

Tibet

PRESS WATCH

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- DC Visit of Tibetan Leaders in Exile
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INTERNATIONAL
CAMPAIGN
FOR TIBET

WINTER 2012
A publication of the
International Campaign for Tibet



TAPEY
February 27, 2009



PHUNTSOG
March 16, 2011



TSEWANG NORBU
August 15, 2011



LOBSANG KUNCHOK
September 26, 2011



LOBSANG KELSANG
September 26, 2011



KELSANG WANGCHUK
October 3, 2011



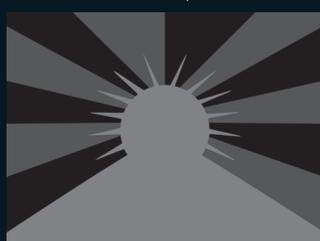
KAYANG
October 7, 2011



CHOEPEL
October 7, 2011



NORBU DAMRUL
October 15, 2011



TENZIN WANGMO
October 17, 2011



DAWA TSERING
October 25, 2011



PALDEN CHOETSO
November 3, 2011



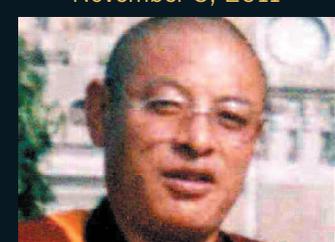
TENZIN PHUNTSOG
December 1, 2011



TSULTRIM
January 6, 2012



TENNYI
January 6, 2012



SONAM WANGYAL
January 8, 2012



LOBSANG JAMYANG
January 14, 2012

DESPERATE ACTS IN TIBET:

Understanding the Self-Immolations



དགྲེལ་འཁོར་ཚོགས་པ།

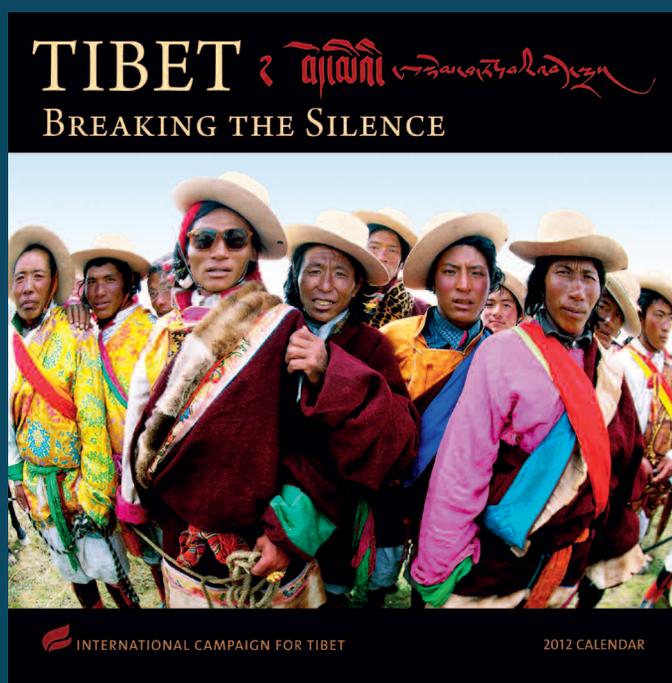
MANDALA SOCIETY
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The Mandala Society is an intimate group of Tibet supporters, committed to helping future generations of Tibetans. By including the International Campaign for Tibet in their will or trust, Mandala Society members ensure that ICT will continue to have the resources to promote a peaceful resolution of the occupation of Tibet, and will be able to help rebuild Tibet when Tibetans achieve genuine autonomy.

For more information about Mandala Society membership, please contact Chris Chaleunrath at 202-785-1515, ext. 225, chris.chaleunrath@savetibet.org, or use the envelope attached to this newsletter to request a call.



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From the President

TIBET PRESS WATCH

The International Campaign for Tibet works to promote human rights and democratic freedoms for the people of Tibet.

Founded in 1988, ICT is a non-profit membership organization with offices in Washington, D.C., Amsterdam, Berlin and Brussels, and field offices in Dharamsala and Kathmandu.

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Dear Friend of Tibet,

This edition of the *Tibet Press Watch* focuses on the self-immolations in Tibet. Since Tapey, a young monk from Kirti monastery in eastern Tibet, set himself ablaze in February 2009, there have been 16 additional self-immolations in Tibet.

These acts of protest have been remarkable in their extreme nature, but they represent a continuum of resistance against Chinese policies that effectively rob Tibetans of every other form of self-determination.

We are confronted at once by the tragedy and the strength of these acts, and we are compelled to react. I believe the self-immolations wish to provoke an international reaction that moves China to back off its heavy-handed policies in Tibet and allow the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet.

During a recent memorial for the great Czech freedom fighter Václav Havel, my thoughts kept drifting back to the Tibetans who are sacrificing their lives for the cause of freedom in their own land.

