonious” as possible -- an adjective often used by the Beijing government -- in front of the world. That is when it rolled out intensified, pervasive, diverse security measures targeted at Tibetans in Nepal.

That year, on March 10, police in Kathmandu violently disbanded an assembly of Tibetans gathered in solidarity with the uprising inside Tibet, arresting hundreds. Activists claim Nepal police made more than 8,000 arrests of Tibetans in the subsequent five months.

The security regime in Kathmandu mimics that in China, where the government has routinely flooded ethnic Tibetan areas with extra forces in the wake of demonstrations and self-immolations. But it’s happening in a sovereign nation of 27 million people, albeit one that has lurched from one political crisis to the next since the end of a decade-long civil war in 2006.

China isn’t alone in being accused of meddling in Nepalese affairs: India is too. But China is unique in its preoccupation with controlling Tibetans, or what Nepalese officials have dubbed compliantly “anti-China activity.”

That preoccupation was reflected in the fate of Tsering’s body.

Weeks after the monk’s self-immolation, newspaper notices failed to attract any of his family members to claim the corpse. Nepalese law dictates that the government can hand a body over only to a proven relative, and if it remains unclaimed for 35 days, it becomes state property.

Tibetans asked that the government respect their religious traditions and hand the body over to the community so that proper funeral rites could be conducted. While some activists and diplomats held closed-door discussions with government officials, others signed online petitions.

In a March 15 op-ed piece, Tendro Dorjee, the director of Students for Free Tibet, raised the stakes by calling the decision about Tsering’s body “a litmus test for Nepal.”

The government said it would wait the legally mandated 35 days. Observers

speculated that China was pressuring Nepal to squelch any potential for a martyr's funeral. And on March 25, the government cremated the body, in the middle of the night, at a site for unclaimed corpses.

The litmus test had failed.

"The cremation being carried out in such a hasty, secretive manner reflects poorly on the Nepalese authorities," said Kate Saunders, director of International Campaign for Tibet.

"It speaks volumes about the Chinese authorities' leverage and influence in Kathmandu at a time of political paralysis in Nepal," she said, calling the government's actions a betrayal of good faith in those who had been in dialogue during the weeks prior.

Dorjee, the Students for Free Tibet director, said that the act "crystallized a disconcerting truth about the country's lack of respect for religious freedom."

An open letter from a group of well-known Nepalese human rights activists slammed the government for its actions, but the day after the cremation passed without any public protests in Kathmandu.

So did this past Wednesday, April 3, when officials posted notices warning against any public ceremonies. That's because it was the 49th day since Tsering's death, which in Tibetan Buddhism, which is based on the principles of reincarnation, is the day the consciousness of the deceased enters its next birth.

Tenzin, the Tibetan who would only give his first name, is resigned to this state of affairs. "Whenever there is an event -- a holiday we would celebrate outside or a political situation we would protest -- our desire to do so is matched with instructions from the authorities not to," he said.

"I prayed silently on the bus to work," his wife, Champa, said. "It is of course sad when someone dies like this, but to not be able to share it or conduct the proper ceremonies, I don't know, it just feels like we're losing everything we can do."

Enter The (Ex) American President

As for Nepal at large, the plight of Tibetan refugees is only one among many issues the government has to deal with. The country's first post-civil war parliament, which doubled as a constitution-drafting body, dissolved without reaching an agreement last May. A subsequent caretaker cabinet recently

stepped aside in a controversial move and the country is now run by an interim government, charged with preparing elections, and headed by the Supreme Court's Chief Justice.

But the handling of the Tibetans issue could send a telling message about the fledgling republic. Both sides of the Tibet debate have accused the other of assaulting Nepal's sovereignty, while the Kathmandu government remained silent.

Western governments chime in, too. On a visit last week to discuss political affairs, former U.S. president Jimmy Carter told a press conference: "The Chinese government is putting pressure on the officials in Nepal (...) and my hope is that the Nepali government will not accede to pressure from any other country and abuse or interfere with these peoples' lives."

Trailokya Raj Aryal, a China specialist at Kathmandu University, sees the issue as one of Nepal carving out its philosophy of foreign policy against the historical grain of aid dependency.

"Nepal today retains a foreign policy based on survival, pleasing others, and not promoting our own national principles and interests," he said.

That aid dependency may be the main reason the Kathmandu government is choosing to do Beijing's bidding. For example, China is building a \$1.6 billion hydroelectric power plant in Nepal, a key project to ease power shortages in this chronically electricity-deprived country, where even the capital gets daily power cutoffs.

"The Tibetans have much more support in Nepal than it appears," said a Nepalese scholar who asked not to be named, but "with power and development money coming in from China, everyone is thinking first of their own interests, whether that be protection from threats or free fancy trips to Beijing. We have a history of operating like that."

The issue has expanded beyond Nepal. Judicial cases considering charges of genocide in Tibet are currently underway in Spanish courts, far away from this corner of Asia where two big powers are separated by a giant chain of mountains and one small, fragile, but strategically placed state.

"We have an opportunity to be a facilitator (...) between India and China, but we will continue to miss out until and unless we define our foreign policy

beyond aid and appeasement,” said Kathmandu University’s Aryal.

And until Nepal keeps complying with the whims of foreign powers, it may never become a stable nation with a hand in its own destiny.

On The Ethics Of The Tibetan Self-Immolations
BY JOSÉ CABEZÓN, *Religion Dispatches*, 18 JUNE 2013

As I write this piece, 119 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, choosing to end their lives to further the cause of the Tibetan people. Tupten Ngödrup, a former monk and the first Tibetan to immolate, took his own life in India in 1998. The next such act would not take place until 2009, when the monk Tapey set his body on fire, this time in Tibet. The year 2011 saw thirteen Tibetans giving up their lives through “the burning of the body in fire” (*ranglül merseg*), as Tibetans now refer to this act; all but one of these individuals hailed from eastern Tibet.

The locus of the protests has therefore shifted from the Tibetan exile community to Tibet itself. An interactive map and timeline of the self-immolations can be found on *Al Jazeera*. As one moves the arrow forward on this timeline, it is heartbreaking to think that each dot on the map represents the loss of a human life. Almost all of the Tibetans who self-immolated through mid-2012 were members or former members of the Buddhist clergy—monks, ex-monks, and nuns. Since the middle of 2012 Tibetan lay people are increasingly found among the ranks of those who have chosen to give up their lives in this way. The story of the Tibetan self-immolations has failed to garner much attention from the Western media. *Time* called it the most under-reported story of 2011, and the coverage has not improved, despite more than 100 additional deaths since the end of 2011.

There is a profound sense of desperation and frustration on the Tibetan plateau. This is known to all who are familiar with the tragic situation in contemporary Tibet. The Tibetans who engage in the drastic act of taking their own lives are obviously trying to draw the world’s attention to their plight. But several recent commentators have argued—rightly, it seems to me—that these Tibetans are not so much reacting to their plight out of a sense of despair as they are proactively trying to bring about change. The Tibetans who have

chosen this path have given no single, unanimous reason or motive for their actions. But most of the individuals who have left behind written statements or “testaments” (*kehachem*) tell us that they have given up their lives to unite the Tibetan people, for the return of the Dalai Lama, and for the preservation of Tibetan culture, which they see as steadily eroding.

Remarkably, few if any evince in their written statement a sense of what a Time reporter has called Tibetans’ “new, nihilistic desperation.”

Two issues of important academic journals have been devoted to the Tibetan self-immolations: *Cultural Anthropology* and *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*. As Katia Buffetrille has noted, because there are few known instances of self-immolation in Tibetan history, these acts came as something of a surprise, even shock, to the scholarly community. As examples of excruciating human pain and agonizing death, the Tibetan self-immolations probably lie beyond the power of the human intellect to fully fathom, but scholars have nonetheless attempted to understand them. That, for better or worse, is what we do—attempts to shine some light on the most horrific of human actions. Hence, scholars have written about “the impossibility yet necessity of interpretation,” attempting to understand this tragic phenomenon from a variety of perspectives: political, sociological, historical, literary, even artistic. By comparison, less attention has been paid to the religious and ethical dimension of these acts.

Like many religions, Buddhism deplores suicide, but the Tibetan self-immolations are not simple suicides. The “testaments” that these individuals leave behind make it quite clear that they see their own deaths instrumentally—as means to higher ends. Those ends are not always explicitly religious, but religious language and images infuse their words. The act itself is often referred to as an offering (*chöpa*), an offering of the body (*lijin*), or an offering of light or lamps (*chöme*), one of the traditional offerings made to the Buddha. References to scripture also pervade Tibetans’ self-understanding of the phenomenon. It can even be found in the poetry that the self-immolations have inspired:

*I pay heartfelt homage to these bodhisattvas of the Land of Snows,
The lamps who dispel the darkness of Tibet,
Like the buddha who gave his body to a hungry tigress [in a past life],
Out of the altruistic intention to dispel the suffering of others.**

Tibetans therefore see the motivation for the self-immolations in largely religious terms—for instance, as an act motivated by the wish “to protect the Buddha’s teachings, the source of benefit for all sentient beings.” †

Although direct reference to Buddhist scripture is rare both in the testaments and in other contemporary Tibetan writings, one cannot help but see resonances with sacred texts. For example, the *Scripture of the Wise and the Foolish* mentions a bodhisattva-king who sacrifices his own body for the sake of the Buddhist teachings “by piercing his body with a thousand wicks and burning it with torches.” [p. 2 in the edition linked above –Eds.]

When, in the same text, another king gives away his body, he states that he is doing so not to obtain a better rebirth, but “to attain supreme enlightenment and to lead all beings to Nirvana.” [p. 113] Lama Söbha, who immolated on January 8, 2012, likewise states:

‘I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering, and to lead them to the paradise of the Buddha of Infinite Light. My offering of light is for all living beings... to dispel their pain and to guide them to the state of enlightenment.’

Despite these allusions to scripture—which many see as providing religious warrant for these acts—the self-immolations have become a site of acute moral conflict for many Buddhists. Human life is recognized to be rare and precious, and Buddhist teachings exhort us not to squander the rare spiritual opportunity human existence affords us. Yet devout Buddhists, including members of the monastic community, are choosing to give up their own lives as a way of powerfully expressing their deep feelings.

Is self-immolation ethically justified according to the Buddhist teachings? As a scholar of Buddhism, I want to explore whether these acts constitute a fundamental violation of Buddhist doctrine, as some have suggested.

The Abrahamic traditions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) have traditionally considered martyrdom—being killed for the sake of the faith—to be not only ethically unproblematic, but even a moral good. However, they consider the taking of one’s own life, even for the sake of religion, to be a moral evil. Although generalization is always perilous, and although the views on these subjects are perpetually in transition, the mainstream Abrahamic view is that life is a precious gift from God, and taking one’s own life constitutes a kind

of contempt for God. Such acts are therefore generally seen as sinful. Indian spiritual traditions in general, and Buddhism in particular, have fundamentally different views on the question of taking one's own life, especially when it involves some higher purpose. Buddhism—perhaps in part because of its nontheistic dimension and belief in reincarnation—does not judge these acts as unequivocally evil; motivation or intention is a key factor in determining whether an act is morally justified or not.

Does this mean that Buddhism therefore considers self-immolation to be ethically justified? Partly at issue here is the question of whether self-immolation constitutes an act of violence. Those Buddhists who condemn it as a form of violence point out that taking one's own life harms both self as well as the living microorganisms that live within the body. This view is understandable: the principle of doing no harm is the cornerstone of Buddhist ethics.

But what happens when an individual is confronted with a difficult choice—a choice between doing harm to oneself and doing harm to others? Or what happens when an act of self-directed harm has the potential to alleviate the harm that is being perpetrated on others? In these cases difficult choices have to be made. Tibetan Buddhism, as a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is a tradition whose ethics, the ethics of the bodhisattva, is founded on the principles of compassion and altruism, believed to “trump” the ideal of no-harm. Hence, in certain instances, Mahāyāna Buddhism permits acts that would otherwise be considered acts of violence when these have a higher purpose, when it brings about the welfare of others. ‡

As noted earlier, the idea of sacrificing one's body for the sake of others is found in many classical Buddhist texts. Especially in Mahāyāna Buddhism, there is explicit acknowledgement that, on rare occasions, giving up one's life for the welfare of others is not only permissible but actually necessary.

When all the prerequisites for engaging in such an act are met, this is regarded as an act of great moral courage. Drawing from earlier scriptures, the fourth-century Indian Buddhist master Aśaṅga speaks of a threefold classification of “giving” that includes giving material goods, spiritual counsel, and life. Of these three, Aśaṅga considers offering up one's life to be the highest form of giving. That said, Indian and Tibetan texts also set forth stringent conditions that must be met before an individual is allowed to offer up his or her life. These

conditions have to do with the purity of the motivation, an absence of negative emotions, and a clear view of the larger purpose.

The point remains that such acts do not, if these conditions are met, contradict the basic ethics of Buddhism. A well-known fourth century text called *Ornament to Realizations* also mentions “giving one’s life for the sake of the Dharma (the Buddhist teachings).” §

Most of the Tibetan monks who have self-immolated would certainly be familiar with this line. In a 2011 post on a Tibetan website, a blogger asks others to comment on what thoughts went through their minds when they first heard about the self-immolation of a monk at the Bodhanath stūpa in Nepal. The first response to his query came in the form of a single line, “I thought of the implications of the line from the *Ornament of Realizations* that says, ‘Giving one’s life for the sake of the Dharma.’” Obviously, elite texts like the *Ornament* are, at the very least, part of the background worldview in which the Tibetan the self-immolations are taking place.

We cannot simply assume that all those have immolated were aware of these classical doctrinal references, but neither can we presume that they were totally ignorant of them.** Religious texts sometimes have a way of penetrating into the fabric of a society in ways that one would not have imagined. In any case, these classical textual references are worth exploring alongside the many other factors motivating these acts. Some scholars believe that the phenomenon of self-immolation is a “symptom of secularization.” While many of the Tibetans who have recently immolated may well have been operating from a secular mindset, many others—in fact, probably most—have seen their actions in religious terms: as acts of virtue, self-sacrifice, purification, and religious offering; acts that, Buddhism tells us, have the capacity to change the world, tipping the scales of history in the direction of truth and justice.

I want to end with the words of one contemporary Tibetan. Jigme, a Tibetan monk living in Gartse Monastery in the Amdo region of eastern Tibet, who published his views on the self-immolations as part of a broader critique of Chinese government policies.

In January of 2013 he was sentenced to five years in prison for the publication of this tract. This is what he wrote (translation my own):

“The Beijing government claims that the act of self-cremation, or the burning

of one's body, contradicts the Buddhist texts, but this is a confused position. According to Buddhism, giving up one's life for the welfare of others is an act of a bodhisattva. One can know this from the biography of the compassionate Buddha himself. Before he was enlightened, the future Buddha came across a tigress and her cubs. They were on the verge of starving to death. Unable to bear their suffering, he sacrificed his own body as food for the tigress. That act of protecting the life of the tigress and her two cubs by giving up his own life is the central theme of many contemporary religious writings; it is widely known. When one reaches the highest level of Mahāyāna practice—that of “the being of great scope”—one is able to give up everything one possesses for the welfare of sentient beings. For example, if it is necessary, one is able to spend many hundreds of millions of years in hell just for the sake of a single sentient being... For all of these reasons giving up one's own life for the sake of sentient beings or for the sake of one's own people does not contradict the Buddhist teachings. Not only does it not contradict them, it is actually a tenet of the Mahāyāna; it is a most excellent doctrine. Hence, no one who is informed about these matters would claim that it contradicts Buddhism—no one, that is, except confused government officials and their lackeys.⁷

It is, of course, impossible to know the precise motivation of those Tibetans who have chosen to end their lives. We cannot know with any certainty that they were motivated by the type of compassion spoken of in this passage; but neither can we dismiss this possibility. Regardless of their motivation, it is clear that many Tibetans, both inside and outside of Tibet, view their actions through the lens of Mahāyāna Buddhist ethics. Self-immolation represents an ultimate act of protest, a final moral boundary, which Tibetans—both monks and laity—feel their Buddhist faith allows them to cross.

That they have chosen to shorten their own lives, yet go to great lengths not to harm anyone else in the process, is a significant indication of their deep respect for the Buddhist teachings. ††

The Dalai Lama suggested as much last week when he remarked, as Reuters reported, that “Tibetans could ‘easily hurt other people,’ but instead were choosing ‘to sacrifice their own lives, not hurting others.’”

NOTES:

* A verse of *A rig 'gyur med*, in Noyontsang Lhamokyab, “Pen bod kyi rtsom pa po'i mthun tshogs kyi tshogs gts'o chab brag lha mo skyabs,” in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no.

28, December 2013: 117.

† Ibid.

‡ There is considerable discussion in the Tibetan community over whether self-immolation can actually accomplish viable, longterm goals. But even those who are skeptical about the political efficacy of self-immolation mostly acknowledge that the act is not inconsistent with the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism, where the moral status of action is ensured by a “proper motivation.”

§ The lines of from the fourth chapter of the *Abhisamaylakra*, and read: *chos kyi don du srog gtong ba*.

Aflame

A wave of self-immolations sweeps Tibet.

By Jeffrey Bartholet, *The New Yorker*, 1 July 2013

On January 12th, the day that Tsering Tashi set himself on fire, he didn't seem particularly troubled. He ate an early breakfast with his wife and his parents in the house they shared in a village near Amchok, a historically Tibetan township in China's Gansu Province. Then he took the family herd—most of the animals were *dzomos*, female yak-cow hybrids prized for their milk yield—to frozen grasslands nearby. He was twenty-two years old and an accomplished horseman, and his family was well respected locally. Tashi watched the animals graze for a few hours, then went home around noon, leaving the herd in the care of friends. It was a frigid, overcast day. Tashi told his mother that he wanted to wear a traditional Tibetan cloak, or *chuba*. “You should wear a nice thick one,” she said. She asked if Tashi would like to join her for lunch, but he said that he needed to get back to work.

Tashi stopped to see his friends and asked if they would look after his animals a little longer. “I have to go into town,” he said. “There's something I need to do there.” He seemed to be carrying something heavy in the folds of his *chuba*, but they didn't ask what it might be.

When Tashi got to the main square of Amchok, he took a container from his cloak, doused his clothes in gasoline, and set himself alight. He had wrapped wire around his limbs, apparently to insure that the fuel-soaked clothing would stay in place. As flames engulfed his body, he fell to the ground. Then he got up and ran, darting away from some Chinese police he saw on the road. Finally,

he collapsed again, the flames sweeping this way and that in the wind. As his clothes turned to ash, Tashi managed to raise his arms and bring his hands together in a final gesture of Buddhist prayer. “Gyawa Tenzin Gyatso,” he called out. “His Holiness the Dalai Lama.” A thirteen-second video, apparently shot by a passerby with a phone, shows Tashi’s flaming body at the moment he raises his arms. In the background, a Tibetan woman hurries a shocked child past the blazing man.

In the past two years, well over a hundred Tibetans have immolated themselves in protest against Chinese rule. The demonstrations have spread across the Tibetan plateau, both in Chinese provinces with significant Tibetan populations—Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu—and in the Tibet Autonomous Region. In 2011, a dozen Tibetans set themselves ablaze—most of them monks or former monks of Kirti Monastery, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Sichuan. Last year, more than eighty Tibetans—monks and nuns, farmers, nomads, students, restaurant workers, and at least one writer—burned to death. The oldest was in his early sixties; the youngest was just fifteen.

Chinese security forces in Tibet quickly seal off areas where immolations occur, to block independent news coverage. Documentaries on the state-run network CCTV portray immolators as delinquents and dupes of the “Dalai Lama clique” and other outside powers, and fire extinguishers have been installed in Tiananmen Square, in case any Tibetans try to set themselves ablaze there. Financial benefits are withheld from the relatives of self-immolators, and there are large rewards for information about people who incite or abet them, an activity that can lead to a charge of “intentional homicide.” Early this year, a monk received a suspended death sentence (which in practice generally means life imprisonment) after being convicted of instigating eight immolations. A foreign-ministry spokesperson told reporters, “We hope that the international community can clearly see, via this judgment, the sinister, malicious methods used by the Dalai Lama clique.” According to the court, the man was working at the behest of monks from Kirti Monastery living in exile in India, an accusation that the monks deny.

Many of the immolations have been captured on camera, and footage and photographs circulate among Tibetan activists. On one level, the protests are a form of political theatre, designed to attract sympathetic attention to the cause of a free Tibet, but their more immediate aim is harder to pin down. There

is little likelihood that Chinese policies will change significantly, or that other countries are prepared to expend much diplomatic energy on the matter. Yet, according to Robert Barnett, the director of the Modern Tibet Studies Program at Columbia University, the more oblique aspect of the protests is recognizably Tibetan—the self-expression of a people who have long been deprived of the fundamental freedom to organize and express themselves politically. He told me, “It’s a hidden politics—a politics without words, a politics of symbols, a politics of gestures.”

The tensions between China and Tibet go back more than a millennium. In the eighth century, Tibet was a sizable empire, extending into Central Asia; under the Mongols, in the thirteenth century, it was almost completely overpowered. For long periods, Tibet and China were politically linked while remaining culturally and ethnically distinct: Chinese emperors sent official representatives to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, where they served as symbols of Chinese authority. Tibet was most assertive when China was weakest. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty, in 1912, the thirteenth Dalai Lama declared Tibet independent, but in 1950, after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the Communists invaded a poorly defended border region and negotiated an agreement that brought Tibet all but entirely under Beijing’s control. Many Tibetans resisted the creeping military takeover, and in 1959, during a failed uprising, the Dalai Lama fled to India.

In the People’s Republic, Tibetans became one of fifty-five officially recognized ethnic minorities. James Leibold, an Australian Sinologist who specializes in China’s ethnic politics, explains that the Communists, faced with the country’s demographic diversity, created a large number of autonomous areas. In theory, minorities had the right to preserve or reform their language and customs, and their regions were given preferences in education and in development funding. But autonomy was severely compromised, in part because of the dominance of the Han Chinese, who make up more than ninety per cent of the over-all population. Leibold believes that a consensus is emerging among China’s political élite that the model of autonomous regions should be jettisoned in favor of assimilation. The pro-assimilation camp points to the breakup of the Soviet Union as a sign that autonomy undermines national unity. “They say, the problem may be bad now, but it will only get worse if you don’t reduce the identification of Tibetans with their own nationality,” Leibold said.

To promote integration, Beijing has invested heavily in infrastructure, building roads and railways across the Tibetan plateau. This has led to better standards of living, particularly for a Tibetan élite that has adopted the language and entrepreneurial outlook of the Chinese. But Tibetans maintain that locals often lack the education and the capital to participate in the boom and that the main beneficiaries have been non-Tibetan migrants, mostly Han Chinese. Furthermore, the imposition of Mandarin Chinese in schools and the settlement of nomads have diluted the Tibetan language and culture. A 2009 report by independent Chinese researchers, studying the causes of a mass Tibetan protest a year earlier, found that “the current rapid process of modernization has not given the ordinary Tibetan people any greater developmental benefits; indeed, they are becoming increasingly marginalized.” The report mentions that many employers consider Tibetans lazy and lacking in business sense. It goes on to say that “non-Tibetans control all major aspects of the local economy,” and that “Tibetans have no way of competing with non-Tibetans in the modernization process.”

