

Brute Force Unable to Suppress Tibetans' Longing for Freedom

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With less than a year left before the Beijing Olympics, China has taken extreme measures to fulfill their quest to become a renowned world leader and has taken extreme measures to build their image as an ideal location for the international event. In doing so, the Chinese government has shown the full extent of its paranoia.

Beginning with the attempted enthronement of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche's portrait by a few monks during a reception ceremony at Nalanda Thekchen Jangchup Choeling Monastery on July 18, 2007, in Lihang, the Chinese Government has been scampering all over Eastern Tibet, in a futile effort to suppress Tibetans' just call for freedom in Tibet. O'dho and Apha Bhomo were arrested a day later on the alleged charge of instigating others to support Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and to go and meet him.

A mass gathering of more than 10,000 Tibetans in Lihang demanded the immediate and unconditional release of Rongay Adak, who was arrested on August 1, 2007. Adak had publicly called for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his return to Tibet on that day. He also shouted slogans for the immediate release of political prisoners and called for freedom in Tibet. Following his arrest, five others:

Adruk Lupoe, Kunkhyen, Jare Lothok, Adruk Kalgyam and Jamyang Tenzin were also arrested on the alleged crime of "endangering national security" and "inciting to split the country".

On November 20, 2007, a court in Dartsedo sentenced Rongay Adak to 8 years in prison after an unfair trial. Three others - Adruk Lupoe, Kunkhyen and Jare Lothok - were respectively sentenced to 10 years, 9 years and 3 years in prison without any trial. The whereabouts of Adruk Kalgyam and Jamyang Tenzin are not known.

The destruction of the two storey high Guru Padmasambava's statue in Purang County on August 29, 2007, is a clear indication that religious freedom is being ruthlessly crushed in Tibet. The local Tibetans financed and constructed the Guru Rinpoche's statue. The co-founder of the statue, Khampa Lama, has been arrested. Tibetans in Tibet were also barred from celebrating when His Holiness the Dalai Lama was conferred the Congressional Gold Medal award on October 17, 2007. On that day, monks from Drepung Monastery, Lhasa, white-washed His Holiness' old palace as a mark of celebration. Thousands of Chinese paramilitary surrounded the monastery and stopped the monks from whitewashing and carrying out other religious activities. The monks resisted the Chinese intrusion into their practice of religious rights and three monks were arrested following the incident.

China's State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) introduced the Order No.5 that contained 14-article measures on reincarnation, which came into effect on September 1st, 2007. The Order No. 5 openly exhibited Chinese Government's rampant attempt to control religious leaders in Tibet. Tibetan Buddhists all over the world, including those in Tibet, will never accept this ridiculous interference, in our religious affairs, especially from the atheistic Chinese Regime.

Routine incursions into Tibetans' lives by the Chinese government, and obvious discrimination against Tibetan people are not limited to the political arena. Recently, on November 20, 2007, in Driru County (Kham region), following a minor quarrel, three teenage monks - Dhondup Dorji (age 16), Yeshe Thokmey (age 15), and Tsering (age 14) - were beaten by Chinese shopkeepers.

The Public Security Bureau (PSB) arrested the monks, and the sixteen-year-old, Dorji, was reportedly beaten severely and is currently hospitalized. The whereabouts of the other two monks are not known. On the other hand, the Chinese shopkeepers were neither arrested nor beaten by the PSB. This clearly shows the Chinese government's purportedly discriminative action against Tibetan people in their own land. The PSB's

highhandedness in dealing with the three teenage monks sparked public protest in front of the PSB officials. More than one thousand five hundred Tibetans protested and demanded the immediate release of the monks. Instead of reassuring the protestors of the monks' wellbeing, PSB dispatched more than two thousand paramilitary soldiers from Lhasa to quell the peaceful protestors, who were ruthlessly put down. This led to the arrest of around two hundred Tibetan people.

Tibetans in Tibet are relentless in their pursuit of basic human rights, and they have always demonstrated a strong commitment to non-violent means of protest. Chinese on the other hand, have always resorted to brute force to suppress Tibetans' call for freedom. Tibetans in Tibet and their actions are an important lesson to the Chinese regime that violent force can never stifle a person's wish for freedom. Tibetans in exile salute the bravery of our brothers and sisters in Tibet. We the under mentioned Tibetan NGO's representing the exile community wish to reiterate our brothers and sisters in Tibet that we are listening to their call for justice and definitely we are here to spread these instances of misfortune and make China accountable for their brutal actions.

Organised by:

Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's Association, Gu-Chu-Sum Movement, National Democratic Party of Tibet, and Students for a Free Tibet-India

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