So much of what Havel communicated about the struggle against Communist Czechoslovakia was intended to be universal in its experience and application, whether his writings on 'the power of the powerless' or 'living in truth.'

In an essay, "Politics and Conscience," written by Havel more than a quarter century ago, he embraces the notion of transcendent power, based on truth:

"... I think that is an experience of an essential and universal importance — that a single, seemingly powerless person who dares to cry out the word of truth and to stand behind it with all his person and all his life, ready to pay a high price, has surprisingly great power ..."

The Tibetans who have self-immolated are challenging the Chinese party state and, indeed, all of us, to see their individual self-sacrifice as a means of discerning the truth in Tibet. And so our work at the

International Campaign for Tibet goes beyond reporting on the self-immolations to raising the consciousness of those who are the intended audiences of the Tibetan self-immolators.

We are pleased that the United States government has been swift and direct in its response and appears to be leading an unambiguous international call for China to change course in Tibet.

At the same time, we are dismayed that the Chinese government chooses to respond with brute force in Tibet and with the tired accusations that foreign governments are meddling in its internal affairs. The articles reproduced in this Tibet Press Watch should give you a good sense of the international response.

I hope you will remember too that each of the men and women who set themselves ablaze is an individual with friends and family, and a unique personal story. We should get to know them as best we can, and we invite you to visit our website for this purpose.

There is so much that you can do to be a part of our work for Tibet — and you can also find ways to take action on our website.

Our obvious task right now is to share the truth of the self-immolations in Tibet. Please turn to page 15 to make a personal effort to help ICT spread the word. Thank you.

In solidarity,



Mary Beth Markey



Tibet Press Coverage

News from around the World

As the people of Tibet feel increasing desperation in the face of unbearable Chinese repressions, news of their few outlets for expression — including, most tragically, self-immolation — are leaking past even the rigid Chinese news black-out. We've pulled a small collection of the global press for your review and recommend you read these to gain a more accurate understanding of what happens within and beyond Tibetan borders.

Dalai Lama Says China Policy in Tibet Cause of Self-Immolation Deaths

Associated Press, October 29, 2011

TOKYO — Tibet's exiled Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, pointed to what he called China's "ruthless policy" as prompting the recent deaths of Tibetan monks who set themselves on fire in protest.

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate called on Beijing to change its approach to ruling over the Himalayan region. "For their own interest, not just the interest for certain sort of problem here and there, but for the whole country's sort of future, they have to act (with a) realistic sort of policy," he told reporters Saturday.

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 traditionally Tibetan regions of western China.

"Actually, the local leader must look what's the real causes of death," the Dalai Lama said of the China. "It's their own sort of wrong policy, ruthless policy, illogical policy."

Nepalese Police Detain More than 100 Tibetan Exiles Protesting Chinese Rule

Associated Press, November 1, 2011

KATMANDU, NEPAL — Nepalese police detained more than 100 Tibetan exiles on Tuesday who had gathered to pray for nine Tibetans who set themselves on fire to protest against Chinese rule.

About 400 Tibetans, including 150 monks, held a prayer meeting on the outskirts of Katmandu in honor of the monks, former monks and a nun who have immolated themselves since March in a restive Tibetan area of western China that is under martial law-type police controls. At least five died of their injuries, while the condition of the others is not known.

Nepalese police in riot gear entered the prayer meeting at the Tibetan Refugee Center and pulled down a banner of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. This angered the Tibetans at the meeting, who poured into the streets to protest. They chanted anti-China slogans calling for a free Tibet and for China to "leave our home."

More than 100 protesters were taken in trucks to detention centers. The monks were not among those detained. There have been a number of similar protests in the past in Nepal. Police generally don't charge the protesters and they are usually released by nightfall.

Nepal's government has said it cannot allow protests against friendly nations, including China. Nepal is also under pressure from the Chinese government to stop them.

In China, Tensions Rising over Buddhism's Quiet Resurgence

USA Today, November 2, 2011

SERTHAR, China — Breathless but beaming, Sheng Zisu sounds confident after five months in a maze-like Buddhist encampment high on the eastern Tibetan plateau, nearly 400 miles of bad road from the nearest city.

"Look around. They could never find me here," Sheng, 27, says of parents so anxious about their only child's turn to Tibetan Buddhism that they have threatened to kidnap her.

Sheng is far from her home — and from the bars where she used to drink and the ex-boyfriends she says cheated on her. She is here with 2,000 other Han Chinese at the Larung Gar Buddhist Institute in Serthar, Sichuan province, the rain-soaked mountainous region of southwest China.

The academy and its rising number of converts from China's dominant ethnic group, the Han Chinese, reflect a remarkable and quiet recovery for Buddhist teachings here. Just how many Han Chinese have converted to Tibetan Buddhism is a sensitive and unanswered question in China.

Han students say the institute's popularity lies in its Chinese language provision and inspirational teachers such as Khenpo



Palden Choetso died in November 2011 after setting herself on fire in protest in Tibet.