Amid mass protests, including attacks on businesses owned by Han Chinese, the Dalai Lama has consistently advocated dialogue over confrontation. His position, known as “the Middle Way,” and formally adopted in the nineteen-eighties, involves renouncing the demand for independence in the hope of securing meaningful autonomy. Yet nine rounds of negotiations ended without result in 2010, and Tibetans worry that China is simply waiting for the Dalai Lama, who is seventy-seven, to die, leaving them without their most powerful symbol of national identity and international support. Lodi Gyari, who was the lead negotiator with China until he resigned last year, said that, if so, the Chinese are miscalculating. He told the Chinese delegates, “Once this Dalai Lama is either too old to be effective or, sadly, not there, then the resentment of the Tibetan people against you will be a hundred times more than what they feel now.”

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile are based in Dharamsala, a hill town in the north of India, three hundred miles from the border with the Tibet Autonomous Region. The town is a cluster of villages, and the Dalai Lama’s residence and the main temple complex are in the village of McLeod Ganj, high up in the hills. There are several streets with shops, sidewalk stalls, and small restaurants. Tibetan monks and nuns with shaved heads and crimson robes walk among tourists bargaining over Buddha statues,

jewelry, and colorful scarves. The buildings are covered with posters advertising Tibetan massage, meditation, yoga, and Hindi lessons. Larger posters and billboards commemorate self-immolations, and whenever one occurs activists organize a solemn candlelit procession.

The exiled wing of the Kirti Monastery, established by the lama Kirti Rinpoche after he fled Tibet half a century ago, is a multi-story concrete structure, a five-minute walk from the Dalai Lama's residence. The monastery is built into the side of a hill, with a view of the valley below and snowcapped peaks above. In February, I went there to visit Kanyag Tsering, a thirty-four-year-old monk who spends most of his days and evenings collecting information about self-immolations and other activism in the region surrounding the main Kirti Monastery, on the Tibetan plateau. He fled Tibet when he was nineteen, during a period of "reeducation" campaigns, in which Tibetans were forced to pledge their loyalty to the Communist Party and denounce the Dalai Lama.

Tsering works with another monk, Lobsang Yeshe, in a storage room that has been converted into an office. Like reporters, the two monks gather tips and try to substantiate them, passing on what they find out to N.G.O.s, media outlets, and agencies of Tibet's government-in-exile. A lot of information comes from other exiles, but they also talk to people inside Tibet, who speak in hints and codes, using unregistered cell phones. Voice messages, particularly in local dialects, are safer than text messages, which can be monitored by Chinese security agents. The two monks don't share information about their sources, even with each other. "When we contact Tibetans inside Tibet, we're putting their lives at risk," Tsering explained.

Tsering and Yeshe often have difficulty collating the piecemeal information they receive. On February 4th, Tsering received a message from a Tibetan in exile. The man had heard that someone had set himself on fire near Taktsa Monastery, in Sichuan, and that the body had been taken to the monastery, but he had no further details. A day later, another monk came to Tsering's office and told him he had heard that a Kirti monk named Lobsang Namgyal had self-immolated, but he didn't know precisely where or when. For more than a week, Tsering and Yeshe tried to turn ambiguous hints into a coherent account, until Tsering heard from a reliable source who confirmed that the man who self-immolated was indeed Namgyal. He had set himself alight at six in the morning

in front of a police station. It was the hundredth self-immolation in Tibet.

Namgyal's death was particularly upsetting for Tsering and Yeshe, who both knew him from their days at Kirti Monastery. He had been two classes ahead of Tsering and sat across from Yeshe during prayers. Tsering remembers Namgyal as "a very simple monk, very practical," always fingering his prayer beads. He was not an outstanding student, but he was regarded as disciplined and reliable. The monks heard that things had gone badly for Namgyal in the past year. In September, he disappeared for two weeks; it turned out that he had been in jail. Police spread word in the monastery that he had been caught consorting with prostitutes. Namgyal quietly told a few fellow-monks that this wasn't true, that he had been interrogated about a relative living in Australia but had refused to speak. Some monks believed his account, Tsering says, but could not openly defend him. Others in the monastery, who didn't know the full story, began harassing Namgyal for not being a "pure monk." He felt humiliated and pressured, and eventually left the monastery. "He had nothing left but to set himself on fire," Tsering said.

I first met Tsering last summer. In his tiny monk's cell, which until recently doubled as his office, he sat cross-legged on a Tibetan carpet with a dragon motif. He juggled smartphones and SIM cards, surfed Web sites, and organized files on a Samsung computer. He was friendly and talkative, and I learned that he was renowned among the monks as a soccer fanatic—Chelsea is his team—and that he once circumvented the monastery's strict rationing of television by tapping into the main cable line to watch matches. When I saw Tsering again this year, he seemed more oppressed by his work. As we discussed the burnings, he rubbed the bridge of his nose and sometimes clasped his hands over his ears as if his head might explode. His friends told me that he was suffering from depression. He said that he no longer had time to watch soccer, and that he had migraines and high blood pressure. He had been to the hospital to get checked for chest pains, and one doctor advised him to change jobs. To Tsering, that was inconceivable, because so many people relied on him for information about protests inside Tibet. "We have this responsibility," Tsering said. "We can't shrug it off our shoulders."

Tsering obtained permission for me to spend a night at the monastery, and I stayed in his cell with him. The room, secured by a brown steel door with a large sliding bolt, was big enough for a mattress on a wooden platform, a metal

wardrobe, two knee-high tables, and a two-burner gas stove. Small bookshelves were built into the walls. There was a photograph of Tsering's father, mother, and three younger brothers propped on a ledge. It was a season of bone-chilling rains, but Tsering kept his window open to get fresh air. He put his mattress on the floor and offered me the wooden platform for my sleeping bag. As night fell, we could hear the patter of footsteps in the hallways, yelping dogs in the distance, a monk chanting evening prayers, metal pots being washed, and someone spitting into a communal sink. Shortly before turning in, Tsering read a message on his white iPhone and told me, "Tonight, one Tibetan self-immolated in Tibet."

The immolations have placed exiled Tibetan leaders in an awkward position: they must pay their respects to the self-immolators without being seen to have encouraged them. Lobsang Sangay, the leader of the government-in-exile, has called for the protests to stop, while also saying it's a "sacred duty" to honor the self-immolators. Senior lamas have mourned the loss of life, but still extoll the selfless virtues of Tibetans who give their lives to a larger purpose. "We don't encourage people to self-immolate," Kirti Rinpoche told me. "But it's obvious that they have sacrificed for the Tibetan cause, and it's our responsibility to give voice to what they have done."

No one is more ambivalent than the Dalai Lama. Regarded by Tibetans as the embodiment of the Buddha of Compassion, he is a deeply committed pacifist. When the first Tibetan self-immolation occurred—in India, a decade before the current protests—the Dalai Lama visited the dying man in the hospital. Whispering through the gauze wrapped around the man's head, the Dalai Lama said, "Do not pass over with hatred for the Chinese in your heart."

During the recent wave of immolations, the Dalai Lama has avoided taking a clear stand, but many people close to him feel certain that he wants them to stop. Jeffrey Hopkins, a Tibetologist at the University of Virginia, told me, "There is no doubt he would counsel anyone not to feel hatred." In an interview with NBC in October, the Dalai Lama said that it was difficult to judge the sacrifices: they could be seen as positive if they were done for the "well-being of the people," but they were wrong if "carried out with full anger and hatred." He worries that the Chinese regime will take advantage of any statement he makes. "If he calls on them to stop, and they stop, what will the Chinese say?" one of his aides asked me. "They'll say, 'The whole time the

Dalai Lama was behind it!’ ”

The Chinese government and its supporters have argued that suicide violates Buddhist principles of nonviolence. “No killing is the first precept of Buddhism and must never be violated,” the Chinese Tibetologist Li Decheng wrote in the *People’s Daily*, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party. Tibetans tend to dismiss this line of argument as disingenuous. Several Buddhist scholars told me that the deaths were, generally speaking, a sacrifice for a higher cause, and should be viewed as different from violence against others or from suicides committed out of personal despair. Lhakdor, a monk who heads the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, said that it was important not to confuse “nonviolence with the absence of violence.” He gave the example of a mother jumping into a pit of fire to save her child as an act of pure compassion. Seen in this light, he said, sacrificing your life for the benefit of others is “not a contradiction, because your life is precious in saving others.”

The exiled Tibetan writer Jamyang Norbu has written of the need for “an action-oriented tradition of Buddhism,” in contrast to what he sees as a “quietist, passive, even escapist perception of Buddhism which has gained more widespread acceptance, especially in the West.” Norbu recounted a story from Buddhist scripture in which the Buddha, in an incarnation before his enlightenment, killed a man who was planning a mass murder, thereby saving the lives of hundreds of innocents. Another story describes how the future Buddha came across a starving tigress and her newborn cubs. In an act of supreme compassion, he found a sharp piece of wood, cut himself open, and fed himself to the famished mother. Today, a monastery about forty kilometres outside Kathmandu marks the spot where this is believed to have happened. It’s a popular pilgrimage site, at which people leave offerings of money and food, hang prayer flags, and light butter lamps.

Analysts trying to explain the recent upsurge of immolations point to various possible influences. In addition to Buddhist stories of self-sacrifice, there is the famous example of Thich Quang Duc, the Vietnamese monk who set himself alight in Saigon in 1963, and the more recent case of Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vender whose self-immolation gave rise to the Arab Spring. Neither of these explanations seems quite adequate: Tibetan protests began before Bouazizi killed himself, and the Vietnamese example is not well known

in Tibet. Robert Barnett told me that he thought one inspiration for the acts might, in fact, be Chinese. “Modern Chinese politics is all about models who die for the party or the nation,” he said. “It’s a culture where martyrdom is seen as the highest political value.” In “Red River Valley,” a popular Chinese film set during the British occupation of Tibet in 1904, a Tibetan hero lights a spreading pool of fuel to kill himself and his enemies. The film was released in 1997 and was shown widely in Tibet, as part of a policy of identifying China’s struggle against Western countries with the region’s earlier suffering at the hands of the British.

Several Tibetan self-immolators have left written statements explaining their actions. Many demand freedom, including religious freedom and the protection of Tibetan culture and language; others call more specifically for independence. The most common sentiment is an appeal for the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet. Nangdrol, an eighteen-year-old who self-immolated in February, 2012, wrote, “My requests to the Tibetans are: Be United, Be Tibetan, Dress Tibetan, and Speak Tibetan.” Sonam Wangyal, the highest-ranking monk to have immolated himself, declared, “I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering, and to lead them—each of whom has been our mother in the past and yet has been led by ignorance to commit immoral acts—to the Amitabha, the Buddha of infinite light.”

When Tsering Tashi set himself on fire, his aunt, Tsering Kyi, was asleep in her apartment, in Washington, D.C. She had escaped from Tibet in 1999, when she was sixteen, walking for nearly a month through Himalayan mountain passes into Nepal, and came to the United States a decade later. She now hosts television and radio programs for Voice of America, including one called “Cyber Tibet,” which explores Tibetan political and cultural news on the Web.

At around seven o’clock in the morning, her iPhone started to vibrate, and when she answered it all she could hear was a background clamor of cries and prayers in her dialect of Tibetan. Kyi called an elderly friend from her village. “Your brother’s son has passed away,” the man said. “He set fire to himself around two-thirty, and just burned to ash.”

Her first reaction was fury at her nephew. He was his parents’ only son, and the family was devastated. Kyi had spoken on the phone with him only a few days before. He had playfully berated her for the way she dressed on Voice of America television broadcasts. “Why are you always wearing the same *chuba*?”

he said. “You don’t have any other Tibetan dress?” She told him that it was difficult to get Tibetan clothing in the United States: “If you have time, maybe you can bring me one!”

A few hours after learning of Tashi’s death, Kyi reached his father. “He couldn’t talk much. So many people were coming to offer condolences,” she recalled later. Yet he tried to console her. “Why are you crying?” he said. “So many people die in accidents, so many die of sickness. But my son has not died without reason.”

Later that day, someone sent her the short video clip of Tashi’s last moments. Watching the footage of him folding his arms in prayer, she started to respect his fortitude. “That is a really, really strong image,” she said. “He is suffering death by putting his whole body on fire, and he’s still calling out His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s name.”

Beyond that, Tashi left no statement. Kyi suspects that Tashi’s final act was a response to the restrictions placed on Tibetan farmers and herders, the mining of Tibet’s mineral-rich land, the influx of Han Chinese. She also thinks that he may have been inspired by an ancestor, Tenpa Yarko, who, in 1958, led a local rebellion against Communist Chinese forces and shot himself rather than surrender. Yarko’s relatives came to regard him as a family deity. “We pray to him,” Kyi said. “If I talk about these things to a Westerner, it sounds like an ancient story. But it’s a reality.”

After Tashi died, Kyi told me, Chinese security forces set up roadblocks at the three entrances to his village, but local people still found ways in. A few monks came and chanted prayers, defying Chinese orders to stay away. Normally, a body must be kept for several days while astrological charts are consulted and special prayers conducted—to soothe the lingering spirit and insure a good rebirth. But Chinese officials put pressure on the leading lama in the area to make sure that Tashi’s family removed his body quickly and quietly. The second night, when there were no crowds about, men came to help Tashi’s uncle take his body across a nearby river and through the grasslands to a holy mountain. There they lit fires to work by and made preparations for a traditional “sky burial,” in which bodies are left for vultures and other scavengers.

Sky burials are still performed in some Tibetan areas where the frozen ground is too hard to dig and where, according to Buddhist precepts, the dead body is

regarded as a spent vessel. The spirit of the deceased, it is thought, has already moved on and its progress will be helped by offering wild creatures a meal. The ceremony is called *jhator*, which means “alms for the birds.” The men cleaned Tashi’s body of ash, cut up the flesh, and broke the bones to facilitate consumption. Then Tashi’s remains were strewn about on the sacred peak.

Signal Fires on the Tibetan Plateau

By Emily Strasser, *The Guernica*, 27 January 2014

Tibetan prayer flags are hung in the thin cold air of mountain peaks where the wind will carry their blessings out across a vast dry land. They are called *lungta*, Tibetan for windhorse. The bold colors—blue, white, red, green, yellow—prick out amidst the wash of tan and gold and lavender of this wide and empty moonscape. See the wind nipping, teasing, pulling at the tiny colored threads. See the horses break free, run thundering down the valleys, long tails streaming, braiding behind them.

When the flags have given all their colors to the wind and sun, worn to near-translucence, they are removed from circulation among the unclean things of this world and set alight in smoldering little heaps. Released from the materiality of bodies, they return to the elements, dissolve back into the rivers and the stones. Burning is the proper way to dispose of that which is sacred. It is to acknowledge the essential transience of life. As the flames lick the faded fabric of the flags, even then, the smoke carries their blessings into the world. Shadow horses on the wind cross borders unchecked.

Tibetans burn books, blessing cords, and images of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But historically, Tibetans have burned bodies only rarely. Flags, books, and photographs give themselves quickly to the fire, but bodies require additional fuel before they will catch flame. Trees are skinny and scarce on the Tibetan plateau, and dried pats of yak dung must be saved to warm the cooking stoves. In the past, cremation was reserved for high lamas, and because burial is impossible in the frozen Tibetan plateau, for centuries, Tibetans have practiced sky-burial. Corpses are cut apart, the pieces spread in a high, wide place to be taken up by vultures, vanishing into the blue.

Throughout the half-century of Chinese occupation, the ceremony has been banned or heavily regulated. Such ritual dismemberment allows priests and

witnesses to examine bodies up close, sometimes revealing hidden injuries in protestors and dissenters who have been detained by Chinese security forces. Though the Chinese have built modern crematories to dissuade from the tradition, many Tibetans still prefer sky-burial.

But in the last four years, the wind sweeping through the Tibetan plateau has more frequently carried the sharp odor of burning flesh and kerosene. On February 7, 2009, a twenty-year-old monk named Tapey from the Kirti monastery in eastern Tibet ran into the streets in heavy, gasoline-soaked maroon robes, and lit a match. He held a Tibetan flag and a photograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama above the flames until he was shot down by Chinese military police. On March 16, 2011, Phunstog, a twenty-one-year-old monk from the same monastery, cried out for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as his body ignited. After extinguishing the fire, police beat the monk in the street until he died. On August 15, 2007, a twenty-nine-year-old monk in Tawu drank petrol before lighting the match. Two brothers, ages 18 and 19. A nun, age 20. A boy, age 18. A girl in a vegetable market. A mother of four, a father of three, an old nomad.

Since 2009, more than 120 Tibetans have set themselves aflame to protest the Chinese occupation of their homeland. Charred silhouettes streaming flames, they run through town squares, past temples and government offices, dying with their hands raised in prayer, “freedom” on their lips.

If you are lost in the woods or the mountains, you can build a signal fire to indicate your location to rescue helicopters. It is not the red of the flames low against the ground but the dark billowing smoke rising up into the sky that will guide the rescuers to you. Whisper your prayers to the smoke, feed the fire on your fierce determination for life. In an indifferent landscape, cry out for the comfort of other hearts.

On December 19, 2013, Tsultrim Gyatso became the 125th recorded self-immolation inside Tibet. In his suicide note, he wrote:

*Dear brother
Can you hear me?
Can you see it?*

Foreign journalists are banned from Tibet and even private tourists have access only through government-arranged tours, their movements carefully

controlled. Some areas are blocked entirely to the outside world. This makes independent reporting on the self-immolations impossible, stories dependent on unconfirmed reports and anonymous sources. Messages are conveyed to Tibetans living in exile in India and Nepal through crackling radio connections, coded phone calls, and memory cards smuggled across the mountains. By the time they reach the world, stories are tangled and dulled through many retellings. Of the 100th recorded self-immolation, the *New York Times* wrote: “Another advocacy group... reported that monks living in exile in India who had received word of the self-immolation had said that during the act, Mr. Lobsang Namgyal called for the long life of the Dalai Lama...”

Over the mountains, in the green and dripping foothills of the Himalayas, Tibetans born in exile light butter lamps in the temple of the Dalai Lama and sing mantras for their brothers and sisters in Tibet. They say, *take care of your precious lives*.

A man in the Kham region of Tibet said to his friend in exile, “If we protest we are thrown into prison, where we are mistreated, get sick and die. We prefer to die for freedom at our own hands and on our own terms.”

To burn themselves is to take charge of their own bodies, to go up in a blaze and slip beyond the reach of the military police and the reeducation campaigns and the forced loyalty pledges. Yet the unlucky ones do not slip far enough. The first monk to self-immolate, Tapey, didn’t die from the flames and he didn’t die from the bullets of the military police. At a local hospital, doctors attempted to amputate his legs and right arm to remove evidence of the bullets; his mother prevented them. Tapey’s condition and whereabouts remain unknown. He is one of more than ten self-immolators who have disappeared after being taken into custody by military police. Others who have died quickly have been disposed of by authorities in rushed and secret cremations.

These days, prayer flags are made of a synthetic fabric; instead of disintegrating into soft ashes, they melt into a black and twisty mess when burned. They cling to the hollows of trees, where small animals sniff them curiously, and birds pluck at them uselessly to separate tiny colored threads for their nests. What happens to a tethered windhorse? To a prayer stuck in your throat?

The colors of the prayer flags signify the five Tibetan elements—blue for sky, white for air, red for fire, green for water, and yellow for earth. When balanced,

the elements are believed to grant harmony both internally and externally. But in recent months, village monasteries in rural corners across Tibet are flanked only by red flags against a too-blue sky. These are not the *lungta*, red for fire, but the red starred banner of China.

The Tibetans are tearing these flags down from the monasteries, stomping them into the yellow dusty earth, throwing them into the green rivers. They refuse to fly the red starred banner from the flat roofs of their mud and stone homes. Those accused of taking down the Chinese flag have been threatened, beaten, and detained by authorities.

Some of the self-immolators carry the banned Tibetan flag, on which a pair of snow lions crouches before a snowy peak and radiant sun. Each self-immolation is followed by an intense security crackdown on the area by Chinese officials. Family and friends of the protestors are questioned and threatened. Cell phones are confiscated, internet service is disconnected, and Chinese paramilitary forces stationed at crossroads monitor the movements of Tibetans.

Fire requires oxygen, fuel, and heat. Oxygen is the wind sweeping through the mountain passes, the runway of the *lungta*. Oxygen is the last breath left to cry out rangzen, independence. Fuel is a plain of dry grass, a people desiccated, a body with no other options. Heat is one thousand red starred banners hung where they are not wanted. Whipped across a plain of dry grass, a signal fire can grow into an uncontrollable wildfire; the flames can engulf everything.

In exile, where survival is both prayer and politics, prayer flags and laundry lines crisscross the sky, tangled rainbows. Children who have never known their homeland dream of mountains higher and drier than they can imagine. They carry candles for the self-immolators, and their songs rise up into the night.

Self-immolation in Tibet

By Thubten Samphel, *The Huffington Post*, 01 March 2014 Updated Mar 05, 2014

On Dec. 19, Tsultrim Gyatso, a monk of Amchok monastery near the sprawling monastic town of Labrang Tashi Kyil in the ethnically Tibetan area of the Chinese province of Gansu, set himself on fire. The 43-year-old monk left behind a handwritten note that serves as his last political testament. The note calls for Tibetan unity and the return of the Dalai Lama to his homeland.

With this latest self-immolation, since 2009, 125 Tibetans have set themselves on fire. All of them have expressed the same refrain: freedom for Tibet and return of the Dalai Lama.

As the world watches in horror these acts of fiery protest, Tibet experts have huddled into conferences to examine the causes of why Tibet is burning. The causes range from increasing alienation in a rapidly changing society to Chinese migrant workers swamping Tibetan population in the cities and towns on the plateau. Forced resettlement of nomads and rampant mining and the accompanying poisoning of river waters are another source of the bubbling discontent on the roof of the world.

The Chinese authorities are doing everything else except address these deep-seated Tibetan concerns. The authorities accuse the “Dalai clique” thousands of miles on the other side of the Himalayas of inciting self-immolation. They put Tibet under tighter restriction and greater surveillance and bar international media from reporting from the plateau and prevent information of the grim situation from flowing out of Tibet.

Certainly, China’s tacit encouragement of unemployed Chinese in neighbouring provinces to migrate to Tibet is an overwhelming fear amongst Tibetans who are increasingly marginalized from the economic boom in their homeland. The main beneficiaries are the migrant Chinese workers. Rampant mining and the damage done to the environment have driven several Tibetans to register their protest by setting themselves ablaze. The Chinese authorities’ unrelenting attitude to all these Tibetan concerns also feed Tibetan discontent.

But these miss a critical issue that drives Tibetans to set themselves on fire. The Tibetan people now realize that their hope of seeing the Dalai Lama in their lifetime is receding. This hope of welcoming the Tibetan leader to his homeland was given a big boost when talks were underway between the envoys of the Tibetan leader and the representatives of the Chinese government from 2002 to 2010. Despite the blanket ban on any information on the Dalai Lama, through news outlets from the outside world and by word of mouth, the people in Tibet were aware of these talks. Their hope was that these discussions would bring the Dalai Lama home.

The envoys of the Dalai Lama based their discussions with their Chinese counterparts on their demand for genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people

under a single administration within the scope of the constitution of the People's Republic of China.

At a press conference organised by the State Council and broadcast live by CCTV on Nov. 10, 2008, China announced its response. Zhu Weiqun, the key Chinese representative at the talks, vigorously and comprehensively rejected the Tibetan demand, pointing to it as Tibetan independence in "disguise."