So Dargye, who embraces social media. Over a half-million followers, on China's Twitter-like micro-blogging service Sina Weibo, receive his posts, usually Buddhist advice.

Don't expect Han converts to soften Beijing's hardline Tibet policy, cautions Thubten Samphel, spokesman for the Tibetan government-in-exile. Their numbers are dwarfed by China's 1.3 billion population, and their motives are apolitical, he says.

"Through Buddhism, Chinese students will come to a better understanding of the values of Tibetan culture, and realize there is no innate sense of anti-Chineseness in Tibetan culture," Samphel says. "We hope and pray that the same attitude and understanding will be shown by the Chinese Communist Party."

Tibetan Nun Dies in Self-Immolation

New York Times, November 3, 2011

BEIJING — A Buddhist nun in southwest Sichuan Province died Thursday after setting herself on fire, becoming the 11th Tibetan to embrace a grisly protest against Chinese rule and at least the sixth to die doing so.

The death of the nun, Qiu Xiang, 35, was reported by Xinhua, the official news agency, and confirmed by exile groups, who gave her Tibetan name as Palden Choetso. She was the second nun in the predominantly Tibetan region to take her own life by self-immolation.

Like two previous cases, the most recent suicide took place in Ganzi Prefecture, known as Kardze in Tibetan, which is the site of several important Buddhist monasteries that have been under especially tight restrictions in recent months. Last week, a Tibetan monk, Dawa Tsering, set himself on fire during a religious ceremony at a monastery there.

Xinhua wrote a short news article about the latest case, saying the nun set fire to herself at a road crossing in Dawu County shortly before 1 p.m. The report said the local authorities were investigating her motives.

Kate Saunders of the International Campaign for Tibet said the nun reportedly made a plea for religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama as her robes went up in flames. Ms. Saunders, citing the account of a local Tibetan, said fellow nuns took the injured woman back to their monastery, where she died a short time later.

The ruling Communist Party has sought to portray the self-immolations as a form of terrorism inspired by the Dalai Lama. Beijing consistently accuses the Dalai Lama of agitating for

an independent state despite his insistence on greater autonomy for the region's five million ethnic Tibetans.

Tibetan Monks Hope Making Ultimate Sacrifice Will Turn Call for Freedom into a Pressing Issue

The Irish Times, November 16, 2011

THE MONK doused himself in kerosene, then set himself on fire, running 200m down the street outside the Kirti monastery in Aba, in China's Sichuan province. As he ran he shouted words in Tibetan, phrases the eyewitness, an ethnic Han Chinese, did not understand.

"Many police and armed police ran to him, some soldiers, but they didn't extinguish the flames. A stallholder brought a bucket of water to put out the fire," the witness says. "Then he was taken away by police and two days later he was dead."

Some riot police carry fire extinguishers in case a monk or nun chooses to make the ultimate sacrifice by burning himself or herself to death.

Kirti monastery has become the focal point of Tibetan anger at what they see as efforts by China's ethnic Han majority to swamp Tibetan culture. Sichuan province covers 485,000 sq km (187,000 sq miles) and has a population of 84 million, making it bigger and more populous than Germany. Aba County, which is about the same size as Ireland, is a 9½-hour bus journey from the Sichuan capital, Chengdu.

Outside Kirti monastery itself a large bus for riot police is parked, and there are lots of police in evidence. The main police station is near the monastery. In Aba most people have had no internet access for more than a year, and mobile-phone contact has been mostly cut off, though text messages work. Anyone using a phone to make calls about anything to do with immolations is visited soon afterwards by the police.

One of the most senior Tibetan Buddhist leaders, the Karmapa Lama, has called on nuns and monks not to set themselves on fire, praising their bravery but hoping they adopt more constructive ways to further their cause.

"In Buddhist teaching, life is precious. To achieve anything worthwhile we need to preserve our lives," he said. "We Tibetans are few in number, so every Tibetan life is of value to the cause of Tibet."

ICT Responds

Updates and Press Releases from ICT

U.S. Government Speaks Strongly on Tibetan Self-Immolations

November 14, 2011

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton used the occasion of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to address the issue of self-immolations in Tibet.

Speaking at the East-West Centre in Honolulu on November 10, Secretary Clinton said the United States is “alarmed by recent incidents in Tibet of young people lighting themselves on fire in desperate acts of protest. ... We continue to call on China to embrace a different path.”

Secretary Clinton’s public remarks, made shortly before a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, follows a strong statement at the State Department’s November 4 press briefing by Spokesperson Victoria Nuland, who said “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 counterproductive policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions and that threaten the unique religious, cultural, linguistic identity of the Tibetan people.

“And let me take this opportunity to again call on the government of China to respect the rights of all of its citizens who peacefully express their desire for internationally recognized freedoms, and particularly the rights of Tibetans to resolve their underlying grievances with the government of China ... since this new spate of self-immolations has begun, we’ve had extensive conversations based in Beijing with our Embassy personnel.”

ICT Recommends: Governments and United Nations bodies should call on China to abide by its obligations to international human rights conventions with respect to the religious freedoms and basic human rights of the monastic and lay communities in Ngaba.

The Chinese government should suspend implementation of religious control regulations, review religious and security policies implemented since 2008 in Ngaba, and begin a transparent dialogue with the leaders of Tibetan Buddhist schools.

The Chinese government should resume its dialogue with the representatives of the Dalai Lama toward genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People’s Republic of China.

On January 9th a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department reiterated the concern of the U.S. government when she said, “We’re seriously concerned by reports that more Tibetans have

self-immolated over the past few days. ... We have consistently and directly raised with the Chinese Government this issue of Tibetan self-immolation ...”

In response, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Weimin stated, “We firmly oppose such remarks and practices making use of Tibet-related issues to interfere in China’s domestic affairs, which could disrupt Chinese social stability and national unity.”



60 Years of Chinese Misrule:
The Case for Cultural Genocide in Tibet

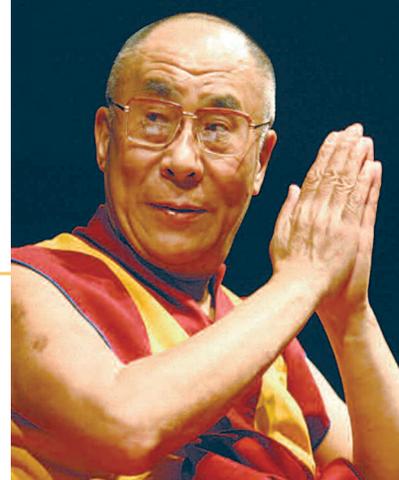
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Launch of the Cultural Genocide Report

A new ICT report on cultural genocide in Tibet, undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Information and International Relations in Dharamsala, has been released. The report makes a political argument that cultural destruction in Tibet both justifies and compels a vigorous international response.

To download a copy, visit our website at savetibet.org.

The Dalai Lama Outlines His Master Plan



Bhuchung K. Tsering, September 26, 2011

On September 24, 2011, the fourteenth Dalai Lama made yet another statement that will have great impact on the future direction of the institution that he represents. I am of course referring to his statement about the evolution of the Dalai Lama institution and the reincarnation system.

Through a succinct explanation of historical development, His Holiness has outlined his decisive role in matters relating to the next Dalai Lama. As expected, the Chinese Government has taken this personal with its spokesman asserting on September 26, 2011 that only it that had the authority. In general, recognition of reincarnation is a spiritual process in which temporal leadership had at best only marginal roles.

The September 24 statement ... is about the future of Tibetan Buddhism and the role of the Dalai Lama in it. The present Dalai Lama's master plan, if I dare to think aloud, is to institutionalize a system whereby the essence of the Tibetan Buddhist culture is understood by Tibetan Buddhists as well as others; and to create the necessary space so that this culture that can contribute greatly to the development of the world civilization can be preserved and promoted.

Delinking the institution of the Dalai Lama from a purely Tibetan political system is a step in line with his objectives. His September 24, 2011 statement says, "If it is decided that the

reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust." The Gaden Phodrang Trust is a reference to the formalization of the office that is currently the "Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama."

Given that the Chinese Government uses religious institutions to serve its political ends and given the central role of the Dalai Lamas in Tibetan spiritual life, the statement categorically says, "Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China."

China needs to understand that recognition of reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism is different from selecting a Party Secretary or priest for a Church, or even an abbot for a Buddhist monastery.

However, it is my contention that while this statement very much concerns the role of the present Dalai Lama in his next incarnation, it is also a reflection of the vision that he has for the future of Tibetan Buddhism.

An Excerpt from His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Statement on the Issue of His Reincarnation September 24, 2011

... Reincarnation is a phenomenon which should take place either through the voluntary choice of the concerned person or at least on the strength of his or her karma, merit and prayers. Therefore, the person who reincarnates has sole legitimate authority over where and how he or she takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognized. It is a reality that no one else can force the person concerned, or manipulate him or her. It is particularly inappropriate for Chinese communists, who explicitly reject even the idea of past and future lives, let alone the concept of reincarnate Tulkus, to meddle in the system of reincarnation and especially the reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas. Such brazen meddling contradicts their own political ideology and reveals their double standards. Should this situation continue in the future, it will be impossible for Tibetans and those who follow the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to acknowledge or accept it.

When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other con-

cerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. On that basis we will take a decision. If it is decided that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust. They should consult the various heads of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked inseparably to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. They should seek advice and direction from these concerned beings and carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with past tradition. I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China.