The collapse of the talks ended the Tibetan people's dream of ever seeing their leader. The following February, Tapey, a monk of Kirti monastery of the ethnic Tibetan area of Ngaba in Sichuan, carrying a Tibetan flag and a picture of the Dalai Lama, set himself on fire. International media reports of the event said police fired at the smouldering figure.

While Tapey's self-immolation sparked off the ongoing fiery resistance, a revolution took place in the world of Tibetan exiles. In 2011, the Dalai Lama separated his spiritual responsibilities from his political obligations and handed his political office to an elected leader. This set off two conflicting emotions in the ranks of the Tibetans in Tibet. The realization that the Dalai Lama is no longer their political leader adds to their dismay and inflames their frustration. On the other hand, the constant refrain of freedom for Tibet among the self-immolators seems to suggest that they too want the same gift of democracy.

All this brings us to the irony of Chinese rule in Tibet. After more than 60 years of its rule in Tibet, China has failed to win over Tibetan hearts and minds. The Tibetan people's devotion to the Dalai Lama remains unshakeable.

The leadership in Beijing should consider this a strength in resolving the issue of Tibet, as suggested by some Chinese scholars within the Party establishment. One such voice on how China should deal with the Dalai Lama is that of Jin Wei, a professor at the Central Party School in Beijing that trains China's future leaders. In comments made in June and October to *Asia Weekly*, a Chinese-language publication in Hong Kong, Jin Wei said that given the loyalty of the six million Tibetans to the Dalai Lama, China should consider him as "the key to the issue of Tibet." These voices within the Party establishment suggest that the Dalai Lama's active cooperation will bring stability to Chinese rule on the plateau. Though the current leaders' hands are full with more pressing issues, they should take this advice in all seriousness.

Tibet's Monks Are Setting Themselves on Fire Again

By Jay Michaelson, *The Daily Beast*, 20 January 2015

The world's most brutal occupation took yet another bloody turn late last month, reports from Tibet now confirm. In the final week of the year, three Tibetans burned themselves alive to protest China's 56-year-long occupation of Tibet. This was the most concentrated burst of self-immolations in almost two years.

As if that weren't tragic enough, Chinese police then opened fire on Tibetans trying to give one of the victims a traditional Tibetan funeral. On Facebook, authorities deleted posts related to the self-immolations. The social media giant says the images and posts were too graphic. Activists say Facebook is cozying up to the Chinese regime.

Tibet is the largest nation without self-determination in the world today with over 3 million Tibetans living under Chinese occupation in China and about 150,000 more in exile. Unbelievably, 1.2 Tibetans—over 20% of the country's pre-occupation population—have died as a result of China's repressive policies.

By way of comparison, according to Palestinian activists, 100,000 Palestinians (2.5% of the population) have died as a result of Israel-related violence since 1948.

China, however, is not Israel. As a world superpower with growing economic clout, not to mention the world's most populous nation, there is little other nations can do, either in response to tragedies like the Cultural Revolution or Tienanmen Square massacre, or to ongoing occupations like that of Tibet.

Tibetans know this. The Dalai Lama has said since the late 1990s, that he would accept Chinese rule as long as Tibetans had “a high degree of autonomy,” and the Chinese regime stopped the population transfers that have made the Tibetan capital of Lhasa into a majority-Chinese city. But despite eight years of talks (from 2002 to 2010) and the Dalai Lama's retirement from political life in 2011, not only has no progress been made, but the situation has steadily gotten worse.

Tibetans know this too. Outside of Tibet, the younger generation has questioned the Dalai Lama's conciliatory policy. Inside of Tibet, the younger generation has become desperate, and self-immolation has become the

desperate protest of choice. Echoing the self-immolation of Buddhist monks in Vietnam, the first such act took place in India in 1998, but the tactic began to spread in earnest in 2011.

Since then, 110 to have burned themselves to death.

Self-immolations are horrific. Youtube has a (warning—incredibly graphic) video of one here. Dying by fire is said to be the greatest human fear, which is why so many people jumped out of the World Trade Center on September 11. It's an apt metaphor for rage and hopelessness, yet the self-immolators believe its dramatic nature also has the capacity to inspire. Indeed, the self-immolation of Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi ignited the Arab Spring.

There is also a specifically Buddhist flavor to the act. The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh wrote to Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1965 that “to burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance.” Yet the image of a monk or nun seated still in meditative posture while flames devour his or her body is also a provocative image for self-transcendence. It has become iconic.

It's not known if a single thread unites the three most recent protesters. The first, Sanghe Khar, came from a remote, nomadic area, and killed himself on December 16, the occasion of a Tibetan holiday. The second, Tseypey, was a nineteen-year-old girl. Her exact motive was unknown, but activists note that a previous self-immolation took place in the same town two years prior. (A horrifying video is here.) The third, a Tibetan monk named Kalsang Yeshe, was a well-known teacher who self-immolated in front of a new police station established near his monastery, long a site of confrontation between Tibetans and Chinese forces.

It was the third self-immolation that triggered yet another round of violence – although details are unclear. According to a source on Radio Free Asia, a crowd gathered around Yeshe and tried to keep the police from taking the body away, perhaps because Yeshe was a monk. But the police fired into the crowd, and took the body anyway.

Another report, by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, said that the crowd gathered around the police station, demanding the body's return, and that the police fired at that point.

Either way, Yeshe was denied a traditional funeral. His family was told that

he'd already been cremated, and his ashes dumped in a river.

The final insult, though obviously not as egregious as all that had come before, came from—of all places—Facebook. On December 26, Tibetan writer Tsering Woesser wrote a short post about Yeshe's death, including a link to video about it. Facebook deleted the post.

Tibet activists went ballistic. They noted that Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has been on a big pro-regime love-fest, publicly praising a book by Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping (reportedly stating that "I want [Facebook staff] to understand socialism with Chinese characteristics"), cozing up to censorer-in-chief Lu Wei, and speaking at a Beijing conference in Mandarin.

So the International Campaign for Tibet started a petition got a few thousand signatures (not really a big deal these days), and got Facebook's attention.

In an official response to the criticism, Facebook said that the real problem was that the posted video was too graphic:

Facebook has long been a place where people turn to share their experiences, particularly when they're connected to controversial events. Where such expression involves graphic videos, it needs to be shared responsibly, so that younger people on Facebook do not see it, and it doesn't appear without warning in peoples' News Feeds. While we continue to work on ways of giving people ways to share graphic expression responsibly, we will remove video content of this nature from our service... Any suggestion that we took action because of politics, philosophy or theoretical business interests is completely false.

Moreover, Woesser was able to repost the video later, where it remains. Surely, though, this undermines rather than proves Facebook's point. If the video was too graphic on December 24, it was too graphic on January 8, no? On the other hand, if this is about Facebook trying to save face after a small-scale PR scandal, then the about-face makes sense.

Mark Zuckerberg is now on the *Je Suis Charlie* train, affirming free expression everywhere. Nice words. We'll see if they translate into action the next time a young Tibetan sets herself on fire, and the Chinese regime seeks to sweep the ashes under the rug.

World must pressure China to end human rights violations in Tibet

By Yeshe Choesang, *Tibet Post International*, 15 May 2015

Dharamshala — As a Tibetan, we are inspired by every event of the non-violent struggle for peace and justice. The will of Tibetan people to stand up for freedom and democracy has inspired the rest of the world. This first occurred in 1949 and since then, we have seen a collective, strong voice comprised of Tibetan people and supporters across the world saying to the international community loud and clear: “We want to join the civilised world in democracy and freedom and we are committed to stand against China’s regime of occupation and oppression.” The courage of the Tibetan people and their non-violent struggle has inspired all peace-loving countries and peoples. Ironically, there is more yet to come.

We must remember the honorable stand of the Tibetan people within Tibet on behalf of freedom of conscience and expression, their tireless struggle for peace and justice against communist totalitarianism. Despite ongoing political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation and environmental destruction in occupied Tibet, they have managed to grow, excel, maintain a non-violent struggle, maintain high spirits, retain their cultural identity and maintain moral standards. Despite their many losses and the constant threats of repression and terrorism, most Tibetans share a deep desire to live in peace with the Chinese and the rest of the world. However, even after nearly 60 years of Chinese dominance, suppression and terrorism in Tibet, the Tibetan national spirit has not been broken. However, the issue of Tibet would not be like this if there was not strong international involvement and support.

Despite their courage and struggle to survive and thrive in a sea of hostility, their cry for moral support sometimes is sometimes ignored by the world. It is time for the world to say enough is enough to suppressing, repressing and terrorising Tibet and her people. Tibet is part of the inspiration to the new yearning for non-violent struggle, peace and justice and the world needs to give Tibet credit for that. The world must break its silence on China to end its unrelenting attacks against Tibet, which is trying to survive with a regime that has had no respect for individual rights and freedoms, and where some extreme elements prefer to kill their own citizens rather than grant them liberty.

Unfortunately, some countries who think of themselves as progressive,

liberal or humanitarian shamelessly call China – an unreconstructed totalitarian dictatorship – “best” or “true friend.” Such people gratify themselves by believing that they are championing the underdog when they claim the country is “still developing” in order to excuse human rights violations. Having accepted the arguments of capitalist economics, they have lost the ability to recognise and celebrate true freedom fighting when it shows up, as it has done in Tibet. Instead, they justify Chinese authorities who are in fact dictators who hide the extent of their extremism, and who now have to use paramilitary force to influence compliance, obedience and maintain power. Their iron fist policy has failed.

Tibetans in exile, who want to promote freedom and democracy in their culture of origin, are extremely discouraged by the world leaders’ apologists who claim that a totalitarian regime is a good cause. To them we must say: “No! We are the freedom fighters, the totalitarians are the evil aggressors”. Speaking to the Western media, Chinese authorities often lie and blame the West for all their problems, and Western journalists too frequently fall into their trap.

True Western liberals must start seeing the budding aspirations of the real Chinese freedom fighters, those who stand for democracy and freedom, tolerance of minorities, peace with Tibet and its people, and normal relations with the civilised world based on mutual respect. Many of them are jailed for their alleged “crimes” in China, Eastern Turkestan, Inner Mongolia and Tibet.

Today’s true freedom fighters are the Tibetans inside Tibet, as well as exiles and foreign supporters around the world who speak against the stoning of Tibetan women, the torture of Tibetan men, and the cruel and unusual punishments still going on in Tibet. We fight against cultural genocide in Tibet. We hear with horror about so many Tibetans that were slaughtered by communist terrorists in Tibet, but we are not dissuaded and continue to speak out for peace and freedom. They are the freedom fighters.

The progressive left in this world is supporting the wrong side. Instead of supporting the oppressed underdog, they support the oppressors and their communist terrorists. We must know that they understand the reality in Tibet and China. Their old causes stand in the way of progress and have become part of the problem, not the solution. Let the world support the true freedom fighters of the snow land, Tibet!

Every year since 2009 many Tibetans sit on the ground or stand in front of government offices, drink and douse themselves with kerosene or petrol, and set themselves ablaze. Most of them are immediately engulfed in flames and soon burn to death, shocking the world.

The latest self-immolation was Ney Kyab, known as Dhamkar, a 45-year-old father of seven who died last month. He was the 139th Tibetan to resort to self immolation as a form of protest against the Chinese government since 2009. They are protesting the continued oppression of the Tibetan people and the suppression of their religion by the communist government in Beijing. Unfortunately, and due in part to periodic news blackouts enforced by the PRC, their sacrifice has not galvanised world opinion. In fact, it has hardly been noticed. But these demonstrations of self-sacrifice will continue to shock the global conscience with the hope that some day their people will be set free.

The Tibetan self-immolators have strongly called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for the Tibetan people. Most parts of Tibet have suffered severe crackdowns and been under heightened restrictions and controls. The Chinese government has blamed outside forces for the self-immolations, particularly His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration – regarded by China as subversive. However, Tibetans have denied such accusations, saying that the main cause of self-immolation is “Beijing’s hard-line policies, including political repression, economic marginalisation, environmental destruction, cultural assimilation and denial of religious freedom.”

The over half-century struggle for Tibetan freedom is continuing whether the whole world is watching or not. As the communist government in Beijing struggles with issues of reform and modernisation, it has retained and even intensified its hard-line policies against the Tibetan people. Given China’s growing importance as an economic power and a general sense of fatigue in the rest of the world for meaningful action in the defense of human rights, the people of Tibet remain convinced in their quest for political freedom and religious liberty

Immolations are just one sign of tension over Communist rule

By Barbara Demick, *The La Times*, 22 August 2015

By the time Dongtuk arrived, the body was gone. A pack of matches lay on the ground, the only sign of the horror that had taken place. Dongtuk picked them up and fingered them.

About an hour earlier, one of the teenager's best friends had siphoned gasoline from a motorcycle, swallowed part of it and doused himself with the rest. Then he had set himself on fire.

Standing at the scene near Kirti Monastery, where both had been apprentice monks, Dongtuk, then 17, considered the pack of remaining matches.

"At that point, I felt no doubt at all," he said. "I wanted to die myself."

Dongtuk's friend, Phuntsog, was among the first of more than 140 ethnic Tibetans who have taken their lives through self-immolation, an act designed to telegraph the desperation of a people so marginalized as to have nothing left to lose.

Six million Tibetans live in China, many chafing under the stifling rule of the Communist Party.

In few places are the tensions so palpable, or the resistance so stubborn, as in Aba, known as Ngaba in Tibetan. With only 65,000 people, Aba has been an outsized source of trouble for the Chinese Communist Party for almost as long as the party has been in existence.

To avoid outside scrutiny, Chinese authorities restrict visits by foreigners to Aba unless chaperoned by the government. Nevertheless, a reporter from the Los Angeles Times has visited several times in the last few years, trying to understand what made the outwardly tranquil town such an engine for unrest.

Tibetans complain that they live, essentially, as second-class citizens in their own land. Their language, culture and faith are all under pressure. They attend substandard schools and, if they manage to get an education, lack the same job opportunities as the Han, the Chinese majority.

"The town is now packed with Chinese — the vegetable sellers, the shopkeepers, the restaurant owners. They don't speak Tibetan at all," said Dolma, 18, whose parents are farmers and, who, like many Tibetans, uses only one name. "My parents can barely speak Chinese. When they go to town to buy things, they can barely communicate."

Aba is located in China's Sichuan province, outside what is known as the Tibet Autonomous Region but inextricably part of what Tibetans consider their homeland. The 10-hour drive from the provincial capital, Chengdu, follows winding canyons that eventually open up, at 12,000 feet, to grassland under a horizon-to-horizon stretch of Himalayan sky.

The town is composed of one long road, officially Route 302, although Tibetans now call it the "Martyr Road." It is lined on both sides with red-metal shuttered storefronts — tea shops, shoe stores, businesses selling cellphones. Tibetan men wear long cloaks over their jeans; the women favor ankle-length skirts and floppy hats, with glossy black braids that cascade down their backs, and an occasional flash of coral jewelry.

Rising up like bookends on each side of Aba are gold-roofed Buddhist monasteries with white stupas, or prayer towers, that loom over the skyline. The largest, Kirti, is now known as the place people go to set themselves on fire.

After any self-immolation or protest, Aba is transformed into a military garrison. Checkpoints seal off travel in and out of town. Out come the security forces: the People's Liberation Army and the Chinese paramilitary forces known as *wujing* in khaki uniforms, the SWAT teams in black and the regular police in blue.

Along with the riot shields, guns and batons, they carry another essential tool: a fire extinguisher.

Huge new compounds girded by barbed wire house the police and courts. In a 2011 analysis, Human Rights Watch reported government spending on security in Aba had increased 619% between 2002 and 2009.

"You always feel like you're being watched," said Dawa, a widow in her 50s who lived in Aba near the Kirti Monastery until four years ago. "I was never interested in politics. I never got involved. But at the back of my mind, I never felt relaxed. I always thought I could be arrested any moment."

Aba has a long history as a town of troublemakers. For centuries, it was ruled by tribal kings who reported neither to the Tibetan government in Lhasa nor to the Chinese. In the 1930s, Aba was the first place where Tibetans collided with Mao Tse-tung's Red Army, which was fleeing Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists in what became known as the "Long March."

Aba became a center of resistance in 1959, and nomads fanned out into the mountains, launching guerrilla raids on Chinese installations with ancient hunting rifles or spears fashioned by local blacksmiths. In 1966, Mao's Cultural Revolution brought more violence. Monasteries were turned into warehouses or government buildings or demolished. Monks were forced to shed their robes and live lives for which they were ill-prepared.

The terror ended with Mao's death in 1976. The Chinese government started rebuilding the monasteries. With the country's economic opening, Tibetans saw their standard of living rise along with that of others in China.

Aba became famous in the 1980s for exporting entrepreneurs, who spread out across China and beyond, selling Tibetan products such as wool and medicinal herbs and introducing Tibetans to bluejeans, coffee and the Sony Walkman.

Even as they prospered, the Tibetans couldn't help but notice the Chinese were getting even richer. And the divide grew as the government began denying travel permits to Tibetans.

"The Han people have all the advantages. All the factories are located in Han areas. We don't have passports so we can't travel across borders," complained one envious businessman.

Yangchen, a rail-thin Tibetan woman in her early 30s pushing a wheelbarrow of concrete blocks up a staircase, said she was unable to find anything other than manual labor despite being able to speak excellent Chinese. Even with that, she said, the going rate for such work for Tibetans, about \$16 a day, was half of what ethnic Chinese are paid.

"Most of the businesses are owned by Han Chinese," she added, "so they naturally prefer to hire other Chinese."

The undercurrent of unhappiness with Chinese rule exploded on a Sunday morning in March 2008, in the courtyard in front of the Kirti Monastery, where monks were conducting prayers for the upcoming Tibetan New Year.

In the middle of the chants, one monk started speaking about independence. People shouted along, raising their fists in the air, ignoring the entreaties of older monks. It degenerated into a riot, with Tibetans hurling rocks at the police and trashing Chinese-owned shops, including the fanciest department store, which happened to be owned by a former People's Liberation Army soldier.

Chinese troops used tear gas and smoke bombs, then switched to live ammunition.

At least 18 Tibetans were killed, including a 16-year-old schoolgirl. It was a galvanizing moment for a small town in which almost everybody knew somebody who died.

Dhukar, now 18, a slip of a teenager with a ponytail and chipped nail polish, was a student at a Chinese-language public school and so pro-Chinese that she could have been a poster child for the Communist Party. She spoke Chinese better than Tibetan, rarely wore traditional clothing and loved the war movies on television with the matinee idols playing Chinese soldiers.

Watching the riot from a second-floor tea shop overlooking the main street, Dhukar was horrified to see Tibetans throwing rocks at the soldiers. “I thought: ‘These soldiers are here to protect us,’” she said.

But she found out later that three young people she knew had been shot, two fatally. That night the Chinese television news “talked only about Tibetans throwing rocks, nothing about Tibetans getting shot,” she said. “I knew it was lies and that I couldn’t believe Chinese television again.”

Dongtuk was a 14-year-old monk at Kirti at the time. After the protests, the monastery was placed under siege, with barracks built on the grounds. The school he had attended was closed. Police conducted regular inspections, searching for banned photos of the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader. A closed-circuit camera was erected directly outside Dongtuk’s window.

“It was really a period of crisis,” he recalled.

The first self-immolation took place in February 2009. Religious authorities were threatening to prohibit the monastery from observing a scheduled prayer ceremony, especially infuriating one monk in his late 20s who set himself on fire.

That monk, named Tapey, didn’t die, but was left badly disabled and in police custody. There were no more self-immolations in Aba until 2011, when Dongtuk’s friend, Phuntsog, killed himself.

Dongtuk explained why he nearly followed suit.

“I thought somehow if I self-immolated, the news would spread overseas and it would gain support for Tibetans, and in the end it would help people live

happy and peaceful lives,” he said.

Although he ultimately held back, many others didn’t. Among them were Dongtuk’s half-brother and Phuntsog’s brother, both of whom later burned themselves to death.

The most recent self-immolator in Aba was a 45-year-old barley farmer with seven children. He set himself on fire April 16 in the courtyard of his home so that firefighters would not be able to reach him before he perished.

Many of those who died were the descendants of Tibetans who had fought the Chinese in earlier generations. Phuntsog, 20, was the grandson of a resistance leader who fought the Chinese Communists in the late 1950s.

“Aba is a special place. Three generations have suffered from the excesses of the Chinese Communists, and their attitudes have been passed down from generation to generation,” said Kirti Rinpoche, the head of the Kirti Monastery, in an interview this year in India, where he lives in exile.

Out of 140 self-immolations in the last several years, more than a third took place in and around Aba. Hundreds of Aba residents have been arrested — and at least a dozen are still in prison — on homicide charges for helping self-immolators. These include shopkeepers who sold gasoline and people who helped with Buddhist funeral rites.

A 29-year-old homemaker, Dolmatso, was arrested in 2013 and held for more than 18 months on charges of being an accessory to murder, according to her brother. She had been on her way to pick up her daughter from school when a man burned himself.

“My sister didn’t know this man,” said Kunchok Gyatso, a Tibetan activist who works with an association of former political prisoners in Dharamsala, India. “Tibetans tried to load his corpse into a truck so that they could do a Buddhist funeral. She was helping.”

One result of the recent turmoil has been growing self-awareness of Tibetan identity. Unable to directly confront the Chinese, Tibetans have begun low-key initiatives to preserve their language, clothing and Buddhist traditions.

On June 21, when the Dalai Lama turned 80 on the Tibetan calendar, Aba residents dressed in Tibetan clothing to show their respect.

Tibetans in Aba are trying to bolster their mother tongue by banishing

Chinese from their vocabulary. A computer is now a *tsekor* instead of a *diannao*, and a cellphone is a *kapor*, not a *shouji*.

“We keep a jar around so that if you say a Chinese word by mistake, you pay a fine,” usually about 15 cents, said a cultural activist in his 30s who asked not to be quoted by name because he feared Chinese authorities. “Then we will take the money in the jar and go out and have a meal together.”

Tibetans say the Chinese government has been paying more attention to the needs of Tibetans since the immolations began. Photos of the Dalai Lama were put back last year inside Kirti Monastery and are gradually making a reappearance on shop walls.

A few weeks ago, the prefecture to which Aba belongs organized a trip for journalists to see government-built housing for Tibetan nomads. Reporters were brought to the spacious home of a former nomad who had been the Communist Party secretary for his village and shown a guesthouse displaying large photographs of Mao and the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

Last summer, many nomads could be seen pitching white waterproof canvas tents distributed free by the local government, replacing the bulkier traditional tents made of black felt. The local government also gave out lumber to build pens for yaks and freed up grant money for Tibetans to make additions to their homes.

A 21-year-old college student, Roumo, visiting her nomadic parents during school break, showed off her brand-new iPhone 5, and a solar panel powering a new flat-screen television.

“Life has changed so much. We have vehicles, phones, television, electricity,” said Roumo.

Said another Tibetan woman, Lhamo, a semi-literate homemaker in her 30s: “I don’t approve of self-immolation, but I have to admit we are getting more from the government. The self-immolators did make sacrifices to improve our lives.”

Still, she said many of her neighbors remain desperately poor.

“In my village, people eat nothing but *tsampa*,” she said, referring to roasted barley, a Tibetan staple. “They plant barley and before it comes in, they don’t have much to eat.”

And even among those who are doing well, resentments sometimes simmer.

Tenzin is a middle-aged businessman who has a considerable real estate portfolio, drives an imported SUV and carries a recent model iPhone.

“I have everything,” he said. “Everything but my freedom.”

Tibet’s Epidemic of Suicides by Fire

By Tsering Woeser, *The New Republic*, 6 February 2016

February 27, 2009, was the third day of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. It was also the day that self-immolation came to Tibet. The authorities had just cancelled a Great Prayer Festival (Monlam) to commemorate the victims of the government crackdown in 2008. A monk by the name of Tapey stepped out of the Kirti Monastery and set his body alight on the streets of Ngawa, in the region known in Tibetan as Amdo, a place of great religious reverence and relevance, now designated as part of China’s Sichuan Province. Losar is usually a celebratory festival, but it was marked by the majority of Tibetans in 2009 in silent mourning—a mourning that continues to this day. On account of the unrelenting government suppression that followed in the wake of protests across Tibet the year before, a slogan has spread secretly among the people of Tibet: “No Losar.” Tibetans had decided not to celebrate Losar, as a means of resisting Chinese rule. And continuing this resistance, Tapey’s final act would become the beginning of a series of self-immolations that have spread across Tibet and beyond in recent years.

Since that day in February 2009 when the flames of protest were first lit in Tibet, I have documented every act of self-immolation and shared this information on my blog. I have provided daily updates, just as I first chronicled the protest movement of 2008.

Back in February of 2009, as I read about Tapey’s final act, I never could have imagined that so many Tibetans would sacrifice their bodies and lives to these flames, in a series of protests unlike any that the world had ever seen. And I certainly never could have predicted that my blogging would barely be able to keep pace with the lives sacrificed for this cause. In Ngawa alone, thirty-nine more people have followed in Tapey’s footsteps. At least ten Tibetans have given themselves to the flames on the same street where Tapey self-immolated; it is now known among Tibetans as “Heroes’ Lane.” As of July 9, 2015, 146

Tibetans have chosen the path of self-immolation. This is unprecedented in human history.

The residents of Amchok are known for their devoutness and their unyielding struggles against Chinese rule. In the 1950s, almost all of the nomadic tribes of Amchok engaged in a lengthy uprising against the CCP's army—a struggle that ended in state suppression that drove them nearly to the point of extinction. One of the few texts to explore this history is Tenzin Palbar's unforgettable memoir *The Tragic History of My Fatherland*. In no uncertain terms, its author describes a “cruel and inhuman massacre” in which courageous local resistance fighters against CCP rule faced a well-armed opponent with no qualms about using the harshest means to crush rebels and punish the populace.

Amchok is located within the larger Amdo region, and any discussion of history or the contemporary situation here must begin with the year 1958. It was in 1958 that the Chinese army and government perpetrated a human tragedy that affected nearly every family across Tibet, but especially here. This history is engraved deeply in the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people, so that some refer to the Cultural Revolution simply as “1958,” despite the fact that the Cultural Revolution did not begin until 1966. The year 1958 has become a shorthand for tragedy—a symbolic gathering point for all of the misfortunes that befell us after “liberation.”

Since 2009, twenty-one people in the Kanlho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture have self-immolated. Other than one middle school student and another youth working in Lhasa, all of the self-immolators were nomads. In Amchok alone, there have been four cases of nomads committing self-immolation, while at least sixteen out of Kanlho's twenty-one self-immolations have been carried out by members of the traditional nomadic tribes of Amchok—survivors or descendants of the “rebel bandits” slaughtered in the 1950s

On January 12, 2013, a twenty-two-year-old nomad from Amchok, Tsering Tashi, followed the path of self-immolation. That morning, he had put on a clean set of traditional Tibetan clothes and let out his livestock to graze. Around noon, he wrapped his body in wire and then walked into town. His family had no idea of where he was going or what he was about to do.

Its roads not even paved, Amchok township is the type of simple and nondescript small town that you will find in many Tibetan areas. No one saw Tsering Tashi pouring the gasoline onto his body, but we do know that the iron wire wrapped around him made his clothing, soaked in gasoline, burn even more intensely. There, on the dirt road in Amchok, Tsering Tashi set his body alight, as he repeatedly called out a Tibetan term of respect and endearment for the Dalai Lama: “Oh Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso, oh Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso . . .”

Soon he fell to the ground. The military police arrived and tried to take his body away, but the people surrounding him kept them away, reciting prayers as the flames continued to consume his charred corpse, then lifting up his body and walking past the heavily armed military police to bring him home. Neighbors, family members, and monks brought khatas and conducted a final heartfelt prayer ceremony for him. But officials and public security arrived soon thereafter, demanding that Tsering Tashi’s grieving family cremate him immediately. One official, beating his fist on the family’s table, declared: “Your family has ties to the ‘splittist Dalai Lama clique.’”

More police soon arrived to seal off the entrance to the village, in order to block people from nearby villages coming to pay their final respects. Concerned for the safety of his family and his entire village, Tsering Tashi’s father agreed to have his son’s body cremated that night. Unable to cope with all that was happening around her, his mother passed out and had to be taken to the hospital. In the middle of that cold, dark night, under official monitoring that felt even colder, Tsering Tashi was yet again engulfed in flames, completing his final sacrifice.

In late 2012, my husband Wang Lixiong, a Chinese scholar engaged in the research on Tibet, analyzed the twenty-six final statements from self-immolators available at that time. Wang’s approach was based in his belief that interpreting protestors’ final statements was essential to understanding these acts: even if some statements were only a few words long, he felt certain that classifying them into categories and analyzing their most common themes could provide a clearer picture of the aspirations behind these acts of protest.

Today, more than three years later, we have access to a significantly larger sample of forty-nine final statements. They include written statements, recordings, and comments made to friends and family. Of the forty-nine cases of self-immolation represented by these statements, forty-four self-immolators

are deceased, while two recovered and are living in exile, and the fate of three others remains unknown.

Facing unimaginable pain in order to voice support for all suffering Tibetans, while at the same time maintaining one's sense of dignity within a dehumanizing political environment, self-immolation enacts an extreme form of self-sublimation. "They think we are scared of their weapons and their repression, but they are wrong," wrote Tenzin Phuntsok in a leaflet he distributed before his self-immolation at the age of forty-six. "My head held high, I step forward and set my body alight . . . for the dignity of Nangdrol, and for the Tibetan people, to whom I owe unending gratitude" wrote Nangdrol, an eighteen-year-old who self-immolated in Ngawa in 2012. "I am willing to take on this pain for the multitudes of living beings who are suffering," wrote Rechok, a mother of three who set her body alight and died outside a monastery in Ngawa's Barma Township in 2012. "I am willing to sacrifice my body and my blood to show my support and respect," wrote Golok Tulku Sobha Rinpoche, the most senior monastic figure to have self-immolated.

These protestors undergo the ultimate pain of burning each and every cell of their bodies, without harming other living beings, simply to make their voices and grievances heard. Yet the Chinese government has labeled them "terrorists." The Chinese government has declared self-immolation a crime, thus making those who commit this act "criminals." And the state has furthermore unveiled an ambitious "campaign against self-immolation" that extends throughout Tibetan areas of the country. One aspect of this campaign has been collective punishment of the Tibetan community, including the arrest and sentencing of relatives, friends, and neighbors of self-immolators. Another has been a resolute blockade on any and all information related to instances of self-immolation. In this environment, news of such incidents only manages to find its way out of Tibet days, weeks, or even months after the fact. And because of this information blockade, the real number of self-immolations may be considerably higher than is currently known.

Can self-immolation really resolve the issues facing Tibet? No one knows for sure. But as Tenzin Phuntsok wrote in his final statement, these protestors are "unable to go on just waiting for the rest of their lives." As heartbreaking as this may seem, this statement merits careful consideration by anyone who hopes to understand the origins and motivations of this wave of self-immolations: the

need to take action, and to make one's voice heard in an environment in which there is no other means of doing so.

Readers should not think that there is not the slightest trace of violence in any of these statements: the action they refer to is of a different type. The Tibetan people's religious beliefs, combined with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's unwavering stance on nonviolence, place strong restraints upon our people. These teachings are embodied in the act of self-immolation: the self can be annihilated, but no one else may be harmed. Choepak Kyap and Sonam, two young men in their twenties who self-immolated together in Ngawa's Barma Township in 2012, left a final statement in which they explicitly stated: "We do not want anyone else to be harmed."

The final statements of nine self-immolators clearly articulated protests against the Chinese government, or demands directed at it. Furthermore, a number of protestors have shouted protest slogans at the moment of immolation, such as "Allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet!" "Free Tibet!" and "Release the Panchen Lama!" Finally, even in those cases where no final statement was left and no slogans were shouted, self-immolation in itself is clearly a deeply symbolic act of protest and demand for change in Tibet.

China's Cult of Stability Is Killing Tibetans

By Kevin Carrico, *The Foreign Policy*, 13 June 2017

On the morning of May 19, 22-year-old Tibetan monk Jamyang Losal set himself alight in Qinghai province's Tsojang Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Losal, who died at the scene, was the 150th Tibetan to set himself on fire in protest against Chinese policy on the Tibetan Plateau since 2009. He had previously been detained for 10 days for posting a photo of the Dalai Lama on the heavily monitored messaging service WeChat. After this fiery act of protest, he was taken away again for the last time by police, who refused to return his body to his family.

Ever since 1989 and the Tiananmen Square protests, the Chinese state has explicitly prioritized "stability above all else" (*wending yadao yiqie*). The goal of this policy is an authoritarian feedback cycle combining political and

cultural controls from the top with rapid economic growth from below that theoretically produces bottom-up support for the party-state. This stability drive targets any potential source of political, cultural, legal, or spiritual opposition and paints its foes, particularly in Tibet, as “cultic.” But this drive for stability has become a cult itself, one backed by the state: a totalitarian form of belief that refuses all counterevidence or opposition and that must be embraced regardless of consequences. This cult is locking people in Tibet, both Han Chinese and Tibetan, into a downward spiral of anger and pain.

Since 2009, hundreds of Tibetans have taken the same drastic step as Jamyang Losal: Sonam Tso, a mother who set herself alight in Ngaba, a Tibetan area of Sichuan province, in 2016, leaving behind five children; Sungdue Kyab, a 17-year-old who survived his self-immolation in Labrang in Gansu province in 2012, only to be held indefinitely at an undisclosed location since; and Tapey, a Kirti monk who was the first to douse his monk’s robes in gasoline and set them alight in 2009. Looking back at the images smuggled out of Tibet showing Tapey walking down a street in Ngaba with his robes engulfed in flames, one cannot help but ask: Why is this happening? And where is this taking China and Tibet?

Self-immolations have been effective tools of public protests in the past: Consider the famously powerful image of Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc burning himself to death in Vietnam. But in China, where self-immolations have now been ongoing for eight full years, they barely make a ripple. There is a common Chinese perception that Tibetans are “simple” and “primitive” people, who in their worship of a “feudal slave owner” — known elsewhere as the Dalai Lama — fail to recognize just how much they have benefited from Chinese largesse. Consequently, there is an assumption that immolators must have somehow been tricked by external cult forces manipulating their “primitive” and “irrational” minds.

That assumption is reinforced by the primary Chinese public memory of self-immolation, the alleged Falun Gong supporters who set themselves on fire in protest in Tiananmen Square in 2001. Those scenes were gratuitously and repeatedly broadcast on state television, reinforcing notions of self-immolation as a cultic act, with vulnerable minds tricked by manipulative elders. Although some Chinese express sympathy and understanding in private, the majority see self-immolations in Tibet as another example of the simple and easily misled

mind of the native.

But the reality of self-immolation is far more complicated. Self-immolation is part of a tradition of protest against Chinese rule in Tibet that extends as long as China's occupation, from uprisings against "social reform" policies throughout eastern Tibet in the 1950s to large-scale demonstrations against cultural and political controls in the late 1980s to the latest uprising in 2008 that spread across the plateau in the months before the Beijing Olympics.

This last series of protests, however, became the target of an unrelenting state crackdown, followed by the all-encompassing securitization of the Tibetan Plateau in the name of sacred stability. Since 2008, the People's Armed Police, China's paramilitary enforcers, have roamed the streets of Tibetan areas on foot and in armored vehicles in a dramatic show of force, backed up by video cameras that watch every movement in real time and record all events for further review. Checkpoints monitor and control the flow of people from one place to another, targeting ethnic Tibetans for particular scrutiny in their own homeland. International journalists and researchers, meanwhile, are blocked from entering Tibetan areas to monitor and report on these developments.

Most insidiously, "the grid" management system (Tibetan: *drwa ba*, Chinese: *wangge*), represented as a public interest project to provide access to social services, brings personalized surveillance activities down to the household level. A network of community workers overseeing sections of cities divided into "grids" provide real-time data on their territory, to be analyzed by security officials for the slightest hint of potential unrest. The results have been so pleasing that this model has now been exported to the equally troubled region of Xinjiang.

The obsessive securitization of the Tibetan Plateau, seeing and tracking everything, has created an environment in which collective acts of resistance are now virtually impossible — they are nipped in the bud well before they could ever evolve into large-scale protests. Even lone individual protestors shouting slogans in support of Tibetan independence or the return of the Dalai Lama are disappeared before their message can be heard.

All of this would seem to be a sign of enhanced stability, the state's goal. Yet it is precisely this "stable" environment that has produced self-immolation as a form of protest. As Tibetan writer Tsering Woeser observes in her recent book

Tibet on Fire, self-immolation requires little planning, can be executed on one's own in an instant, and is thus virtually impossible to stop. At the same time, it conveys an unambiguous message of resistance. It is the most dramatic way of speaking out when everything else is silenced.

While the cult of stability makes any other forms of protest impossible in Tibet, the issues driving protest — religious oppression, the second-rate status of Tibetans, exploitation of the poor — haven't gone away. The stamping-down of protest in the name of stability has created the string of self-immolations, a final defiance that no security measure can stop. This practice has now taken on deep cultural and religious significance as a form of self-sacrifice for a higher cause. And this development, perceived as yet another threat to stability, has in turn led to ever greater determination by the state to stamp out dissent once and for all through an anti-immolation crackdown.

Local officials are under huge pressure to stop any more self-immolators, but as devotees of the cult of stability, the only recourse they have in their toolbox is further oppression — precisely the original source of protestors' grievances. Families of self-immolators, even entire villages, are collectively punished for self-immolations: Relatives are detained, the bodies of self-immolators are held by police, and the towns self-immolators come from are denied state funds.

Surveillance is intensified, and those who report acts of self-immolation to the outside world are prosecuted. State-sponsored religious authorities condemn self-immolation as a form of violence in violation of Buddhist teachings — rather than as part of a long and honorable tradition of self-sacrifice. Propaganda has gone into overdrive, either accusing self-immolators of mental instability or accusing the “Dalai clique” of masterminding these protests and paying their enactors. The state accuses manipulative and corrupt monks in exile in India or the supposedly broken minds of the protestors — foreclosing any consideration of the role the government's own orthodoxies play in the current situation in Tibet.

In reality, the clampdown on protest since 2008 produced self-immolation as the only possible way to make one's voice heard. In turn, the self-immolations have produced further clampdowns. And in response to this deteriorating situation, we see continued self-immolations. And so, eight years on, we face a grim milestone of 150 burnt bodies with no substantive change in the situation and no end in sight.

There was hope when Xi Jinping first took power in 2012 that there could be changes in Chinese policy toward Tibet. Yet Xi appears to be a true believer in the cult of stability: The crackdown on civil society that has emerged during his reign has only made the already quite restrictive political environment increasingly constricted. While China's leaders are typically portrayed as pragmatists gradually measuring the costs and benefits of various policies, on matters of stability and Tibet policy they are true believers, drinking the Kool-Aid of failed methods as the ultimate solution.

When we talk about the historical relationship between China and Tibet, or about the present-day effects of Chinese policy in Tibet, there are bound to be differences of opinion. But when people are setting themselves on fire, one after another, there's no longer any way to dodge the fact that something needs to change. As long as Chinese leaders remain dedicated to the cult of stability, though, it never will.

Self-Immolation for Tibet: Why the Dalai Lama's Silence is Costing Lives

By James Flynn, *Brown Political Review*, 17 March 2018

Even so, to understand the motivations for self-immolation, one cannot overlook the role that Tibetan Buddhism plays, of which nonviolence is a central tenet. The Dalai Lama's apparent change on the question of Buddhist doctrine—namely, whether Buddhism justifies self-immolation—echoes the discrepant responses of Buddhist authorities to the issue. Tsering Wooser, Tibetan activist and author of *Tibet on Fire*, asserts that, rather than perpetrators of suicide or of killing, the self-immolators are bodhisattvas, enlightened individuals who sacrifice on others' behalves. She cites a “high ranking monk,” who sees these acts as having the purpose of protecting the Dharma. A more nuanced but also favorable view of self-immolation is that of Tenzin Kun-khyab of the Central Tibetan Administration. He places importance on the acts' underlying motivation, that is, on whether one burns himself for altruistic or for selfish and hateful purposes; and he cites the story told in *Jataka Tales* of the Buddha's offering his own body to feed a tigress. On the other end of the spectrum, as Chung Tsering describes in his 2012 survey of articles by members of the Tibetan exile community, some Tibetan Buddhists consider self-immolation an act of violence because it violates the *Vinaya*, the Buddhist moral code, which forbids suicide, and—a more outlandish reason—

because it “brings harm upon numerous micro-living beings surviving on one’s body.” The Dalai Lama does not extensively elaborate on his view, but as of 2017 he seems to be leaning to the latter camp (although he has never mentioned the ethics of human microbiota).

Whatever his religious views, the fact is that if the Dalai Lama does not condemn self-immolation, more people will die. His concern for the families of the protesters comes from the right place; indeed, they would be sad to hear that the Dalai Lama disapproves of the suicide of their relatives. Such sadness, however, does not compare to the potential deaths of Tibetan self-immolators to come. Each year since 2011, there have been at least three, at most 86, Tibetan self-immolators. The phenomenon does not look to be stopping on its own, and therefore needs the Dalai Lama’s condemnation.

The huge and ever-growing death toll of those who have burned themselves in his name should be enough to spur the Dalai Lama to action; but the inefficacy of these protests makes them all the more depressing. He himself, as mentioned above, has questioned their efficacy, even though he has not taken the next step of discouraging them. The Chinese government has effectively propagandized the protests: it has branded the self-immolators as terrorists who mindlessly follow the “feudal slave owner” the Dalai Lama. In the nine years since the first self-immolation by Tapey, the Tibetan people have seen virtually no substantive improvement of their condition. Worse, the self-immolations actually may be backfiring: after the initial waves of these protests, China tightened security across Tibet, and now, in order to deter protesters, Chinese authorities go to such lengths as to punish the self-immolators’ families and even their entire villages.

On the surface, the self-immolations have achieved at least one of their goals, which is that they alerted the world’s attention to the struggle of Tibet. In 2012, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, moved by the “desperate” forms of protests to which Tibet had resorted, called on China to address the allegations of human rights violations. She underscored the need for the Chinese government to permit the freedom of expression and to allow for peaceful demonstrations. The oppression of Tibet is a dire and horrific crisis, which China has an ethical imperative to alleviate. In the meantime, however, an imperative is also on the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan Buddhist authorities, who have done a bad job of curbing the politically and religiously

motivated suicides in their name. Too many have died; after more than 150 self-immolations, another one will not anymore change the world's perspective on the oppression of Tibet. In the same statement, Pillay also said, "I recognize Tibetans' intense sense of frustration and despair which has led them to resort to such extreme means, but there are other ways to make those feelings clear." Now the Dalai Lama must—definitively and without reservation—urge his followers to employ those other ways.

What Ever Happened To Hollywood's 'Free Tibet' Rallying Cry?

By Massoud Hayounupdated, *The Pacific Standard*, 14 August 2018

Pema Gyaltsen, a 24-year-old Tibetan man, reportedly set himself alight late last week—one of many such protests in recent years against what rights activists call brutal and repressive policies in China's far West. Gyaltsen, who lived through his self-immolation, was promptly arrested by authorities; his whereabouts remain unknown.

The international advocacy group Free Tibet first reported Gyaltsen's self-immolation Sunday on its website, basing the news on information obtained by research partners in northern India, says John Jones, an organizer with Free Tibet.

"The reasons for the self-immolation protests are the occupation and the accompanying human rights abuses," Jones says. "Tibetans often leave notes or shout slogans during their self-immolation protests, calling for Tibet to be free, for an end to China's repressive policies, for an end to the attacks on their culture and religion." The incident was not widely reported in most Western outlets.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Chinese officials expressed outrage to their counterparts in India, after the current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso—the Tibetan religious leader living in exile in Dharamsala, India—participated in an Indian state-sponsored Buddhism conference there.

New Delhi typically refrains from indicating any official support for the Dalai Lama, whom Beijing accuses of inciting Tibetan separatism from China. But it appeared this week the Dalai Lama was becoming involved in a long-standing deadlock between the two competing regional and world superpowers,

entrenched in territorial disputes more than a half-century after the Sino-Indian War. Like Gyaltzen's self-immolation, the news development received little attention in the Western media.

This trend is nothing new: With the exception of United States government-funded outlet Voice of America—which routinely reports on human rights violations in hard-to-reach parts of China and other deeply censored media environments—Americans and the international community have largely turned their attention away from Tibet.

And that worries some ethnic Tibetans.

“Not only does the New York Times mention Tibet less, and not only does the American public ... not talk about the issue, and not only is it Hollywood sidestepping this issue,” says a Tibetan activist who asked not to be named out of fear of reprisal from authorities. “The whole world is doing this. It’s because the Chinese government’s influence is growing.”

“But I also believe that as in everything in this life, there is karma,” the activist adds. “So I don’t believe that the Chinese government can always have good luck.”

It wasn’t always this way. In the 1990s, Tibet was Hollywood’s cause célèbre. As a result, for about a decade, Americans often heard of human rights violations in Tibet.

In 1993, the Academy Awards imposed a ban on actor Richard Gere (he’s since been rehabilitated) in response to a speech he gave advocating for Tibetan rights while presenting the Oscar for Art Direction. In his speech, Gere expressed his wishes that “we could all kind of send love and truth and a kind of sanity to Deng Xiaoping right now in Beijing, that he will take his troops and take the Chinese away from Tibet and allow people to live as free independent people again.”

Four years after Gere’s controversy, two big-budget films set in Tibet were released: In October, there was *Seven Years in Tibet*, starring Brad Pitt, and, in December, there was Martin Scorsese’s *Kundun*. Both films featured appearances by the Dalai Lama. One year later, the Dalai Lama himself released his book of philosophy, *The Art of Happiness*. A favorite at the time, it has sold well over a million copies.

Taking Hollywood's lead, Free Tibet student groups proliferated in high schools and colleges across the nation.

But these days, the website for the Gere Foundation, dedicated to Tibet and the fight against HIV/AIDS, appears not to have been updated in years. An attempt to reach the organization was not successful, and Gere's agent did not respond to a request for comment on his recent work for Tibetan rights.

Gere is, however, still sticking up for Tibetans, even if his activism isn't as loud or widely publicized as it once was. In February, he met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel amid the Berlin release of his forthcoming film *The Dinner*. At the meeting, the two reportedly discussed Tibet, among other international affairs.

"For several years recently [Gere] was more engaged with his work on HIV/AIDS than on Tibet, so his return to the Tibet issue, let alone as a strategic player, is a new development," says Robert Barnett, a Columbia University professor and preeminent scholar on Tibet. "Perhaps media coverage has finally become seen as of secondary importance?"