Understanding the Self-Immolations: A Timeline

In 2008, spontaneous protests ignited across Tibet, protesting China's repressive rule and the deliberate subversion of the Tibetan culture and of Tibetan Buddhism. The resulting governmental crack-down has further limited Tibetan freedom. Numerous Tibetans have found their only outlet for protest to be publicly setting themselves on fire — begging the question: How bad do things have to be for self-immolation to be the best alternative?

The International Campaign for Tibet is working to ensure that each Tibetan's sacrifice is seen and understood as a desperate cry for international support. The following timeline must, for reasons of space, omit the many protests, arrests, and violence visited upon the people of Tibet — from schoolgirls to nuns and monks to laypeople — who have courageously raised their voices in protest.



FEBRUARY 27, 2009

Tapey, a young monk from Kirti monastery, sets himself on fire to protest the cancellation of prayer ceremonies. He douses himself with gas and lights himself on fire at the market while holding a homemade Tibetan flag. He is

shot several times by police while afire, apparently to stop him from shouting pro-Tibet slogans. Tapey is removed; destination unknown. Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, acknowledge Tapey's self-immolation but denied police shot him. **WELLBEING: Unknown**



MARCH 16, 2011

Phuntsog, 20, a Kirti monastery monk, sets himself on fire on the third anniversary of a protest in Kirti in which at least 10 Tibetans were killed. He shouts slogans including "May His Holiness the Dalai Lama live for ten thousand

years!" Police extinguish the flames and are seen beating Phuntsog before he dies. **WELLBEING: Deceased**

In the aftermath, several hundred security personnel are posted to Kirti monastery. Around 300 monks are removed for "legal education," and two elderly Tibetans are beaten to death. Three monks are sentenced to prison terms of up to 11 years as "accomplices" in Phuntsog's death.

EARLY JULY, 2011

Authorities in Kardze indicate their alarm over the continuing peaceful actions by Tibetans. Li Dao Ping, the Vice President of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Sichuan province, visits Kardze and says "We should firmly smash separatist activities, firmly protect social stability and make an effort to equally develop all nationalities."



AUGUST 15, 2011

Buddhist monk Tsewang Norbu, 29, drinks gasoline, sets himself on fire, and calls for freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Chinese state media confirms his death shortly afterwards, stating: "It was unclear why he

had burnt himself." **WELLBEING: Deceased**



SEPTEMBER 26, 2011

Kirti monastery monks Lobsang Kunchok (left) and Lobsang Kalsang (right), both believed to be 18 years old, set themselves on fire while shouting "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama" in a protest in Ngaba. After putting out the flames, police take the two young monks into custody. **WELLBEING: Both reportedly hospitalized.**



OCTOBER 3, 2011

Kelsang Wangchuk, 17, of Kirti monastery sets himself aflame on Ngaba's main street. He carries a photo of the Dalai Lama and shouts slogans against the Chinese government. Sources say police surrounded him, extinguished the

flames, and beat him before taking him away. He is said to be detained in the county hospital with a head injury from the beatings. **WELLBEING: Unknown**

Additional security forces are deployed in Ngaba and Kirti. Anonymous pamphlets appear around Kirti monastery stating that if the current security crackdown in the area were to continue, “many more people were prepared to give up their lives.”



OCTOBER 7, 2011

Two former monks — Kayang, 18 (left), and Choepel, 19 (right) — clasp hands and set fire to themselves on the main road of Ngaba before security personnel extinguish the flames and take them to the government-run hospital. It is not known if the two monks opted to leave the monastery or were expelled by government authorities; they were not wearing monks’ robes when they self-immolated. Chinese media reported they were “slightly injured.” **WELLBEING: Both deceased**

OCTOBER 11, 2011

Kirti Rinpoche, the exiled head of Kirti monastery, explains his views on the self-immolation of monks, saying: “With the Chinese government making arbitrary arrests and passing unimaginably harsh sentences on the basis of false representations and allegations, Kirti has been turned into a virtual prison. All the monks, young and old, are subjected day and night to deprivation of all freedoms. Internally the monastery’s teaching program is not allowed to function, and externally, Tibetan religion and culture is under such unthinkable repression that it has reached a point of desperation where people would choose to die rather than go on living.”



OCTOBER 15, 2011

Norbu Damdrul, a former monk from Kirti Monastery, self-immolates in Ngaba. He is badly burned but reportedly alive when police extinguish the flames, kick him, and drive away with him in the opposite direction of the hospital.

The large Tibetan crowd of witnesses is dispersed at gunpoint. **WELLBEING: Deceased**

Kirti monastery is forbidden by authorities to help families of monks who have committed self-immolation, such as prayers for those who have died. Four permanent security police offices are built within the monastery compound. Internet access is cut off.