"As for the Dalai Lama's popularity, there is a slight shift in his role in the West from being an advocate on the Tibet-China issues to being a leading figure on ethics and religious tolerance in general," Barnett adds. "The latter position continues to give him a huge audience in universities and other sectors around the world. That's a shift in the type of media focus he's interested in, rather than a decline in his profile."

Some activists for the Tibetan cause blame a more turbulent world for the decline in international awareness of Tibetan affairs.

"There are many conflicts taking place around the world and Tibet has to compete for news coverage with the frequently shocking news from Syria, Ukraine, Sub-Saharan Africa, and other areas where there are wars and natural disasters," Jones says. "Tibet retains many of its supporters from the 1990s, but, given the suffocating level of control that China is imposing, it is hard for news to get out of Tibet and for people around the world to get a true sense of how repressive China's rule there is."

Many advocates for human rights in China have observed that, with the country's rise in political and economic power, Washington has been less willing to comment on Beijing's repression of civil liberties.

Moving forward, Jones says, “it is up to Tibetan groups and Tibet’s supporters, both celebrities and regular people, to keep reporting on Tibet, so that it remains in the public consciousness.”

As for China’s comments to India: Last week, the Dalai Lama was present at an Indian-government sponsored Buddhism conference in India’s eastern district of Nalanda.

“It does look as if Delhi is signaling a somewhat tougher stance to Beijing for the moment, and that’s something the Dalai Lama has long called for,” says Barnett, the Columbia professor.

But don’t expect to find the Dalai Lama at the center of any major conflagrations between New Delhi and Beijing in the near future, Barnett predicts. “Neither [the Dalai Lama] nor Delhi will want to push this too aggressively,” he says. “For both of them, it is an element within their larger negotiating strategies rather than a prelude to confrontation.”

GLOBAL RESPONSE

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: ASA 17/045/2011, Wednesday 28 September 2011

Document - China: More Tibetan monks set themselves on fire to protest repression

Monday's reported self-immolation attempt by two young Tibetan monks in Sichuan province is the third such incident since March this year. According to the official Chinese news agency, the two were promptly taken to a hospital. However, the Tibetan exiled sources say that their exact whereabouts are unknown and that it is possible that one of them died on the spot.

These recent immolations have reportedly been protests against the Chinese government's repression of freedom of religion and cultural rights in Tibetan areas. Amnesty International urges the Chinese government to end these repressive practices immediately and respect the right of Tibetans to practice their culture and religion.

The Chinese government has clamped down on the monasteries at the centre of these incidents:

Kirti monastery in Ngaba county, Sichuan Province, and Nyitse monastery in Kardze country, also in Sichuan. The latest attempt at Kirti this week has taken place only six weeks after the death of a Nyitse monk Tsewang Norbu, who self-immolated on 15 August, calling for freedom and for the Dalai Lama's return.

Tsewang Norbu's fatal act was reportedly motivated by the Chinese authorities' heavy-handed tactics since the Kirti Monastery monk Phuntsok's self-immolation in March.

One of the monks who self-immolated this week is reported to be Phuntsok's brother. Six months ago, Phuntsok is said to have shouted slogans such as "Long live the Dalai Lama" as he set himself on fire.

Phuntsok's act recalled the 2009 protest by another Kirti monastery monk Tapey, who burned himself while raising a self-made Tibetan flag with a picture of the Dalai Lama at its centre. Phuntsok's suicide this March was followed by protests, mass arrests of people including around 300 Kirti monastery monks, enforced disappearances and possible killings by the security forces. High schools where students expressed solidarity with the Kirti monastery monks were report-

edly blockaded and raided, and books burned by security forces.

Two elderly Tibetans - a 65-year old woman called Sherkyi and a 60-year old man Dongkho – died after local residents clashed with security forces whilst trying to stop the mass arrest of Kirti monastery monks. Another Tibetan, Chukpel, 24 died in hospital soon after police reportedly beat him. He had been staging a protest for self-governance for Tibetans outside a local police station in Ngaba. Three of the monks arrested, one of them Phuntsok's uncle, have recently been sentenced to 10 and 13 years imprisonment for encouraging the self-immolation or for “intentional homicide”. Among the some 300 monks detained in March were children, whom the Chinese authorities say were taken away for “patriotic education”, which consists of denunciation of the Dalai Lama and inculcation in the Chinese government's version of Tibetan history.

Most of the monks have since been released, but Amnesty International knows of least five more people who have each been sentenced to three years imprisonment in ongoing criminal proceedings.

Their names are Lobsang Khedup, Lobsand Gyatso, Dhonyoe Dorjee, Lobsang Dhargay and Kunchok Tsultrim. The exact charges and other details of their trials are unknown, but Amnesty International has frequently documented violations of the right to fair trial in Tibet and elsewhere in China. At least three others have been assigned to Re-education Through Labour. According to Tibetan exile sources, the security forces took control in Kardze after the Nyitse monastery immolation last month. There were reports that the security forces cut off water, electricity and food supplies to the monastery. Internet and mobile phone text messaging services are reportedly unavailable in Ngaba county. And in Kirti monastery, the “patriotic education” of monks continues on a daily basis.

International Secretariat, Amnesty International,
1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK

China: UN Members Should Address Rights Crisis in Tibet

Back UN Experts; Consider Contact Group on Deteriorating Conditions

21 September 2012

Governments concerned about the worsening human rights situation in Tibet should meet on the sidelines of next week's United Nations General Assembly to discuss the formation of a Tibet contact group, Human Rights Watch said today.

A contact group could press the Chinese government to consider resuming meaningful negotiations with Tibetan representatives, and visibly demonstrate heightened international concern about deteriorating conditions.

"The response of governments to the Chinese government's renewed crack-down in Tibet is hardly commensurate to the scope and scale of the crisis," said Sophie Richardson, China director. "Concerned governments should set aside fears of irking Beijing and press China to respect Tibetans' basic rights."

Human Rights Watch also urged governments to express support for the long-standing requests by UN special rapporteurs, as well as diplomats, journalists, and other independent monitors, to have access to Tibetan areas.

The Chinese government, in response to a wave of self-immolations, has strengthened its blackout on information and communications into and out of Tibet, increased repressive security operations, and multiplied arbitrary detentions. In 2012, 38 Tibetans have set themselves on fire, 32 fatally; some stated that they were doing so to protest Chinese government policies. The government continues to bar independent observers to the region.

In August 2012, Chinese officials responded to protests with sweeping arrests, detentions, and further controls, especially inside monasteries. Tibetan human rights groups reported the arrest of three monks from Tsodun (Caodeng in Chinese) monastery in Ma'erkang County (Barkham in Tibetan) on August 12, and two more arrests on August 16. On each of the intervening nights, armed police entered the monastery and beat and questioned the monks, purportedly asking about those individuals who had self-immolated. No reasons for the arrests are known to have been given. A similar armed raid on Zilkar monastery in Chenduo county (Trindu in Tibetan), Qinghai, on September 1 resulted in the detention of five monks and the confiscation of computers and other items.

Ever-increasing government restrictions on religion, culture, and other basic

freedoms have led to at least some of the self-immolations in recent years. A total of 51 Tibetans have self-immolated in Tibetan areas since February 2009, and of the 38 immolations in 2012, seven took place in August alone. In several cases the deaths of people who set themselves on fire triggered incidents or protests involving several hundred people, with thousands attending funerals.

Rather than attempt to address underlying grievances, the Chinese government's primary response has been to increase security presence and restrictive regulations across the region.

Background

In late 2011, the Chinese government reversed the policy that had allowed Buddhist monasteries in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) to be run by monks who comply with government regulations. A system was introduced that places almost every monastery in Tibet under the direct rule of government or Chinese Communist Party officials who will be permanently stationed in each religious institution with orders to compile files on each monk and nun, as well as check their political reliability. The measure, unprecedented in Tibetan areas, was contained in an "important memorandum" on "mechanisms to build long-term stability in Tibet," according to official news reports in December 2011.

The government's increased security and restrictions are particularly acute in and around monasteries. While there were reports in May 2012 that security forces had begun to leave religious institutions that had seen immolations, such as Kirti monastery in Aba county (Ngaba in Tibetan), in Sichuan, there appears to have been a reversal of that process in recent months, with police and other security personnel entering the monasteries. Most of those who have set themselves on fire in protest are current or former monks and nuns.

Tibetans remain subject to much greater restrictions on information than Chinese-speakers or those living in other parts of China. Throughout 2012, Human Rights Watch has documented a gradual tightening of restrictions on news, media, and other communications in Tibet, which has resulted in cutting off Tibetans in China from information not subject to the government's control. People who seek to challenge that control are harshly treated. In August, the authorities reported that Lho Yonten Gyatso, a monk at Kashi (Kaxi in Chinese) monastery in Aba county, Sichuan Province who had been missing for eight months, was sentenced to seven years in prison. He had been convicted on June 18 for passing

information about Tibet to exiles abroad, including a photo of an immolation protest. At least two other Tibetan monks were given prison sentences in August 2011 for sending out similar photographs of an immolation protest.

Chinese government policies on information control have expanded to include new measures announced in May 2012 in the TAR that list locally specific controls on internet use, text messages, phone ownership, and photocopying as necessary to “ensure the absolute security of Tibet’s ideological and cultural realm.” As a result, Tibetans have no legal access to independent news.

Tibetans, including the majority in the countryside, are also being made to undergo political education in villages, schools, and monasteries throughout the region since late last year.

Restrictions on the right to freedom of movement have also increased. Tibetans from other provinces attempting to travel into the TAR face increasing limitations on travel to Lhasa and other parts of the central Tibetan region, and an unknown number of Tibetans from other provinces have been deported from Lhasa, including some with valid residence permits.

The government has also targeted Tibetans returning from trips in India and Nepal. Since February 2012, over 1,000 people have been detained without any judicial process for political re-education – termed “legal education” by the government – after travelling to Nepal and then India to hear religious teachings by the Dalai Lama, even though most have travelled on legal documents. Except for those aged 60 years or older, most of the detainees were reportedly confined for two months before being released.

Several governments, particularly those with official bilateral human rights dialogues with the Chinese government, have expressed concern publicly about the deteriorating environment in Tibet, documented human rights abuses there, or had detailed private conversations about the immolations and other alarming developments with their interlocutors in Beijing. But most have limited their calls for action to exhorting the Chinese government to resume meaningful negotiations with Tibetan representatives – a step the Chinese government is unlikely to take in the absence of significant, coordinated international pressure.

“The many years of restricting Tibetans’ fundamental rights have led to acts of desperation that have escalated a crisis that shows no sign of abating,” Richardson said. “UN member countries should take steps now that could give Tibetans some hope.”

Early day motion 2327 - UK Parliament

SELFIMMOLATIONS IN TIBET

Session: 201012 Date tabled: 31.10.2011

Primary sponsor: Hamilton, Fabian

Sponsors: Bottomley, Peter Caton, Martin Durkan, Mark Leech, John Shannon, Jim

That this House is greatly saddened by the disturbing news of 10 incidents of selfimmolation in eastern Tibet by young Tibetan monks, former monks and a nun, five tragically losing their lives;condemns the Chinese government's ongoing repression in Tibet that serves to exacerbate the frustration and desperation felt by the Tibetan people; calls on the Prime Minister to make a public statement of concern about this grave situation; and further calls on the Government to make urgent representations to the Chinese government to urge that it takes measures to ease the situation by withdrawing its troops from Kirti monastery, to verify the condition and whereabouts of the monks who have disappeared since selfimmolating, to allow international independent observers to visit the region and to respect the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan people including the right freely to practise their religion.

Total number of signatures: 39

Alexander Heidi Begg, Anne Blomfield, Paul Bottomley, Peter Campbell, Gregory Caton, Martin Clark, Katy Corbyn, Jeremy Davidson, Ian Dowd, Jim Durkan, Mark Evans, Chris Foster, Don George, Andrew Hamilton, Fabian Hancock, Mike Hemming, John Hoey, Kate Hopkins, Kelvin Hughes, Simon Jackson, Glenda Leech, John Lewis, Julian Lloyd, Stephen Long, Naomi Lucas, Caroline Mulholland, Greg Pugh, John Reeve, Simon Ritchie, Margaret Robertson, John Rogerson, Dan Shannon, Jim Sharma, Virendra Syms, Robert Weir, Mike Williams, Mark Williams, Roger Williams, Stephen Williams

**European Parliament resolution on Tibet,
in particular self-immolation by nuns and monks**

European Parliament, 26 October 2011

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its previous resolutions on China and Tibet, in particular its resolution of 25 November 2010(1),

– having regard to Rule 122(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, which guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of religious belief,

A. whereas respect for human rights, freedom of religion and freedom of association are founding principles of the EU and a priority of its foreign policy;

B. whereas the Chinese Government has imposed drastic restrictions on Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the Aba/Ngaba county prefecture in Sichuan province, and in other parts of the Tibetan plateau, including brutal security raids, arbitrary detention of monks, increased surveillance within monasteries and a permanent police presence inside the monasteries in order to monitor religious activities;

C. whereas these security measures are designed to curtail the right to free expression, freedom of association and freedom of religious belief in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries;

D. whereas Phuntsog (aged 20) and Tsewang Norbu (aged 29) died after setting fire to themselves, on 16 March and 15 August 2011 respectively, as a protest against restrictive Chinese policies in Tibet;

E. whereas Phuntsog's younger brothers, Lobsang Kelsang and Lobsang Kunchok (both aged 18), set fire to themselves at the Aba/Ngaba county market on 26 September 2011, and whereas, although they survived, their present condition remains unclear;

F. whereas Dawa Tsering, a 38-year-old monk at Kardze Monastery, set fire to himself on 25 October 2011, whereas Chinese security personnel doused the flames and tried to take him away, whereas the monk is currently being protected

by fellow monks at the monastery and whereas his condition is critical;

G. whereas Kelsang Wangchuk, a 17-year-old monk at Kirti Monastery, immolated himself on 3 October 2011 and was immediately carried away by Chinese soldiers, who extinguished the fire and beat him strenuously before taking him away, and whereas his current state of well-being and whereabouts are unknown;

H. whereas two former monks from Kirti, Choephel (aged 19) and Kayang (aged 18), clasped their hands together and set fire to themselves while calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and the right to religious freedom, and whereas they died following this protest;

I. whereas former Kirti monk Norbu Damdrul (aged 19), who set fire to himself on 15 October 2011, was the eighth Tibetan to self-immolate, and whereas his current whereabouts and state of well-being are unknown;

J. whereas on 17 October 2011 a nun from Ngaba Mamae Dechen Choekorling Nunnery, Tenzin Wangmo (aged 20), died, and whereas she was the first female to commit self-immolation;

K. whereas self-immolation can be seen as a form of protest and an expression of the increasing desperation felt by young Tibetans, especially within the community of Kirti Monastery;

L. whereas, whatever personal motivations may underlie these acts, they must be considered in the wider context of religious and political repression in Aba/Ngaba county, which can be traced back many years;

M. whereas the tightening of state control over religious practice via a series of regulations passed by the Chinese Government in 2007 has contributed to the desperation of Tibetans across the Tibetan plateau;

N. whereas current regulations have dramatically expanded state control over religious life, with many expressions of religious identity being subject to state approval and control, including the recognition of reincarnate lamas;

O. whereas a Chinese court sentenced three Tibetan monks to imprisonment over the death of their fellow monk Phuntsog, who set himself on fire on 16 March 2011, on the grounds that they had hidden him and deprived him of medical attention, and whereas it accused them of 'intentional homicide';

P. whereas in March 2011, following the first immolation incident, armed personnel surrounded Kirti Monastery and cut off its access to food and water

for several days; whereas the new security officials dispatched to the monastery imposed a compulsory new ‘patriotic education’ programme, and whereas more than 300 monks were taken away in military trucks and detained at unspecified locations to undergo several weeks of political indoctrination;

Q. whereas the Chinese Government has accused the monks at Kirti Monastery of being involved in acts ‘aimed at disturbing social order’, including vandalism and self-immolation;

R. whereas in recent months the Chinese authorities have tightened security in Tibet, especially in the area surrounding Kirti Monastery, whereas journalists and foreigners are banned from visiting the region, and whereas the monastery is patrolled by police in full riot gear; whereas foreign media have been banned from entering restless parts of Tibet, whereas Chinese state television has failed to report on the protests, and whereas monks are forbidden from speaking out about the protests;

1. Condemns the Chinese authorities’ continued crackdown on Tibetan monasteries and calls on them to lift the restrictions and security measures imposed on monasteries and lay communities, and to restore the lines of communication to the monks of Kirti Monastery;

2. Is deeply concerned by reports, since last April, of eight Tibetan Buddhist monks and one nun self-immolating near the Ngaba Kirti Monastery in China’s Sichuan province;

3. Urges the Chinese Government to lift the restrictions and heavy-handed security measures imposed on the Kirti Monastery, and to provide information as to the whereabouts of monks forcibly taken from the monastery; urges the Chinese authorities to allow independent international media and human rights monitors to visit the area;

4. Calls on the Chinese Government to guarantee freedom of religion to all its citizens in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to abolish criminal and administrative penalties which target religion and have been used to punish citizens for exercising their right to freedom of religion;

5. Calls on the Chinese authorities to respect the rights of Tibetans in all Chinese provinces and to take proactive steps to resolve the underlying grievances of China’s Tibetan population;

6. Calls on the Chinese authorities to cease promoting policies which threaten the Tibetan language, culture, religion, heritage and environment, in contravention of the Chinese Constitution and the Chinese law granting autonomy to ethnic minorities;

7. Urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to provide full details as to the status of the 300 monks who were taken away from Kirti Monastery in April 2011, in relation to which several Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, including the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, have intervened;

8. Urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to be accountable for the status of those Tibetans who have been 'hospitalised' after self-immolating, including as regards their access to medical treatment;

9. Condemns the sentencing of the Kirti monks and insists on their right to a fair trial and to the provision of adequate legal assistance for the length of that trial; calls for independent observers to be allowed access to the Kirti monks held in detention;

10. Calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to release a public statement expressing the EU's concern as regards the escalating situation in Aba/Ngaba county and urging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with restraint on the part of security police;

11. Calls on the Chinese authorities to refrain from implementing counterproductive policies and aggressive 'patriotic education' programmes in Tibetan-populated areas such as Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai, places where human rights violations have created tensions;

12. Calls on the Chinese authorities to respect traditional Tibetan death rites and to return remains in accordance with Buddhist rituals and without delay or hindrance;

13. Asks the EU and its Member States to call on the Chinese Government to resume its dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives with a view to bringing about genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China, and to stop its campaign to discredit the Dalai Lama as a religious leader;

14. Calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Se-

curity Policy / Vice-President of the Commission to raise human rights issues at the next EU-China Summit, and calls on the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council clearly to uphold Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity in the course of their official speeches during the opening or closing of the summit, in the event that it is not on the agenda for discussion;

15. Calls on the EEAS and the EU delegation to China constantly to monitor the human rights situation in China and to continue to raise – in meetings and correspondence with Chinese officials – the specific cases of individual Tibetans imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of religious freedom, and to present a report to Parliament within the next 12 months, suggesting actions to be taken or policies to be implemented;

16. Reiterates its call to the Council to appoint an EU Special Representative for Tibet with a view to facilitating the resumption of dialogue between the Chinese authorities and the Dalai Lama's envoys in relation to the determination of genuine autonomous status for Tibet within the People's Republic of China;

17. Calls on those Member States which are members of the G-20, and on the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council, to raise the human rights situation in Tibet with the President of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao, at the upcoming G-20 Summit in Cannes on 3 and 4 November 2011;

18. Urges the People's Republic of China to respect the religious freedoms and basic human rights of the monastic and lay communities in Ngaba, and to suspend the implementation of religious control regulations in order to allow Tibetan Buddhists to identify and educate religious teachers in a manner consistent with Tibetan traditions, to review the religious and security policies implemented in Ngaba since 2008, and to open a transparent dialogue with the leaders of Tibetan Buddhist schools;

19. Urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to respect internationally agreed human rights standards and to abide by its obligations under international human rights conventions with respect to freedom of religion or belief;

20. Expresses the need for the rights of China's minority communities to be put on the agenda for future rounds of the EU-China human rights dialogue;

21. Urges the Chinese Government to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union / Vice-President of the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of the People's Republic of China.

Statement of Maria Otero, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and Commissioner, Congressional-Executive Commission on China U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Hearing on Congressional-Executive Commission on China: 2011 Annual Report

November 3, 2011

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Berman, and esteemed members of the Committee, thank you for calling this hearing today on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China's 2011 Annual Report.

I would like to congratulate Chairman Smith, Cochairman Brown and my fellow members of the Commission on an excellent report. I especially would like to recognize the Commission's staff for their fine work, expertise and diligence. The work of the Commission, including its published reporting and its Political Prisoner Database, is a tremendous resource, and I am honored to serve as a Commissioner. Political prisoners and human rights advocates cited in the 2011 annual report include rights defender Chen Guangcheng, lawyers Jiang Tianyong and Gao Zhisheng, Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, journalist Memetjan Abdulla, bishop Su Zhimin, labor advocate Zhao Dongmin, Tibetan nomad Ronggyal Adrag, monk Choeying Khedrub, former monk Jigme Gyatso, and many others. Shining a light on human rights in China and particularly on conditions in Tibetan areas is always important, and certainly could not be more important than it is at the present time.

As U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, I would like to draw attention to a number of the Commission's findings on Tibet. Over the last year, Tibetans who peacefully expressed disagreement with government policy faced increased risk of punishment, as the Chinese government continued to criminalize such

expression under the guise of “safeguarding social stability.” The Chinese government also substantially increased state infringement of freedom of religion in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries. Government security and judicial officials detained and imprisoned Tibetan writers, artists, intellectuals, and cultural advocates who lamented or criticized government policies.

In July, when I participated on the Commission’s panel, “The Dalai Lama: What He Means for Tibetans Today,” I noted my deep concern with the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibetan areas of China, and specifically with the abuse and forcible removal of monks from Kirti Monastery and the heavy security presence there. The recent self-immolations of young Tibetans, many of whom have been affiliated with Kirti Monastery, are desperate acts that reflect intense frustration with human rights conditions, including religious freedom, inside China. The Commission has thoroughly documented the policies that many believe have created escalating tensions and a growing sense of isolation and despair among Tibetans. These policies include dramatically expanded government controls on religious life and practice, ongoing “patriotic education” campaigns within monasteries that require monks to denounce the Dalai Lama, increasingly intensive surveillance, arbitrary detentions and disappearances of hundreds of monks, and restrictions on and imprisonment of some families and friends of self-immolators.

The U.S. government repeatedly has urged the Chinese government to address its counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and that threaten the unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people. Senior State Department officials have consistently and directly raised with the Chinese government the issue of Tibetan self-immolations. We have urged the Chinese government to allow access to Tibetan areas for journalists, diplomats and other observers. We also have asked the Chinese government to resume substantive dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives. When President Obama met with the Dalai Lama at the White House in July, the President stressed that he encourages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans.

I have had the honor of meeting several times with the Dalai Lama, and I also have had the opportunity to speak with Tibetans who live in China, and in India and Nepal. The U.S. government believes that the Dalai Lama can be a construc-

tive partner for China in dealing with the challenge of resolving continuing tensions in Tibetan areas. The Obama Administration hopes that Chinese leaders will pursue substantive dialogue to resolve remaining differences and provide all Chinese citizens with peace, prosperity, and genuine stability.