OCTOBER 17, 2011

Tenzin Wangmo, 20, from Mame Nunnery in Ngaba, dies after self-immolating at the Sumdo Bridge. As she dies, she calls for the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet and for religious freedom. Her body is taken back to the nunnery; authorities demand her

body be turned over or buried the same day. The nuns refuse. Soldiers and police cordon off the nunnery and surrounding villages. **WELLBEING: Deceased**



OCTOBER 25, 2011

Dawa Tsering, a monk from Kardze Monastery, sets fire to himself and shouts slogans calling for the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet during a religious ceremony attended by hundreds of local people inside the monastery. Monks put out the

flames; Chinese police are immediately deployed around and inside the monastery in an apparent stand-off with the monks and lay-people protecting Dawa Tsering from interrogation and detention. **WELLBEING: Unknown**



NOVEMBER 3, 2011

Palden Choetso, a Tibetan nun, sets fire to herself in Kardze. As her body burns, she calls for the long life and return of the Dalai Lama. Her sister nuns take her to the nunnery, and she dies soon afterwards. Local authorities have

locked down the area, closing a major road in Tawu, and deploying troops to the nunnery. **WELLBEING: Deceased**

DECEMBER 1, 2011

Tenzin Phuntsog, a former monk in the Tibet Autonomous Region, sets himself on fire to protest dramatic repressions in Chamdo. He was a monk of the Karma monastery in Chamdo, founded in the 12th century by the first Karmapa. Tenzin Phuntsog was reportedly hospitalized after his protest. **WELLBEING: Deceased**

JANUARY 6, 2012

Tsultrim and Tennyi (both around 20 years old) set themselves afire in Ngaba and run into the street calling for the return of and long life for His Holiness. Tennyi is believed to be a monk at Kirti monastery, and Tsultrim may have been expelled from Kirti by Chinese authorities. **WELLBEING: Both deceased**



JANUARY 8, 2012

Sonam Wangyal, believed to be a reincarnated lama, drinks kerosene and lights himself on fire in Amdo. Before his death he writes that he does not “act for my personal glory but for Tibet and the happiness of Tibetans.”

WELLBEING: Deceased

As this edition of the Tibet Press Watch went to print we learned of the self-immolation and death of Lobsang Jamyang, 21, on January 14. For the most dependable information on the situation inside Tibet, please visit savetibet.org

The International Response

Governments from around the world honor the death of these Tibetans and speak out in protest of China's repressions.



UNITED STATES

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton:

We have made very clear our serious concerns about China's record on human rights. When we see reports of lawyers, artists, and others who are detained or disappeared, the United States speaks up both publicly and privately. We are alarmed by recent incidents in Tibet of young people lighting themselves on fire in desperate acts of protest. We continue to call on China to embrace a different path.



GERMANY

German foreign ministry spokesperson:

The federal government is horrified at the rising number of self-immolations in the Tibetan regions of Southwest-China. The foreign office urged China on Friday to shape their policies in a way that existing tensions are relieved. It asked the Dalai Lama — the religious head of the Tibetans — to discourage young monks and nuns from further self-immolations.



UNITED KINGDOM

Extract from Foreign and Commonwealth Office update regarding Tibet:

We understand at least ten monks have now been imprisoned in connection to these [self-immolations]. We have raised these incidents with the Chinese Embassy in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing. British Embassy officials in China make regular visits to Tibet, and have kept in contact with the Foreign Affairs Office in Sichuan and local Public Security Bureau offices regarding access to these areas.



AUSTRALIA

Michael Danby MP, Melbourne Ports, Australian Labor Party:

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.



CANADA

House of Commons, Ottawa, Canada:

From the statements of Canadian members of Parliament: "The desperation of these people has now led to self-immolation acts, an act of desperation for anyone who understands Buddhist religion and culture. This is the sign that things have become a crisis for those in Tibet." "It is time for the Government of Canada to take a lead in coordinating an international response to condemn the Chinese government's repressive measures against the Tibetans. Canada should also work to ensure the United Nations to immediately send a fact finding mission to Ngaba to assess the situation. We cannot afford to waste another day."



POLAND

Deputy Director of Asia and Pacific Desk, Polish Ministry of

Foreign Affairs (translated by the Tibetan community in Poland): Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the utmost care and concern is watching developments around the Kirti monastery. Particularly moving is information regarding new acts of self-immolation among young Tibetans — their tragic loss of life and are the cause of sincere sorrow of Polish society.



EUROPEAN UNION

European Parliament resolution on Tibet:

The European Parliament 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, restore the lines of communication to the monks of Kirti Monastery, lift the restrictions and heavy-handed security measures imposed on the Kirti Monastery.

China's Reaction



Chinese authorities continue to downplay the desperation of the Tibetan people, while

an editorial in a Beijing newspaper with ties to the Communist Party blames the Dalai Lama and the West, implying he benefits from the tragedies. The *Global Times* warns, "China's Tibetan region has been affected by outrageous political influences under the name of religion. The selfishness and ruthlessness of the Dalai group are carefully packaged by the West [and] the fact is the more self-immolations happen in Tibet, the more comfortable the life of the Dalai group becomes."

Kelsang Gyaltzen, Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, addressed the European Parliament's Conference on Autonomy on November 29 to update them on talks between China and the Tibetan government in exile.

"The last round of meeting was held in January 2010. Since then we have repeatedly urged our Chinese counterparts to meet. As recently as about two weeks ago in view of the tragic self-immolations and the overall deteriorating situation in Tibet we urged our counterparts in Beijing to meet as soon as possible in order to explore ways to diffuse and calm the situation in Tibet. We are, however, still waiting for a positive reply."

Making Our Voices Heard

Lobby Day 2012: March 19-20

Each year in March, the International Campaign for Tibet hosts a Lobby Day event in Washington, DC so members and interested friends can speak out to our nation's lawmakers with the greatest possible impact.

Our Invitation to You

Representatives and Senators tell us that constituent visits help them measure the intensity of support for an issue; this means that your visit could make the difference for a member of Congress who's been sitting on the fence about supporting the people of Tibet.

Many people think that visiting their members of Congress is intimidating; they feel unprepared and uneasy at the thought of participating in a Lobby Day.

But we sincerely hope you decide to participate this year. We hold special training sessions just to familiarize first-time

activists with the best ways to express themselves, and we set up the meeting with your members or their staff. By the time you get to Capitol Hill, you'll be ready and eager to make your voice heard.

Traveling to Washington, DC for Tibet Lobby Day is a valuable experience. You'll meet like-minded people while visiting one of the most beautiful cities in the nation, and you can strengthen your ties to the International Campaign for Tibet. We'd like the chance to shake your hand and thank you for your support. For more information, visit tibetlobbyday.us.

The deadline to register for Tibet Lobby Day in February 17.

Proposed Schedule:

MARCH 18 Evening Lobby Training for first time lobbyists.

Distribution of Lobbying Materials/ Informational Packets to all participants.

MARCH 19 8:30 am–5:00 pm: Meetings with Representatives, Senators, and their staff on Capitol Hill

MARCH 20 8:30 am–5:00 pm: Meetings with Representatives, Senators, and their staff on Capitol Hill.

5:30 pm–8:00 pm: Possible evening networking reception.

DC Visit of Tibetans in Exile

Tibet's new Kalon Tripa (head of the Central Tibetan Administration, the political authority for Tibet in exile) made his first visit to the nation's capitol since his confirmation. Dr. Lobsang Sangay demonstrated his leadership by meeting with US officials, members of Congress, scholars, experts, members of the Tibetan community, and more to draw attention to his twin goals: To draw attention to the ongoing critical situation in Tibet — especially considering the self-immolations — and to seek support for the empowerment of the Tibetan people. His op-ed was published in the *Washington Post*, and he was a guest at the newsmaker program of the National Press Club.

During the same week, Kirti Rinpoche (spiritual leader of the Kirti monastic community) visited Washington, DC. Six of the seventeen recent self-immolations have been current or former monks from Kirti, and Rinpoche was reaching out to global leaders (including government officials and members of Congress) to en-

sure these desperate acts were recognized in the halls of power as a plea for help.

Both men testified on the situation in Tibet and on the conditions of the Tibetan people at a hearing by the US Congress' Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, as did Bhuchung K. Tsering, ICT's Vice President for Special Programs, who provided ICT's recommendations, found in this issue of *Tibet Press Watch* on page 6.

Dr. Sangay briefed Congress on the achievements of democratic government in the Tibetan exile community following the Dalai Lama's decision to relinquish his political role. He spoke to the priorities of his administration to revitalize Tibetan settlements, including its focus on improving education. To support the Dalai Lama's vision of a vibrant diaspora to sustain the Tibetan cause, Dr. Sangay asked Congress to pass the Tibetan immigration bill (H.R. 699) and to urge the Administration to resettle Tibetan refugees in South Asia.

Kirti Rinpoche spoke eloquently, telling the attending members that the self-immolations were not an overnight development but the outcome of wounds suffered for decades by the Tibetan people at the hands of the Chinese authorities. Rinpoche noted that three generations of Tibetans have endured constant abuses — and that the Chinese government and international leaders needed to understand the underlying causes of "sudden" outcries like the self-immolations if they don't want to see such developments repeated.

In a blog posting on ICT's web site www.savetibet.org, Bhuchung K. Tsering noted that "Rinpoche had a very somber analysis of the self-immolations. He said that these were the highest form of non-violent actions that Tibetans were taking and hence signified the level of desperation of the people. He said unless the Chinese government took positive measures it was quite likely that the Tibetan movement would take a different turn."

Ngawang Sangdrol: Life after Prison

Ngawang Sangdrol was a young nun of just 13 when she was first imprisoned and tortured; her crime was shouting the slogans “Free Tibet” and “Long live the Dalai Lama.” By the time she was 15, her prison sentence was two years — and with every “infraction” committed while in the notorious Drapchi Prison in Lhasa, Ngawang Sangdrol’s sentence was extended — ultimately to 23 years.