**Open Letter to the President of the People's Republic of China on
self-immolations in Tibetan populated areas of Sichuan Province**

November 3, 2011

President Hu Jintao
People's Republic of China
Zhongnanhai, Xichengqu, Beijing
People's Republic of China

Dear President Hu,

We are writing to express our concern regarding a number of incidents in which Tibetans living in Sichuan Province have set themselves on fire apparently in protest against restrictions on fundamental freedoms and human rights and punitive security measures imposed on a number of monasteries in the area. These immolations have drawn renewed international attention to longstanding grievances and on-going human rights concerns affecting Tibetans in China.

We call on you to put an end to policies that infringe on fundamental freedoms and human rights in Tibetan areas of China, such as excessive restrictions on freedom of expression and religion, and the heavy security presence to enforce such restrictions in areas of the country with large ethnic minority populations. Of particular concern to many Tibetan monks and nuns is the requirement that they undergo compulsory political indoctrination under the guises of "patriotic" and "legal education" within the monasteries.

Nine Tibetan monks or former monks and two Tibetan nuns in Sichuan Province have attempted to set themselves on fire between March 16, 2011, and October 25; six are believed to have subsequently died. These individual protests appear to be in response to increasingly harsh punitive security measures imposed on religious institutions and lay communities in the region. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International strongly believe that the Chinese government must

address the underlying causes of these protests, including by engaging in meaningful dialogue with the Tibetan community and its leaders on their widely-held grievances and human rights concerns.

Following the March 2008 protests across the Tibetan plateau, strict security measures and restrictions on fundamental freedoms in Tibetan areas have been imposed. Immediately following the protests, thousands of people were detained and arrested, though the total number is unknown. At least two Tibetans were executed in October 2009 on charges stemming from their involvement in the protests. Security measures and restrictions on the exercise of religious freedom imposed on monasteries in Aba (Tibetan: Ngaba) and Ganzi (Tibetan: Kardze) Tibetan autonomous prefectures, where the 2011 self-immolations occurred, have been especially severe, including intimidating raids, arbitrary detentions of monks, and a permanent official presence inside monasteries to monitor religious activities.

These measures appear to have fueled tensions in the region, to which some have responded in protest with acts of self-immolation, the first by Phuntsok (Chinese: Ping Cuo) Jarutsang, who set himself on fire on March 16, 2011, the third anniversary of protests in the same town in 2008 in which at least ten protesters were shot to death. Despite the fact that ten more incidents of self-immolation have occurred since then, the latest by Palden Choetso (Chinese: Qiu Xiang) on November 3, there is no indication that your government has sought to address the underlying causes or acknowledged the grievances of the Tibetan community.

We urge your government to:

- Commit to a comprehensive review of the human rights concerns raised across the Tibetan plateau and an end to legal and policy restrictions that infringe on fundamental freedoms

and human rights;

- Provide information about the current whereabouts and well-being of the individuals who set themselves on fire in protest and were removed from the scene;

- Provide information about lay people and religious personages detained following the self-immolations, including their current whereabouts and reason for detention;

- Provide information about other monks detained and removed from monasteries in 2011, including 300 monks who were taken from Kirti (Chinese: Ge Erde) monastery in April;

- Reduce the heavy presence of military police and other officials and security operatives in and around religious institutions, including Kirti monastery and Nyitso (Chinese: Ling Qiao) monastery, and end the practice of requiring monks to undergo “patriotic education” as dictated by local authorities;

- Resume meaningful and direct dialogue with representatives of the Tibetan community who can represent widely-held human rights concerns;

- Cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Procedures by responding promptly and in full to their urgent appeals and communications. As a matter of priority, facilitate the request of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief to carry out a country mission, including to the area in and around Aba and Ganzi Tibetan autonomous prefectures in Sichuan Province, which has been agreed in principle by the government. In addition, the government should respond positively to outstanding visit requests from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the Independent Expert on minority issues.

We urge you to take meaningful steps towards resolving human rights abuses in Tibetan areas of China and to allow independent monitoring of human rights conditions in the region, so that further acts of self-immolation do not continue.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Given the seriousness of the situation and the ongoing tension in the region, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International will continue to follow it closely in the coming months, and would be pleased to be in contact with representatives of your government on this matter.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

Salil Shetty, Secretary General, Amnesty International

**Michael Danby MP, Melbourne Ports, Australian Labor Party
Parliament House, Canberra, Australia,**

November 3, 2011

Since March this year, 10 young Tibetans, including seven monks from the Kirti Monastery in Ngaba, have set themselves alight to protest the Chinese government's restrictions on their religious and political freedom. Chinese authorities are using extreme force in the crackdown on the Kirti Monastery, where they are enforcing a 'patriotic re-education campaign' and have imposed an indefinite ban on religious activities at that critical monastery. The number of monks in the monastery has gone from 2,500 to around 400. Since March Ngaba has seen the presence of civilian and military personnel patrolling the area.

Yesterday the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion, Heiner Bielefeldt, said: "Intimidation of the lay and monastic community must be avoided, and the right of members of the monastic community and the wider community to freely practice their religion, should be fully respected by the Chinese Government."

The restrictive and repressive measures enforced on the monks at Kirti include security raids and surveillance with police presence inside and outside the monastery to monitor religious activities. Over 300 monks have been disappeared by the Chinese authorities for "patriotic re-education" and many of them remain missing and unheard from by their families. A recent Human Rights Watch study found that per capita annual spending on public security in Ngaba was five times the average spent per person on public security in non-Tibetan areas of Sichuan.

The US State Department has called on China to respect human rights and the rights of Tibetans since the nine young Tibetans have set themselves on fire as a result of these restrictive Chinese practices. The US State Department said: "We urge Chinese leaders to address counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions; and to protect Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity."

The crackdown on Tibetan monks since 2008 has been brutal. Beijing continues to restrict foreign journalists from travelling to Tibetan areas, jam radio broadcasts of Voice of America and Radio Free Asia's Tibetan and Chinese language services. This is part of a strategy to eliminate the remnants of Tibetan identity and cultural heritage. The Chinese authorities continue to repress Tibetan cul-

ture.

On 19 October 2010, a decision was made to replace Tibetan with Mandarin as the main medium of instruction in Tibetan schools in the Qinghai province. Freedom of movement of monks and nuns is extremely limited within Lhasa and Tibetan areas of Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan. Last year in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan province, the Chinese government reportedly continued to remove monks under the age of 18, unregistered monks and monks and nuns from outside the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The process of eliminating Tibetan culture and the removal of monks and nuns is a direct violation of the freedom of religion. The Australian government is deeply concerned about reports of self-immolations by monks and nuns. Australian officials last week made renewed representations in Canberra and Beijing to their Chinese counterparts about these reports. Our embassy in Beijing has raised our concerns about reports of the continuing crackdown around the monastery and the province and increased security measures in the Tibetan areas. I entreat the Chinese authorities to respect the religious rights of Tibetan monks and to cease their repressive actions against those in the Kirti Monastery.

Letter to US Ambassador to China Gary Locke
United States Congress: Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission,
 November 17, 2011

Dear Ambassador Locke:

You have undoubtedly seen news reports of the recent wave of self-immolations of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns since March of this year in desperation at the abuses suffered by her people. Just last week a second nun did the same. According to the International Campaign for Tibet, she apparently called for religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama before setting herself aflame.

Recently the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on which we serve held a hearing during which we heard from Dr. Lobsang Sangay with the Central Tibetan Administration and His Eminence Kyabje Kirti Rinpoche with Kirti Monasteries. Their testimony was moving and deeply disturbing. They spoke of the abuses suffered by the Tibetan people which in recent months

have driven these peace-loving people to desperate forms of protest.

In light of these realities, we urge you, in your capacity as U.S. ambassador to visit Tibet. Speak with the Tibetan people and faith leaders. Press for a fact-finding mission into the Kirti monastery which has featured prominently in the recent wave of self-immolations. Raise the Chinese government's repressive policies in Tibet with senior party officials and publicly use your platform as Ambassador to make it clear to the Tibetan people that they have a friend in the United States of America.

You are uniquely positioned to reflect American values and priorities to the Chinese people and the Government of China. In that light, it is important for you as the lead representative of the United States in China to publically declare that the Chinese government must respect the peaceful religious, political, civic, and cultural expressions of the Tibetan people. For the United States, this is both morally imperative and politically prudent

We wish you continued success as Ambassador to China and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf, Member of Congress

James P. McGovern, Member of Congress

Joseph R. Pitts, Member of Congress

UK House of Commons held a debate on the crisis in Tibet

Henry Bellingham, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs

7 December 2011

On December 7, 2011, the UK House of Commons held a debate on the crisis in Tibet. Questions and debate came from Members of Parliament Simon Hughes, Jonathan Edwards, Nic Dakin, Cathy Jamieson and Jeremy Corbyn. Henry Bellingham responded for the government, who also addressed many aspects of the Tibet issue. The questions and full response can be found at parliament.uk. Mr. Bellingham's remarks on the self-immolations is as follows:

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Henry Bellingham):

The Government are seriously concerned about recent reports of self-immolations among nuns in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan province. We have closely followed those reports and other developments in the region. Let me describe the situation as it stands today. We are aware of 11 confirmed instances of monks and nuns in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan province who have self-immolated since March, and we know that four of those people died. We are aware of reports of a number of other attempted self-immolations, including one within the Tibetan autonomous region on 1 December, although those have not yet been confirmed.

The incidents began with the self-immolation on 16 March of Phuntsok, a monk at the Kirti monastery in Aba county, Sichuan. His immolation sparked a number of demonstrations and protests in the area, which by 12 April had led to a stand-off at the Kirti monastery between locals and monks on the one hand and Chinese security forces on the other. That ended on 21 April, when about 300 monks were removed from the monastery by the security forces. Their location and legal status has not been confirmed by the Chinese Government. Six of the 10 subsequent immolations have been by monks, or former monks, linked to the Kirti monastery.

We understand that there continues to be a high security presence at the monastery, and that a significant number of its monks have been dispersed away from the monastery grounds. The other immolations have been by two nuns, one in Aba county and the other in Daofu county, and two monks, one in Daofu county and one in Ganzi county - all in Sichuan province.

The Dalai Lama has made several public statements about the immolations, which he has said are the result of human rights violations caused by discriminatory Chinese policies in the region. The Chinese Government, on the other hand, have stated that the immolations are “politically motivated”, and that the Tibetan community in exile should be held responsible.

I assure my right hon. Friend, and other hon. Members, that the Government have been following developments closely. In terms of making a strong statement, as recently as 29 November my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said that we should urge the Chinese Government to work with local monasteries and

communities to resolve the grievances that have led to these self-immolations.

Furthermore, during his visit to China in November, my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton Deane (Mr Browne), the Minister of State, raised his concern about the immolations with Fu Ying, the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister. He also wrote to the Chinese ambassador about the situation at the Kirti monastery, asking for information and calling for restraint. Officials have raised their concerns with the Chinese embassy in London and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing.

At the 17th session of the UN Human Rights Council in June this year, the EU issued a statement calling on the Chinese authorities to refrain from the use of force in dealing with the situation at the Kirti monastery, and to allow independent observers on to the site. British embassy officials have kept in frequent contact with the Foreign Affairs office in Sichuan and with local public security bureau offices, regarding access to those areas.

British diplomats were able to access neighbouring Tibetan areas in October, but we understand that access to the Kirti monastery remains severely limited. I assure my right hon. Friend that we will continue to urge the Chinese authorities to allow access to Tibetan areas for foreign diplomats and journalists, just as we will continue on a regular basis to raise the case of the Panchen Lama.

**French Minister of Foreign Affairs answers question
relating to Tibet immolations**

12 January 2012

Answer by French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé to the Question 19985 tabled by Senator Mme Christiane Demontès on the situation on Tibet (Original in French, translated by ICT)

France is worried about the situation in Tibet and the escalation of tensions which have been observed since few months, in particular in the area of the Kirti monastery, China's Sichuan province, where violent incidents took place. France deplores the death by immolation of young Tibetan monks. The extreme character of their gesture reflects the desperation of their situation. France is deeply concerned about the rapid increase in the number of immolations since the end of September 2011. In concert with its European partners, France has expressed

its concern to the Chinese authorities and has urged them to lift restrictions on access to the area of the monastery imposed on foreigners, including diplomats. France, and the EU, calls upon both parties to dialogue and is convinced that dialogue is the only way to reach a durable solution, which fully respects the cultural and spiritual identity of Tibetans, within the framework of the People's Republic of China.

City of Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission

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CONSENT CALENDAR: January 31, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Peace and Justice Commission

Submitted by: Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission

Subject: Recognizing the Sacrifice by Tibetans of Self-Immolation in Reaction to China's Extreme Repression of the Tibetan People and Nation

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution recognizing the Berkeley Tibetan-American community and the immeasurable sacrifice of those Tibetans protesting China's extreme repression of the Tibetan people and nation by self-immolation and urging the Obama administration to take such actions, including but not limited to calling on China to end its extreme security measures of Tibetan monasteries and adjacent communities.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At its regular meeting on November 14, 2011, the Peace and Justice Commission unanimously adopted the following recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution recognizing the Berkeley Tibetan-American community

and the immeasurable sacrifice of those Tibetans protesting the extreme repression by China of the Tibetan people and nation by self-immolation and urging the Obama administration to take such actions, including calling on China to end its extreme security measures of Tibetan monasteries and adjacent communities.

M/S/C: (Sochet/Meola)

Ayes: Armendariz; Bohn; Lippman; Litman; Maran; Masri; Meola; Mundu; Rabin; Rueda; Siegel; Sochet

Noes: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Kenin (excused); Litman

BACKGROUND

Since March 16, 2011, eleven self-immolations by monastic Tibetans have taken place in Ngaba and Kardze counties of China's Sichuan province (one nun and eight monks at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County, and one nun and two monks in Kardze County). Community groups in Berkeley have been actively engaged in the struggle for Tibetan self-determination and have engaged in protest in solidarity with the self-immolations by Tibetans in Sichuan province.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch finds that, following the first immolation incident in March, armed personnel surrounded Kirti Monastery and cut off access to food and water for several days, while more than 1,000 Tibetans engaged in peaceful protests. Chinese police and paramilitary officers were subsequently dispatched to the monastery to carry out a compulsory "patriotic education" campaign. On April 21, 2011 more than 300 monks were removed from Kirti Monastery and detained in unspecified locations to undergo several weeks of "legal education." As of 12 Oct. 2011 there are approximately 2,000 fewer monks living at Kirti Monastery, compared to the total number in March, 2011.

Findings in a recent assessment by Human Rights Watch suggest a causal relationship between the self-immolations and sharp increases in public security spending for Ngaba and Kardze counties and the resulting security crackdowns by the Chinese authorities in Tibetan-inhabited regions.

Chinese government security measures have subjected monastic and lay Tibetans to collective punishment, and monks are being charged with intentional homicide, a capital offence, for allegedly assisting self-immolations. Self-immo-

lation has presented a critical means of political expression in atmospheres of severe political and social repression

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Peace and Justice Commission, consistent with its mandate to promote peace and justice, locally, nationally and internationally, recommends that the Council support this Resolution to recognize the immeasurable sacrifice of individual Tibetans who protest via self-immolation the extremely repressive measures imposed by China on the Tibetan people and nation.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the Commission's recommendations or the contents of its Report.

CONTACT PERSON

George Lippman, Chairperson, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-843-1160

Noah Sochet, Commissioner, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-898-1583

Eric Brenman, Secretary, Peace and Justice Commission, 510-981-5114

Attachments:

1. Resolution

RECOGNITION OF THE BERKELEY TIBETAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THAT ACTS OF SELF-IMMOLATION REFLECT IMMEASUREABLE SACRIFICE IN REACTION TO THE EXTREME REPRESSIVE CONDITIONS OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE AND NATION BY CHINA

WHEREAS, the Peace and Justice Commission advises the City Council on all matters relating to the City of Berkeley's role in issues of peace and social justice (Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Chapter 3.68.070); and

WHEREAS, since March 16 2011, eleven self-immolations by monastic Tibetans have taken place in Ngaba and Kardze counties of China's Sichuan province (one nun and eight monks at Kirti Monastery in Ngaba County, and one nun and two monks in Kardze County); and

WHEREAS, community groups in Berkeley have been actively engaged in the struggle for Tibetan self-determination and have engaged in protest in solidarity with the selfimmolations by Tibetans in Sichuan provinceⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, a recent report by Human Rights Watch finds that, following the first immolation incident in March, armed personnel surrounded Kirti Monastery and cut off access to food and water for several days, while more than 1,000 Tibetans engaged in peaceful protests. Chinese police and paramilitary officers were subsequently dispatched to the monastery to carry out a compulsory “patriotic education” campaign.

On April 21, more than 300 monks were removed from Kirti Monastery and detained in unspecified locations to undergo several weeks of “legal education.” As of October 12, there are approximately 2,000 fewer monks living at Kirti Monastery, compared to the total number in Marchⁱⁱⁱ; and

WHEREAS, findings in a recent assessment by Human Rights Watch suggest a causal relationship between the self-immolations and sharp increases in public security spending for Ngaba and Kardze counties and the resulting security crackdowns in Tibetan-inhabited regions^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, published Chinese government spending for public security includes expenditures for paramilitary units known as the People’s Armed Police, security raids, arbitrary detentions, permanent police presence and increased surveillance within monasteries, and other police-state infrastructure^v; and

WHEREAS, government security measures have subjected monastic and lay Tibetans to collective punishment, and monks are being charged with intentional homicide^{vi}, a capital offence, for allegedly assisting self-immolations; and

WHEREAS, self-immolation has presented a critical means of political expression in atmospheres of severe political and social repression^{vii}; and

WHEREAS, a single act of self-immolation, by Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, impacted the speed and breadth of the so-called “Arab Spring”^{viii}; and

WHEREAS, beginning with Thích Quang Duc, Vietnamese monks utilized selfimmolation as protest during the Vietnam War,^{ix} contributing to the fall of South Vietnam’s Diem regime in the same year (1963).

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley, that the City Council in affirmation of the shared belief in protest

and civic engagement of the people of the City of Berkeley, and in recognition of the Berkeley Tibetan-American community, recognizes these acts of self-immolation as a reflection of the extremely repressive conditions to which the Tibetan people are subjected, and the crushing of peaceful means of resistance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the residents of Berkeley have continually demonstrated their concern for peace and justice based on equality among all peoples, and the City Council hereby recognizes the immeasurable sacrifice of the following protesters:

Lobsang Phuntsok, 21 (deceased; 17 March 2011)

Tsewang Norbu, 29 (deceased; 15 August 2011)

Lobsang Kalsang, 18 (detained, location and condition unknown)

Lobsang Kunchok, 19 (detained, location and condition unknown)

Kalsang Wangchuk, 18 (detained, location and condition unknown)

Kayang, 18 (deceased; 8 October 2011)

Choepel, 19 (deceased; 11 October 2011)

Norbu Damdul, 19 (detained, location and condition unknown)

Tenzin Wangmo, 20 (deceased; 17 October 2011)

Dawa Tsering, 31 (detained, location and condition unknown)

Palden Choetsok, 35 (deceased, 3 November 2011); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley strongly urges the Obama Administration to call upon China to reject the use of misleading and culpability-evading language such as “terrorism in disguise” to describe the immolations⁵.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that that the City of Berkeley urges the Obama Administration to insist that China allow members of the media and international independent fact-finding delegations to visit Ngaba and Kardze counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Berkeley urges the Obama Administration to insist that China immediately end excessive security measures on Tibetan monasteries and lay communities in the region and work towards a resolution that will affirm the right of its minority populations to social equality and freedoms of speech, assembly, and demonstration, as well as freedom of

religious practice, as outlined in the Preamble and Articles 4, 35 and 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China^{xi}.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Chinese Consulate; Office of the Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile; Representative Barbara Lee; Senator Dianne Feinstein; Senator Barbara Boxer; Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; Maria Otero, Undersecretary and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues; Gary Locke, United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China; Lobsang Nyandak, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's Representative to North America; Tibetan Association of Northern California; and UC Berkeley Students for a Free Tibet. A record copy of said Resolution to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

i A turbulent year in Tibet: timeline. (2011, October 18). Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/tibet/8833267/A-turbulent-year-in-Tibet-timeline.html>; See also: GLADSTONE, Rick. "Tenth Tibetan Reported to Self-Immolate in Anti-China Protest." New York Times 25 October 2011. n. pag. Web. 25 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/26/world/asia/tibetan-monk-said-to-set-himself-on-fire-in-protest.html>>.

ii Hands off Ngaba, Candle Light Vigil Berkeley CA Oct 14th. Dir. SFRTYC. Web. 16 Oct 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUiMajLBu0&feature=player_embedded>.

iii Human Rights Watch. (2011, October 12). China: end crackdown on Tibetan monasteries. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/12/china-end-crackdown-tibetan-monasteries>

iv Between 2002 and 2006, public security spending per capita in Ngaba was three times the average in non-Tibetan areas. By 2009, per capita annual spending on public security in Ngaba and Kardze counties was five times the average spent per person on public security in non-Tibetan areas of Sichuan. "Appendix: Spending on Security in Aba Prefecture." Human Rights Watch. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Oct 2011. <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Appendix_-_Spending_on_Security_in_Aba_Prefecture.pdf>.

v http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/Appendix%20-%20Spending%20on%20Security%20in%20Aba%20Prefecture.pdf

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Pelosi Statement on Recent Violence in Tibet

Washington, D.C.

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi released the following statement
 today in response to the recent violence in Tibet:

February 8, 2012

"Today, Tibetans around the world are holding vigils to call attention to the recent violence in Tibet and to express solidarity.

"In recent weeks, the Chinese government has intensified its crackdown; there have been reports of indiscriminate shootings by Chinese police forces resulting in the loss of life and injuries. Further, the disturbing trend of self-immolations by Tibetans reflect the desperation of the human rights situation and the need for the Chinese government to change its repressive policies against the Tibetan people.

"The Tibetan people have legitimate grievances after decades of harsh rule. They have been economically marginalized in their own land, imprisoned for peacefully expressing their political views, and forced to endure 'patriotic education' campaigns to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

"It is long past time for the Chinese government to enter into a meaningful dialogue with representatives of the Tibetan Government-In-Exile to produce a way forward that promotes peace and stability in China and Tibet."

Italy

Tibet Resolution adopted in the Italian Parliament 8th February
February 8, 2012

Dear Friends,

The Italian Chamber of Deputies adopted [February 8, 2012] unanimously in the Foreign Affairs Commission the “Tibet Resolution” calling the People

Republic of China to:

- stop immediately violence in Tibet and in all other Tibetan areas
- resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama
- open Tibet to international media

The Tibet Resolution call as well, the Italian Government to promote a monitoring initiative on human rights violations in Tibet at the United Nations competent bodies.

The Tibet Resolution call the Italian Government to involve in this initiative the European Union Partners starting at the next EU-China Summit that will be held in Beijing next 14th February.

The resolution was presented by Gianni Vernetti (Third Pole) and subscribed by Valter Veltroni, Arturo Parisi, Franco Tempestini (Democratic Party); Margherita Boniver, Enrico Pianetta, Fiamma Nirenstein (People of Freedom), Franco Alasia (Northern League); Matteo Mecacci (Radical Party). The full text of the resolution will follow soon.

With my best regards,

Gianni Vernetti

United Nations

General Assembly

Human Rights Council

Twentieth session

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement submitted by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

4 June 2012

United Nations A/HRC/20/NGO/58

General Assembly Distr.: General

13 June 2012

The human rights situation in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan-populated areas of China

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) wishes to draw the attention of the Human Rights Council to the situation of human rights in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan-populated areas of China. Information received by IFOR indicates that since the popular uprisings of March 2008 severe limitations have been imposed on the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, expression and religion or belief, all of which are supposedly guaranteed by the constitution of China itself. There has also been a heavy military build-up; it is reported that 26 new military or paramilitary camps have been set up in the Tibetan-populated prefecture of Karze (Ganzi) in China's Sichuan Province alone. There are specific reports of arbitrary detention, of enforced and involuntary disappearances, of torture, and of a sustained campaign of political interference with the internal affairs of Tibetan monasteries and nunneries which directly threatens the freedom of the population to maintain its religious traditions. A wave of self-immolations has represented a desperate attempt to draw the world's attention to the plight of the Tibetan people. Currently the

internet and phone lines in Tibet are blocked, and foreign journalists are barred from entering all restive Tibetan areas. This could enable any outbreaks of popular dissent to be put down with ruthlessness and impunity.

Self-immolations

Between February 2009 and 30th May 2012 at least 39 Tibetans, including 17 monks or nuns, set themselves alight in protest against the harsh treatment of peaceful protestors, the programmes of “patriotic re-education” in monasteries and the denial of basic human rights. Of the 39, 29 are known to have died; the fate of the others is not known. Many of the bodies of those known to have died have not been returned to the families for funeral according to Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Five cases have been reported from the town of Ngaba in which self-immolators were shot or beaten by the Chinese security forces while on fire, namely:

- Tapey, a monk from the Kirti monastery, aged in his 20s, who set himself alight on 27th February 2009. He was shot by members of the People’s Armed Police and fell to the ground. The police then doused the flames and took him away. Whether he survived is not known.

- Phuntsok Jarutsang, aged 20, of the same monastery, self-immolated on 16th March 2011 and died the next day. Eyewitnesses reported that Chinese authorities beat Phuntsok as they put out the flames. Six monks, including Phuntsok’s brother and uncle, were sentenced in connection with this self-immolation.

- Norbu Dramdul, 19, a former monk from Kirti, burned himself on 15th October 2011 and died on 5th January 2012. Eyewitnesses reported that he was chased by police who extinguished the flames, beat him, and took him away in a police vehicle.

- Lobsang Jamyang, 21, set himself alight on 14th January 2012. The police extinguished the flames and beat him. Tibetan eye-witnesses became distressed and a spontaneous protest took place in which a large crowd tried to retrieve the dying man. More police arrived and opened fire; it is alleged that at least two people were

shot. Jamyang himself died either at the time, or two days later.

- Lobsang Tsultrim, 20, of Kirti Monastery, self-immolated on 16th March 2012, and died on 19th March. While he burned, the Chinese police allegedly

knocked him down, beat him, and threw him into the back of a truck.

Arbitrary detention, enforced or involuntary disappearances, and torture

On 23 January 2012, there was a large, peaceful demonstration in Drango (Luhuo) County, Kardze (Ganze) Prefecture. Many monks from the Drango monastery took part. The same day, the Chinese authorities arrested a senior religious leader, Tulku Lobsang Tenzin, and three monks, Geshe Tsewang Namgyal, Thinlay and Dalha, all from that monastery, who were visiting the city of Chengdu in a different part of the province of Sichuan. The current whereabouts of the four are unknown.

In Drango County itself, between 25th January and 10th February, the security forces arrested two monks, Shonu and Tsering Gyaltsen, and six laypersons: Yonten Sangpo, Sherkyam, Peldor, Gyekyab, Khengdo and Gyaltsen. Their current whereabouts are also unknown.

Hundreds of Tibetans detained in January 2012 after returning from a pilgrimage to India and Nepal, are still being held (at their own cost) in hotels in and around Lhasa. The detentions followed reports that around 9,000 visitors from Tibet attended the Kalachakra teaching given by the Dalai Lama at Bodh Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar between the 1st and 10th of January. The detainees, some aged over 80 or in poor health, have been interrogated about their activities and contacts in India and subjected to intense “political

education” sessions. Their families are said to have been kept in the dark as to their exact

whereabouts or when they might be released.

Tibetans from the eastern regions of Kham and Amdo who were detained in the same operation have after interrogation been referred to the provincial authorities in Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan. Those who landed at Chengdu airport on their way back home to the Tibetan areas in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces were detained in that city itself; their fate and whereabouts remain unknown.

A highly respected Tibetan Buddhist monk arrested in July 2011 in Tsolho (Hainan) prefecture, apparently for his role in the March 2008 protest in Qinghai province, died on 22nd January 2012, shortly after his release from detention, allegedly as a result of torture he had undergone while in prison. According to

Beijing-based Tibetan poet and blog activist Ms Woese, Geshe Tsultrim Gyaltso, 51, who had played what she termed a “pivotal” role in the preservation and protection of the Tibetan language and culture, had been taken to hospital at the end of December 2011 and from there, incapacitated and looking frail, had been handed over to his family just a few days before his death. This is not the first time that it has been alleged that the Chinese authorities have released severely tortured prisoners in order to avoid responsibility for their death in prison.

Interference with the running of Tibetan monasteries and nunneries Since October 2011, ‘work teams’ instituted by the Chinese government have been conducting “patriotic re-education” sessions in Tibetan monasteries and nunneries, in order to produce “Harmonious Model Monasteries” and “law-abiding, patriotic and advanced” monks and nuns. Instead of Tibetan Buddhism and a philosophy based on compassion, the monks and nuns are forced to study Communist Chinese doctrines and to denounce their spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The “work teams” have also taken over the complete authority and management of the monasteries from the monks. Monks and nuns are arrested and punished for not complying with the work teams’ orders.

Five monks of Ungting Monastery in Dachu Township of Ngamring (Angren) County of Shigatse Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region, were arrested for opposing the “patriotic education”, including the order to fly the Chinese Red Star flag in the monastery.

In Markham (Maerkang) County of Chamdo Prefecture, 22 of the 30 resident monks at the Dama Monastery were expelled for not being registered with the government. The monastery is in danger of being closed down for refusing to replace a portrait of the Dalai Lama with one presented by the Chinese authorities, showing Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu.

Reports which have reached IFOR indicate that, unable to endure the increasing restrictions and intrusions, monks and nuns had been leaving religious centres in rising numbers. Many monks left the A-Kyong Jonang Monastery in Pema (Baima) County of Golok Prefecture in Qinghai Province after the Chinese authorities banned its nine-day annual religious festival which had been due to start on January 18th, 2012. The monasteries of Drubde and Rachen have reportedly become completely deserted. The Driru, Pekar, Choeling, Tagmo, and Drongna monasteries and the Jana nunnery in Driru County of Nagchu Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region have also been affected.

Recommendations:

Through the Human Rights Council, IFOR calls upon China:

- to allow Tibetan people full enjoyment of the rights guaranteed in China's Constitution including religious freedom, freedom of expression and assembly;
- to allow international media, foreign diplomats and UN independent experts unfettered access to all Tibetan populated regions;
- to withdraw military personnel from the Ngaba, Kardze and Chamdo regions and from individual monasteries;
- to end "patriotic re-education" in monasteries and allow monks and nuns freely to practice their Buddhist philosophy;
- to provide information on the fate and whereabouts of all those arrested for allegedly taking part in protests;
- to resume dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his envoys to find mutually agreeable solutions to the longstanding political problems of the region;
- to grant unconditional release to all prisoners held on political charges.

US Congressional – Executive Commission on China Special Report: Tibetan Self-Immolation Rising Frequency, Wider Spread, Greater Diversity, 22 August 2012

The frequency, geographic spread, and diversity of Tibetans who reportedly have committed self-immolation as they called for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama's return has increased since a December 2011 Commission report. The December report covered 13 self-immolations (8 reported fatal) that occurred from February 2009 to December 2011. All 13 of those self-immolations involved current or former monks or nuns; 12 took place in Sichuan province. Since then, as of August 10, 2012, an additional 33 Tibetans reportedly have committed similar self-immolation protests (29 reported fatal). Of these 33 self-immolations, 13 took place outside Sichuan province and 14 were persons who did not have a monastic background (i.e., laypersons).

The wave of self-immolations is concurrent with increasing Chinese Communist Party and government use of legal measures to repress and control core elements of Tibetan culture,¹ and with the failure of the China-Dalai Lama dialogue process to achieve any sign of progress.²

The Party and government have also not indicated any willingness to consider Tibetan grievances in a more constructive manner and to hold themselves accountable for Tibetan rejection of Chinese policies. The Party and government have handled the crisis as a threat to state security and social stability instead of a policy failure.³ Note: This report covers the period up to August 10, 2012.

As Self-Immolations Spread and Involve Laypersons, Kirti Monks Less Prevalent

As of August 10, 2012, the total number of reported incidents of Tibetans committing self-immolation since February 2009 in protests focusing on political and religious issues—e.g., Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet—increased to 46 (37 reported fatal) from the 13 incidents (7 reported fatal) listed in a December 2011 Commission report. [See Table and Map below.] This report does not characterize the reported June 27, 2012, Tibetan self-immolation of Dekyi Choezom in Yushu (Yushul) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Qinghai province, as political or religious because she committed self-immolation in protest against government expropriation of her family’s property, according to international media and advocacy group reports.⁴

Self-immolation frequency has increased. Of the 13 Tibetan self-immolation protests that took place from February 2009 to December 2011, 12 of them (8 reported fatal) occurred during the 10-month period March to December 2011. In comparison, 33 self-immolations (29 reported fatal) took place in 2012 as of August 10.

Self-immolations have spread. The first 12 of the 13 self-immolations that took place from February 2009 to December 2011 occurred in Sichuan province; 1 self-immolation, in December 2011, took place in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). In comparison, of the 33 self-immolations that took place in 2012 as of August 10, 20 took place in Sichuan and 13 took place in other provincial-level areas. [See Table and Map below.] The following summary provides provincial-, prefectural-, and county-level location information for the 33 self-immolations that took place in 2012 as of August 10.

Sichuan province. A total of 20 self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture. Thirteen of the 20 self-immolations took place in Aba county; 4 were in Rangtang

(Dzamthang) county; and 3 were in Ma'erkang (Barkham) county, the prefectural capital. [See Table and Map below.]

Qinghai province. A total of eight self-immolations took place in a total of four prefectural-level areas. Three self-immolations took place in Huangnan (Malho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP): two took place in Tongren (Rebgong) county, the prefectural capital, and one was in Jianzha (Chentsa) county. Three self-immolations (excluding the property-related protest of self-immolator Dekyi Choezom mentioned above) took place in Yushu (Yulshul) TAP: all three took place in Chenduo (Tridu) county. One self-immolation took place in Dari (Darlag) county, Guoluo (Golog) TAP. One self-immolation reportedly took place in Tianjun (Themchen) county, Haixi (Tsonub) Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture⁵—a reliable Tibetan-language map, however, indicates that Bongtag Monastery, the reported location of the self-immolation, is in neighboring Wulan county.⁶

Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). A total of three self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Lhasa municipality. Two took place in Lhasa city, the TAR capital, and one was in Dangxiong (Damshung county). [See Table and Map below.]

Gansu province. A total of two self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Gannan (Kanlho) TAP. One took place in Hezuo (Tsoe) city, the prefectural capital, and one was in Maqu (Machu) county.

Kirti prevalence has declined. As the frequency of self-immolations increased and spread geographically, the prevalence of Kirti Monastery monks among self-immolators has decreased. If the total of 46 self-immolations as of August 10, 2012, is divided into halves, then current or former Kirti monks made up 12 of the first 23 self-immolations (February 27, 2009, to February 19, 2012). In comparison, current or former Kirti monks account for 5 of the last 23 self-immolators (March 3 to August 10, 2012).

Laypersons dominate recent self-immolation. As self-immolation increased and spread geographically, laypersons have taken on a greater role. Once again comparing halves of the 46 total self-immolations as of August 10, 2012, all but 1 of the first 23 self-immolators (February 2009 to February 19, 2012) were current or former monks or nuns—the 23rd self-immolation was the first by a layperson. In comparison, 13 of the last 23 self-immolations (March 3, 2012, to

August 10, 2012) were laypersons. Nine of the 13 self-immolations that took place during the period April through August 10, 2012, were laypersons. Self-immolations involving laypersons since April have taken place in Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and the TAR.

Officials Blame Self-Immolations on “the Dalai Clique,” Disparage Self-Immolators

Chinese government and Party officials have not acknowledged the role of Party policy and government legal measures in Tibetan decisions to commit self-immolation. Officials have blamed self-immolations on the Dalai Lama and organizations and individuals the Party associates with him (“the Dalai Clique”).⁷ On January 12, 2012, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman asserted that the self-immolations “were organized, premeditated and instigated by overseas groups and people.”⁸ Speaking to European Union officials on December 29, 2011, Zhu Weiqun, Executive Deputy Head of the Communist Party’s United Front Work Department⁹ (UFW) and Director of the Party’s General Office of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs¹⁰ blamed the Dalai Lama directly for the self-immolations and told the EU officials to expect no change in Chinese government policies on Tibetan issues:

The Dalai Lama wants to turn Tibetan Buddhism into a religion of suiciders and self-immolators in order to serve his own political purpose. . . . I want to frankly tell all my friends here that if these incidents continue to occur the Chinese government will not change its policies and principles for the work in Tibet or its attitude toward combating the Dalai clique.¹¹

Chinese officials and media have attempted to discredit some of the self-immolators — and by extension, the basis for their suicides — by describing them or their deaths in pejorative terms including terrorist,¹² criminal,¹³ and copy-cat.¹⁴ A November 2011 Xinhua article described self-immolations as “brutal and terrorist acts in disguise,”¹⁵ and a March 2012 Xinhua report asserted that by “instigating” Tibetans to commit self-immolation, “the Dalai Lama clique” showed willingness to “use terrorism to reach their objectives.”¹⁶ The same March report alleged that “a number of the self-immolators were “secularized monks with criminal records.” In June 2012, for example, Xinhua reported on two former monks who attempted self-immolation: one allegedly had stolen a “golden Buddha statute [sic]” from a monastery and the other allegedly had stolen money from a relative.¹⁷ The same Xinhua report featured a psychologist stating, “Teen-

agers aged 18–22 and the stressed are the most prone to copycat suicides as they are impulsive and lack self-control.”

Policies, Legal Measures, Stalled Dialogue May Influence Self-Immolators’ Decisions

International media and advocacy groups continued to report that as self-immolators burned they shouted anti-government slogans and called for Tibetan freedom (or independence) and the Dalai Lama’s return.¹⁸ The consistency of the reports, if they are accurate, indicates that Tibetan self-immolators rejected the outlook for the Tibetan culture under Party policy and government legal measures. Based on Commission analysis, several factors and trends that developed or worsened following Tibetan political protests that began in March 2008 may have contributed to the environment that influences Tibetan decisions to self-immolate. Examples of such factors and trends include:

- **Government failure to implement the PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL)** in a manner that provides local ethnic autonomous governments the “right to administer their internal affairs”—as guaranteed in the REAL’s Preamble;¹⁹

- **Erosion or elimination of future potential for ethnic autonomy** as the Party and government promote demographic transformation [see Box on Zhu Weiqun below];²⁰

- **Deteriorating outlook for the Tibetan culture, language, and environment** as the government continues to prioritize development initiatives that accelerate infrastructure construction and resource exploitation;²¹

- **Steepening decline since 2007 in the status of religious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists** resulting from national-, provincial-, and prefectural-level government regulation of the religion;²²

- **Ongoing security crackdowns and enforced “education” campaigns** that pressure Tibetans to accept policies and regulations that Tibetans resent, but officials say “uphold [the] normal order of Tibetan Buddhism,” safeguard “social stability,” and foster a “harmonious society;”²³ and

- **Lack of hope that Party officials will resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama’s envoys** and engage in substantive discussions.²⁴

Zhu Weiqun, in his capacity as UFWD Executive Deputy Head (or Deputy

Head prior to 2006²⁵), served as a principal interlocutor in the dialogue between Party officials and the Dalai Lama's representatives starting in the 2003 second round²⁶ through the ninth and most recent round in January 2010.²⁷ The period of time since the ninth round—more than two-and-one-half years—is the longest without a formal meeting since dialogue resumed in 2002.²⁸ On June 1, 2012, the Dalai Lama's envoys, Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen, reportedly resigned their positions as Special Envoy and Envoy respectively and noted “the deteriorating situation inside Tibet since 2008 leading to the increasing cases of self-immolations by Tibetans.”²⁹

UN Must Help with Situation in Tibet

By David Kilgour, 2 September 2012

The following is a talk given by human rights advocate and former MP David Kilgour to mark Tibetan Democracy Day on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Sept. 2.

On Tibetan Democracy Day, I must sadly begin by noting that Tibet is one of the worst instances of the rule by terror operating across China since 1949.

His Holiness, The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetans, a much-loved honorary Canadian citizen and highly-respected world leader, is the best hope for a peaceful resolution of the Tibet issue. Advocating Tibetan autonomy under Chinese rule, he disavows violence, does not favour secession, and has this year turned over the political role to democratically elected men and women.

Over 59 mostly young Tibetans have now made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives through self-immolation since 2009.

His Holiness spoke to an audience of about 7,000 in Ottawa earlier this year. He indicated that he felt the Chinese people generally would accept a degree of autonomy for Tibet if aware that this is all that is being sought. He also highlighted the tragic loss of Tibetan lives to self-immolation.

Advertisement

We friends of Tibet in Canada and beyond are deeply concerned about the current situation. Over 59 mostly young Tibetans have now made the ultimate

sacrifice of their lives through self-immolation since 2009.

There are also hundreds locked away for seeking elemental justice for Tibet. Tibetan parliamentarians-in exile headed by Speaker Penpa Tsering recently presented a letter to various embassies in New Delhi seeking concrete action from their governments to end Beijing's policies that are pushing an increasing number of Tibetans to set themselves on fire.

His letter reads in part: "In January this year, the number of Tibetans driven to self-immolation in Tibet was 17 and now it has reached 51, out of which 41 have succumbed to their injuries. ... Nine people have been shot and killed and some others were beaten to death besides numerous arbitrary and extrajudicial detentions, forced disappearances, and long prison terms without due process of law. ... In some cases only the ashes of the cremated bodies were handed over to the family.

"Instead of looking into the real causes of such drastic acts, all that the Chinese authorities have come up with is fire extinguishers and iron hooks to add to the machine guns and electric batons that the security personnel carry. ... [T]hey have always tried ... to demean the motivation of those who lost their lives by insinuating madness (etc.) as the causes of their action. [They] heap lie upon lie to justify their intransigent position. [They] blame His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Western forces or the separatist forces for the mess they have created. ... [They] reinterpret Buddhism to suit their needs and mislead the ordinary Chinese and the international community by branding it as an act of terrorism.

"The reason for Tibetans being driven to self-immolation [is] ... China's policy of assimilation, thereby destroying the very identity of the Tibetan people—the unique and ancient Tibetan language, religion and culture which has the potential to promote peace and harmony in the world. ... This month alone, five Tibetans have resorted to such drastic acts. Yet the Chinese authorities remain mute to the calls of the Tibetans asking for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, freedom for the Tibetan people, and the protection of their unique identity. ... Watching the trend, it seems highly unlikely that self-immolations will stop in the immediate future and every time the phone rings, we are left wondering, who next? ... It is still not too late to help!"

Tibetan human rights defender Yonten Gyatso was sentenced to seven years imprisonment in June for circulating information relating to a self-immolation

and attempting to share details of the human rights situation in Tibet with overseas organizations. He is a monk based in Sichuan Province. The sentence came after he was accused of circulating photographs of a nun, Tenzin Wangmo, as she tragically self-immolated on Oct. 17, 2011. According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, the charges brought against him also included “sharing information since 2008 about political events in Tibet by attempting to contact international human rights organisations” and “human rights mechanisms of the UN.”

Rule by terror in China today means in Tibet that religious practitioners are not only forced to denounce His Holiness the Dalai Lama during “patriotic education” sessions, but also must adhere to regulations from authorities and monastic management committees filled with Communist Party militants. Tibetans are forced to pay their respects to Party leaders, whose photos are forcibly placed alongside Buddhist images in the monasteries. Efforts are even being made to set up Party branches in monasteries and nunneries. Most dangerously and absurdly of all, the atheist Party wants to be responsible for the selection of reincarnated high lamas to meet its political ends, including that of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

Environmental destruction

Since 1949, destruction of the fragile natural environment of Tibet has caused major damage that affects not only Tibet, but neighbouring countries. Extraction of natural resources without any consideration for the environment will further exacerbate problems. The party-state is confiscating nomadic lands; herders are being placed on the outskirts of cities. Without dung manure, severe degradation and desertification of the grasslands results. The centuries-old wisdom of Tibetan nomads on environmental stewardship is badly needed.

Conclusion

Those of us here today are requesting the UN to look into these and related issues, and for the Canadian government to give support to Tibetans in raising the issue at the UN and to bring up the issues bilaterally with China. A signature campaign is also being undertaken along with the Flame of Truth torch relay to appeal to Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the UN, with the following requests:

1. The UN must discuss the issue of Tibet based on the resolution that it passed

in 1959, 1961, and 1965 and continuously make efforts to fulfill the substance of these resolutions;

2. An independent international fact-finding delegation must immediately be sent to investigate the ongoing crisis in Tibet; and

3. The UN must take special responsibility to ensure that the basic aspirations of Tibetans inside Tibet are fulfilled.

David Kilgour is an internationally recognized human rights defender and former Member of Parliament, at one time acting as Canada Secretary of State for the Asia Pacific region.

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay's Statement on Tibetan Self-immolation

Geneva, 2 November 2012

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Friday urged Chinese authorities to promptly address the longstanding grievances that have led to an alarming escalation in desperate forms of protest, including self-immolations, in Tibetan areas.

The UN human rights chief said she was disturbed by “continuing allegations of violence against Tibetans seeking to exercise their fundamental human rights of freedom of expression, association and religion,” and pointed to “reports of detentions and disappearances, of excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, and curbs on the cultural rights of Tibetans.”

Cases have included a 17-year-old girl who was reportedly severely beaten and sentenced to three years in prison for distributing flyers calling for Tibet's freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama. Others have been sentenced to between four and seven years in prison for writing essays, making films or distributing photos of events in Tibet outside China. Serious concerns have been raised about fair trial standards, and the torture and ill-treatment of detainees.

“I have had several exchanges with the Chinese Government on these issues. But more needs to be done to protect human rights and prevent violations,” Pillay said. “I call on the Government to respect the rights to peaceful assem-

bly and expression, and to release all individuals detained for merely exercising these universal rights.”

The High Commissioner also appealed to Tibetans to refrain from resorting to extreme forms of protest, such as self-immolation, and urged community and religious leaders to use their influence to help stop this tragic loss of life.

“I recognise Tibetans’ intense sense of frustration and despair which has led them to resort to such extreme means,” she said, “but there are other ways to make those feelings clear. The Government also needs to recognise this, and permit Tibetans to express their feelings without fear of retribution.”

The High Commissioner urged the Government, as a confidence-building measure, to allow independent and impartial monitors to visit and assess the actual conditions on the ground, and to lift restrictions on media access to the region. She noted that there are 12 outstanding requests for official visits to China by UN Special Rapporteurs on various human rights issues, including one by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief. During the Universal Periodic Review of China’s human rights record before the UN Human Rights Council, the State pledged to step up cooperation with Special Procedures. Pillay called on the Government to facilitate their access.

“Social stability in Tibet will never be achieved through heavy security measures and suppression of human rights,” she said. “Deep underlying issues need to be addressed, and I call on the Government to seriously consider the recommendations made to it by various international human rights bodies, as well as to avail itself of the expert advice being offered by the UN’s independent experts on human rights.”

Among the recommendations made by international human rights bodies to the Government of China on Tibet are the following:

- UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, recommended a suspension of non-voluntary resettlement of nomadic herders, who make up the majority of the Tibetan population, and called for a meaningful consultation.

- The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CERD) recommended to China that any policies or incentives offered that may result in a substantial alteration of the demographic composition of autonomous minority areas be reviewed. CERD also recommended that the

State party carefully consider the root causes of the unrest in March 2008, including inter-ethnic violence, and the reasons why the situation escalated.

- The UN Committee Against Torture in November 2008 recommended that China conduct a thorough and independent inquiry into events surrounding the protests in March 2008, including the reported excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators, notably monks, in Kardze county, Ngaba county, and Lhasa; and into allegations of torture and ill-treatment against those arrested and detained.

“My office also stands ready to assist constructively on these issues in the region and promoting best practices from around the world with regard to protection of minorities,” Pillay added.

Declaration of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the
European Union on Tibetan Self-immolation
Brussels, 14 December 2012

17831/1/12 REV 1 PRESSE 535, Council of the European Union

The EU is profoundly saddened by the increasing number of Tibetans committing self-immolation, many of them young people.

We are concerned by the restrictions on expressions of Tibetan identity, which appear to be giving rise to a surge of discontent in the region. While respecting China's territorial integrity, the EU calls upon the Chinese authorities to address the deep-rooted causes of the frustration of the Tibetan people and ensure that their civil, political, economic and social and cultural rights are respected, including their right to enjoy their own culture, to practise their own religion and to use their own language.

The EU fully supports the statement made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay on 2 November 2012. The EU calls upon the Chinese authorities to respect the rights of Tibetans to peaceful assembly and expression, to act with restraint, and to release all individuals detained for taking part in peaceful demonstrations.

We also urge Chinese authorities to allow free access to all Tibetan autonomous areas for diplomats as well as for international journalists.

Recognising their intense sense of despair, the EU calls on Tibetans to refrain from resorting to extreme forms of protest, such as self-immolation, and on their community and religious leaders to use their influence to help stop this tragic loss of life.

Finally, the EU encourages all concerned parties to resume a meaningful dialogue.

**An Appeal to Vice-President Xi Jinping from
the International Tibetan Studies Community**

10 December 2012

Dear Mr Vice-President,

As you will be assuming your new role as President of the People's Republic of China in March 2013, the scientific community of Tibetologists would like to express to you its deep concern about the state of the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region and in the Tibetan autonomous prefectures in neighboring provinces.

We know that many schools have been established in Tibetan areas over the last several decades, and we are delighted at that development. We also appreciate the benefits that schoolchildren can have from being educated in their own language.

However, over the last several years, the authorities have been trying to institute new measures that eliminate or severely restrict the use of Tibetan as the language of instruction in Tibetan-speaking areas, such as the replacement of Tibetan by Chinese as the medium of education (announced in Qinghai in 2010) and the replacement of textbooks written in Tibetan by Chinese textbooks —as was seen in Rebkong (Chin: Tongren) in March 2012. These developments have taken place despite the fact that worldwide research on this topic as well as official Chinese statistics have shown that students perform better when they are studying scientific subjects in their own language.

This policy has already been active in the Tibet Autonomous Region for several years and has led to well-known results: students destined for senior positions in the public or private sectors now have only a superficial knowledge of their own language and civilization.

The Tibetan people of Qinghai have repeatedly, through peaceful demonstrations by citizens, and through petitions and letters, expressed their opposition to the new language policy, which is officially designated the “Qinghai Province Mid- and Long-Term Plan for Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020).” They have made known their strong desire to preserve their language as the medium of instruction and communication in their schools, which does not mean in any sense that they are not willing to learn Chinese. They generally acknowledge the economic and cultural significance of the Chinese language. Such requests are consistent with the Chinese Constitution which specifies in Article 4 that *all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs*. Moreover, according to the decree of 2002, in the Tibet Autonomous Region, the Tibetan language has the status of an official language in China, though that status does not always seem to be reflected in practice.

Dozens of Tibetans of all ages, men and women, religious and lay, have committed acts of self-immolation over the last few years. Several of them have shouted slogans demanding respect for the language and culture of Tibet.

As specialists in the areas of Tibetan language, culture and religion, we would like to share with you, through this letter, our own concerns about the various measures that jeopardize the continuing viability of this civilization, a civilization that is one of the treasures of humanity and for which the Chinese government has clearly stated its responsibility. We would like to remind you that in China the Tibetan language is, after Chinese, one of oldest continually-used languages, and has also contributed to the understanding and reconstruction of the ancient Sino-Tibetan family, a family that, like Indo-European, contains many hundreds of languages.

Our work has led us to pursue our professional and intellectual lives within the structures of universities and institution of higher education. We know the value of Tibet’s civilization and we regret that the Tibetan language, which is its fundamental support, is seemingly marginalized and devalued in the TAR and in various other Tibetan autonomous administrative units at the same time that it is increasingly being taught and studied in universities around the world. The responses of the authorities to the demands of Tibetans who are naturally worried about the disappearance of their culture have not assuaged their deep concerns about the situation.

This is why, at the time when new leadership is taking control of the country, we address you collectively with the hope that you will be sympathetic to the aspirations of Tibetan citizens of China; that you will work with them to find peaceful solutions to this crisis that will allow for the promotion and development of Tibet's language and culture. There is no reason why the Tibetan language and culture cannot coexist peacefully with the Chinese language and culture through the application of the principles expressed in the successive constitutions of the People's Republic of China, which is constituted as a multicultural state.

**Under Secretary Otero's Keynote Remarks at
the European Union's Human Rights Day Event**

11 December 2012

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for that kind introduction. It is a special honor to be with you the day after the European Union was awarded the 2012 Peace Prize. My warm congratulations to you.

And thank you also to the embassies that are cohosting today's event—Cyprus, Finland, and Lithuania—as well as the embassies of the Czech Republic, Sweden and the UK which have supported this event as well.

I am very sorry that Maria Otero could not be here. As you've heard, there was a death in her family overnight, and certainly my thoughts are with her. Those of you who know her know that she brings wisdom, grace and warmth to all that she does, and so I am glad that she can be with her family, as I'm sure she is a comfort to them.

Maria and I have traveled together and worked on many issues together over the last three and a half years—so it's an honor to be her understudy today, and I thank the mission for inviting me to deliver her remarks in her stead.

Today's meeting fits well with the EU's legacy of working for peace and justice. And I am pleased you have organized such a distinguished panel to address the issue of human rights, a key pillar of U.S. foreign policy.

Yesterday was International Human Rights Day, when we celebrate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In adopting the Declaration, governments around the world recognized that human beings are, by virtue of their birth, endowed with certain inalienable rights. And these rights serve as “the

foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

Today, we continue to look to the Universal Declaration not just as a reminder of our values, but as a guide for action. As Secretary of State Clinton said last week in Dublin, “it is a time-tested blueprint for successful societies.”

The theme of today’s event – “Supporting Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Association, and Political Participation” – is particularly appropriate. For we recognize that human rights are not just about freedom from violence, torture, unlawful detention, discrimination, and oppression. Human rights also include the fundamental freedoms to speak, associate, assemble, and follow one’s faith.

The European Union and the United States have been strong partners in promoting these basic rights that are so important to securing other rights. We are bound together by a common history and shared values, within which these fundamental freedoms play a key role.

Today, I’d like to highlight a few areas where the EU and the United States are working together to promote and strengthen human rights around the world.

First, we both work to ensure that the freedoms of expression, association, and political participation enhance citizen involvement in the democratic electoral process. As Secretary Clinton has said on numerous occasions, a vibrant civil society in which citizens and activists engage in vigorous public debate is one of the fundamentals of free, democratic nations. Such public deliberation helps keep citizens informed, exposes them to a variety of opinions, values and interests, and induces them to refine their own views and defend them with good reasons.

And democratic elections, in turn, help to protect fundamental freedoms and to promote good governance, by enabling citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Thus, the mutually reinforcing feedback loop between civil society and democratic institutions creates a virtuous circle of vibrant democracy.

Second, we work together to protect freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as a number of other international instruments. Of course, protecting the right of expression does not mean endorsing everything that people say. There are billions of people on earth; some of them will say terrible, hurtful things. They may offend our religious feelings or defame groups we belong to. Rather than banning such speech, the rest of us should use our own freedom of expression to challenge, condemn, and reject hateful or offensive speech.

Working with youth from many European Union countries over the past few years, we have shown that it is possible to stop bigotry and promote respect across lines of culture, religion, tradition, class, disability, and gender. The 2012 Hours Against Hate campaign uses social media to invite youth throughout Europe and around the world to volunteer their time with someone who does not look like them, live like them, or pray like them. The success of the campaign is evident through the more than 20,000 volunteer hours pledged globally. People from faith groups, NGOs, international organizations, universities, businesses, governments, and other individuals in Europe and around the world have joined the campaign.

Third, we share the same objectives in the fight against anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim sentiment, and discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, and persons with disabilities. The EU continues to play the leading role in combating all forms of discrimination across the European continent. We applaud the EU's Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies as an important step in protecting the rights of the members of the Romani minority, and we encourage the EU to press forward in its commitments to promote the social and economic inclusion of members of all marginalized groups.

We also applaud the EU Council's adoption in June of an "EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy." And we look forward to continue working closely with newly appointed EU Special Representative Mr. Lambrinidis on the implementation of our human rights policy. (Incidentally we are already working together -- I was in Geneva last week for the first UN Forum on Business and Human Rights where Mr. Lambrinidis and Mike Posner both addressed the plenary session.)

Fourth, as Secretary of State Clinton noted in a recent speech in Washington, we will cooperate with the EU to promote democracy and human rights in those parts of Europe that are not yet where they need to be. The Secretary reiterated this message in Dublin last week when she met with embattled civil society organizations from across Europe on the sidelines of the OSCE ministerial meetings.

Beyond Europe, we applaud some of the newest members of the EU for using their recent experiences with democratization to support democratic aspirations in Eurasia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

And we look to our European allies to help improve security and build new

relationships in Asia. As Secretary Clinton said, “our pivot to Asia is not a pivot away from Europe. On the contrary, we want Europe to engage more in Asia along with us, to see the region not only as a market, but as a focus of common strategic engagement.”

And as a good example, European governments, including Germany, UK, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, and Poland, have joined the call for Chinese authorities to address the worsening human rights conditions in Tibetan areas.

The United States is deeply concerned and saddened by the continuing violence in Tibetan areas of China and the increasing frequency of self-immolations by Tibetans.

Chinese authorities have responded to these tragic incidents with measures that tighten already strict controls on the freedoms of religion, expression, assembly and association of Tibetans. Official rhetoric that denigrates the Tibetan language, the Dalai Lama, and those that have self-immolated has further exacerbated tensions.

The United States government has consistently urged the Chinese government to address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions. These policies include increasingly severe government controls on Tibetan Buddhist religious practice and monastic institutions; education practices that undermine the preservation of Tibetan language; intensive surveillance, arbitrary detentions and disappearances of Tibetans, including youth and Tibetan intellectual and cultural leaders; escalating restrictions on news, media and communications; and the use of force against Tibetans seeking peacefully to exercise their universal human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, we celebrate Human Rights Day every December. But advancing freedom and human rights is our daily work, as the Secretary noted in Dublin, and we must continue the hard work of “making human rights a human reality.” We continue to press for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, and we will stand with citizens, activists, and governments around the world that do the same, as we strive for a world in which each human being lives freely and with dignity. Thank you.

Canada Concerned about Rash of Tibetan Self-Immolations

December 14, 2012

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird today issued the following statement:

“I am concerned about the escalating number of self-immolations in Tibetan areas of China and the increasingly punitive measures being taken in response, which further exacerbate tensions in the region.

“Canada supports Tibetans’ freedoms of expression, assembly and association. That anyone should feel such an end is justified by these means is a striking testament to Tibetans’ deep yearning for greater religious, linguistic and cultural rights.

“Canada encourages China to give full consideration to the traditions and culture of the Tibetan population in a manner that will help ease tensions. We call on China to lift restrictions on access to the affected areas for the diplomats, media and other observers.

“We urge China to engage in substantive and meaningful dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives in working toward a peaceful resolution of outstanding issues that is acceptable to both sides.”

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Foreign Affairs Media Relations Office

Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

UK has serious concerns about human rights in Tibet

18 December 2012

Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire has said that the UK has serious concerns about the self-immolations in Tibetan regions.

Following a European Union statement on self-immolations in Tibet, Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire said:

“We strongly support the recent statement from Baroness Ashton about the situation in Tibet. We continue to have serious concerns about the human rights situation there, including the self-immolations in Tibetan regions.

“We urge the Chinese authorities to exercise restraint. At the same time, I join Baroness Ashton in calling on Tibetans not to resort to extreme forms of protest such as self-immolation, and urge their community and religious leaders to use their influence to stop this tragic loss of life. We strongly support the resumption of meaningful dialogue to resolve the underlying grievances of Tibetan communities.

“I also urge the Chinese government to ensure unrestricted access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China for diplomats, international media and other concerned parties. We believe a long term solution is best achieved through respect for universal principles of human rights and genuine autonomy for Tibet within the framework of the Chinese constitution.”

China: Stop Sentencing Tibetans for “Inciting” Immolations

Human Rights Watch, 1 February 2013

(New York) – Chinese judicial authorities should immediately release two Tibetans who were found guilty in legal proceedings that relied solely on confessions they gave during five months in detention, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch has documented endemic use of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and coercion of Tibetans in detention.

On January 31, 2013, the Intermediate People’s Court of the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture sentenced Lorang Konchok to death with two years’ reprieve and his nephew, Lorang Tsering, to 10 years in prison on charges of “intentional homicide” in connection with the self-immolation protests of other Tibetans.

“These prosecutions are utterly without credibility,” said Sophie Richardson, China director. “The Chinese government seems to think it can stop self-immolation by punishing anyone who talks about it. But in pursuing these ‘incitement’ cases, the government compounds the tragedy of these suicide protests.”

According to a Xinhua report in December 2012, Lorang Konchok, 41, a monk at the Kirti Monastery, and his nephew, Lorang Tsering, 31, a former monk, had been in detention since August 2012. That same account, the first to confirm their detention, also reported that Lorang Konchok had confessed. At the trial, Lorang Konchok was accused of being the primary actor receiving instructions

from organizations associated with the Dalai Lama in India, and Lorange Tsering was accused of being his accomplice. Between the publication of the Xinhua article and the beginning of their trial on January 26, 2013, there was little additional information about their case, and it remains unclear whether they had access to lawyers during their detention.

According to Chinese state media reports of the trial, both men confessed to trying to “goad” or “incite” eight people to self-immolate since 2010, three of whom died, on instructions from “the Dalai Lama clique.” Those confessions were made public in December, after the men had been in detention for four months. According to state media, Lorange Konchok and Lorange Tsering did not present defenses and the lawyers assigned to them asked the court for leniency on the basis of their cooperation.

Since mid-2011, the Chinese government has detained and prosecuted at least a dozen people who have allegedly been associated with immolations. These include:

- On January 31, 2013, six Tibetans were sentenced by a Gansu court for their alleged involvement in the October 2012 self-immolation of Dorje Rinchen. Four of the six were given sentences ranging from seven to twelve years on charges of “intentional homicide,” based on claims they had prevented police from reaching Rinchen. The other two were given three- and four-year sentences for blocking traffic after the immolation. Chinese authorities said on January 24, 2013, that at least 10 other people in Gansu have been charged with “planning” or “organizing” self-immolations, without giving further details;
- On January 25, 2013, state media reported that Drolma Kyab, a “prospective self-immolator,” and his “suspected inciter,” known as Pakpa, were both detained for investigations relating to homicide;
- In mid-January 2013, four Tsodun Kirti monks were sentenced to prison for charges that stem from ties to monks from the same monastery who self-immolated in 2012. All four were detained at the Kirti monastery in August 2012, but the reasons for their arrest were not made clear at the time, and the monks were subsequently held in an undisclosed location. According to family members and Kirti monks in exile who passed on the information, the Barkham Intermediate People’s Court in Ngaba (Ch. Aba) sentenced Namsey, aged 18, to ten years in prison; Yarphel, aged 18, six years; Lobsang Sengye, aged 19, two years; and

Asung, aged 22, two and a half years. Sources believe they were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the self-immolation protests by fellow monks in March and July of 2012, but no further information is known;

- In August 2012, another Tsodun Kirti monk, Tubwang Tenzin, was arrested. He has not yet been tried and remains in detention, conditions unknown;

- In July 2012, three monks belonging to Bongtak monastery in Tsonub (Ch. Haixi) prefecture in Qinghai province were given sentences ranging from 9 to 11 years in prison in connection with the self-immolation death of another monk;

- In September 2012, two Ngaba (Ch. Aba) Kirti monks were sentenced to prison terms of between 8 and 11 year in connection with the self-immolation deaths of a fellow monk in March 2012;

- In late June 2012, a week after Ngawang Norphel and Tenzin Khedup self-immolated together, Ngawang Norphel's wife, Drolma Dekyi, and two other family members were detained for questioning;

- In August 2011, sentences of 10 and 13 years were given to two monks from Ngaba Kirti monastery for "intentional homicide" in not handing over a monk to the authorities after he had self-immolated, and at least four others were sentenced for sending photographs of self-immolators to exiles.

- There are numerous reports of other detentions that have been carried out after the immolations of fellow monks and family members as an apparent deterrent against future immolations. However, those detained are often held in secret and information about them is difficult to obtain.

Self-immolations take place in the context of the Chinese government's long-standing repressive policies in the Tibetan areas that have seen severe restrictions on Tibetans' rights. Statements left behind by some individuals make clear their actions were protests against government policies. The current wave of immolations began after the government cracked down on mostly peaceful, large-scale protests against Chinese policies in 2008.

To date there has still been no concerted effort from the Chinese government to address the underlying grievances in Tibet, which have contributed to the rising number of self-immolations by Tibetans. The latest in the 99 self-immola-

tions since February 22, 2009, occurred on January 22, 2013. Twenty-six-year-old Konchok Kyab died after setting fire to himself in Kanlho (Ch. Gannan) Tibet Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu province.

“Sentencing someone to death for allegedly inciting someone else to commit suicide is neither just nor respectful of the right to life,” said Richardson. “The ongoing prosecution of people linked with self-immolation appears to be about stifling dissent and laying blame on others for this tragedy. It is time for China to respond to the grievances and human rights violations that appear to be provoking this tragic form of protest.”

Other Resources on Tibetan Self-immolations

Proceedings of the symposium on self-immolation held in Paris (14-15 May 2012):

Tibet is burning — Self-Immolation: Ritual or Political Protest?

Edited by Katia Buffetrille and Françoise Robin

Self-Immolation in Tibet: Some Reflections on an Unfolding History by Katia Buffetrille

Self Immolation, the Changing Language of Protest in Tibet by Tsering Shakya

Political Self-Immolation in Tibet and Chinese Popular Culture by Robert Barnett

Kīrti Monastery of Ngawa: Its History and Recent Situation by Daniel Berounský

Chinese Policy Towards Tibet versus Tibetan Expectations for Tibet: A Divergence Marked by Self-Immolations by Fabienne Jagou

Conversations and Debates: Chinese and Tibetan Engagement by Elliot Sperling

Online Articles by Tibetans in Exile on Self-immolation (A Brief Analysis) by Chung Tsering

Fire, Flames and Ashes. How Tibetan Poets Talk about Self-Immolations without Talking about them by Françoise Robin

Fire and Death in Western Imagination by Michel Vovelle

Self-Immolation in Context, 1963-2012 by Michael Biggs

Immolation in a Global Muslim Society. Revolt against Authority— Transgression of Strict Religious Laws by Dominique Avon

Self-Immolations by Kurdish Activists in Turkey and Europe by Olivier Grojean

The Arab Revolutions and Self-Immolation by Farhad Khosrokhavar

Self-immolation by Fire versus Legitimate Violence in the Hindu Context by Marie Lecomte-Tilouine

Immolations in Japan by François Macé

Multiple Meanings of Buddhist Self-immolation in China, a Historical Perspective by James A. Benn

Available online at:

<http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/collections/journals/ret/index.php?selection=0>

Special focus on self-immolation by **Journal of the Society for Cultural Anthropology**: (April 2011)

SELF-IMMOLATION AS PROTEST IN TIBET

Guest Editors: Carole McGranahan (University of Colorado) and Ralph Litzinger (Duke University)

Transforming the Language of Protest

By Tsering Shakya, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia

Discipline and Resistance on the Tibetan Plateau

By Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies, Harvard University

Social Suffering and Embodied Political Crisis

By Sienna R. Craig, Department of Anthropology, Dartmouth College

Virtue and the Remaking of Suffering

By Tenzin Mingyur Paldron, Department of Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley

Five Armchair Reflections on Tibetan Personhood

By Giovanni da Col, Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge

The Geopolitics of Politico-Religious Protest in Eastern Tibet

By Andrew M. Fischer, Institute of Social Studies (The Hague), Erasmus University Rotterdam

The Place of Hope in Acts of Protest and Offering

By Gillian G. Tan, Research Fellow in Anthropology, The University of Melbourne, Australia

On "Terrorism" and the Politics of Naming

By Emily T. Yeh, Department of Geography, University of Colorado-Boulder

Tibet Talk – on Life, Death, and the State

By Ralph Litzinger, Department of Cultural Anthropology, Duke University

Self-Immolation and Slander

By Woeser, writer, Invisible Tibet

On the Questions of Why and to What End

By Elliot Sperling, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University

The Information Gauntlet

By Losang Gyatso, Service Chief, Voice of America Tibetan Service

Chinese State Media Representations

By Kevin Carrico, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

Mourning Online

By Dechen Pemba, Editor, *HighPeaksPureEarth.com*

The Balancing Act of the Exile Tibetan Government

By The Tibetan Political Review Editorial Board: Tenzin Dickyi, Nima R.T. Binara, Wangchuk D. Shakabpa, Tenzin Wangyal

Online Debates among Tibetans in Exile

By Dhondup Tashi Rekjong, editor, Khabdha

The Afterlife of Images

By Leigh Sangster, Maitripa College

The Blazing Horror of Now

By Cameron David Warner, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus Universitet

Teaching Tibet in a Time of Precarious Emotion

By Carole McGranahan, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado

Available online at:

<http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/526>

A special report by Washington DC-based **International Campaign for Tibet** titles *Storm in the Grassland: Self-immolations in Tibet and Chinese Policy*.

Available online at:

<http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/ict-publications/reports/storm-grasslands-self-immolations-tibet-and-chinese-policy>

A white paper on self-immolation by Tibetan Policy
Institute of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

(January 2013)

Why is Tibet Burning?

<http://tibet.net/2013/01/31/tibet-policy-institute-reveal-reasons-for-tibet-burn/>