She was one of the famous “singing nuns” — a small group of Tibetan nuns in prison who dared to sing pro-Tibet songs into a tape recorder. When the cassette was smuggled out of the prison, it became a global sensation. Her sentence was extended for another six years.

The International Campaign for Tibet and other groups lobbied vigorously on her behalf out of concern for her health. Drapchi’s death rate is notorious; roughly one in every 27 women dies from her treatment and injuries, and Ngawang Sangdrol was a vigorous defender of human rights and religious freedom; thus she was a frequent target for beatings and torture by prison officials. The international spotlight shined on her case proved too bright for Chinese authorities. In 2002 when she was 25, she was released from prison and into the custody of ICT, with the stipulation that she leave Tibet and never return.

Ngawang Sangdrol moved to the United States where she continued her ardent activism on behalf of the people of Tibet. She has spoken twice before the Congressional Executive Commission on China, clarifying the oppressions of life for Tibetans under Chinese authority by sharing the intimacy of one woman’s horrible experiences. From her testimony:

“While I value my freedom, I am continuously reminded of the plight of my fellow Tibetans, particularly those in prison.



ICT’s then-Director of Government Relations Mary Beth Markey and then-President John Ackerly greet Ngawang Sangdrol at the airport in 2002 when she was released into ICT’s care.

I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to urge upon the United States Government to do whatever possible so that the innocent Tibetans who have been detained and tortured, solely for exercising their political rights, can gain their freedom.”

“In my own experience as a political prisoner, when I was in solitary confinement for six months, the conditions were terrible. For the first ten days in this small dark cell I would be given only one meal a day of a tiny dumpling without any meat. There were rats, which terrified me, and it was so cold. The bed was a thin piece of cloth and the blanket was very thin. But every day I imagined His Holiness at the top of my head. This gave me peace of mind, although physical conditions were terrible. This was the only thing that gave me some strength to live.

“I feel the Dalai Lama should be allowed to go home. Of course, that is not going to solve the whole problem. But this is something that would be so powerful and important for the Tibetan people. He is not only important for this generation, but for generations to come. China tried to extinguish Tibet. But it is because of the Dalai Lama that the Tibetan spirit and culture is still so strong today.

“Tibet has many problems, but our biggest problem is the political situation. If the political problem is solved, all our other problems can be managed. Therefore, please do everything you can to bring peace and freedom in Tibet.”

Ngawang Sangdrol now lives in Boston with her husband (also a former political prisoner) and their young son.



Recommended Listening — Semshae: Heart Songs

“Semshae: Heart Songs” is a Tibetan children’s CD to help children learn basic Tibetan language and culture. It can be purchased at www.semshae.org.

Tibet in the Arts

Book review:

Off to Save the World: How Julia Taft Made a Difference

by Ann Blackman

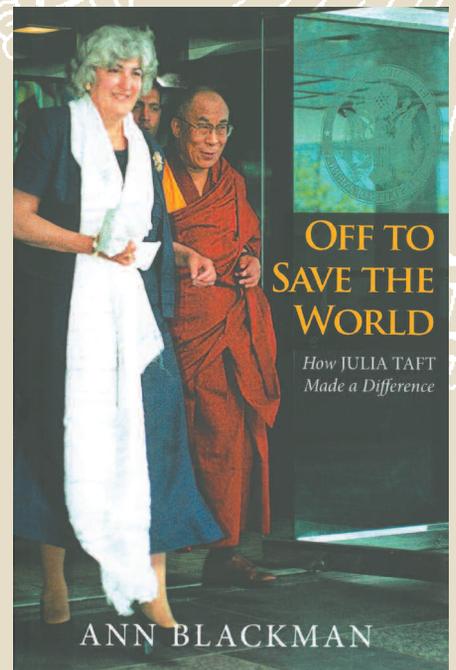
Long a friend to the International Campaign for Tibet and a former board member, Julia Taft lived a remarkable life. A new book by Ann Blackman provides an intimate, moving look into the life of one of the United States' top humanitarian experts.

From her start working to resettle refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in 1975 and following a legendary career through securing American relief during the Armenian earthquake, Lifeline Sudan, the siege of Sarajevo, the crisis in Kosovo, and her trip to Afghanistan in 2001, the book brings her history to life through interviews giving in the year before she died as well as from conversations with her friends and colleagues. Of particular interest to ICT supporters, the book explores her friendship with His

Holiness the Dalai Lama during her time as the State Department's coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Taft, who married into a famous American political family, dedicated her life to those far less fortunate than herself. Even while working in a hide-bound bureaucracy, she became a role model for everyone who hopes to help make the world a better place. At a time when undeveloped countries are overwhelmed by severe refugee problems and people in the developed world are struggling with the consequences of immigration, Taft's story deserves to be told.

The stories are funny and poignant, heroic and terrifying. We are glad to recommend an excellent book about a woman who received ICT's Light of Truth award in 2009.



Book review:

Prisoner of Conscience

by Rep. Frank Wolf

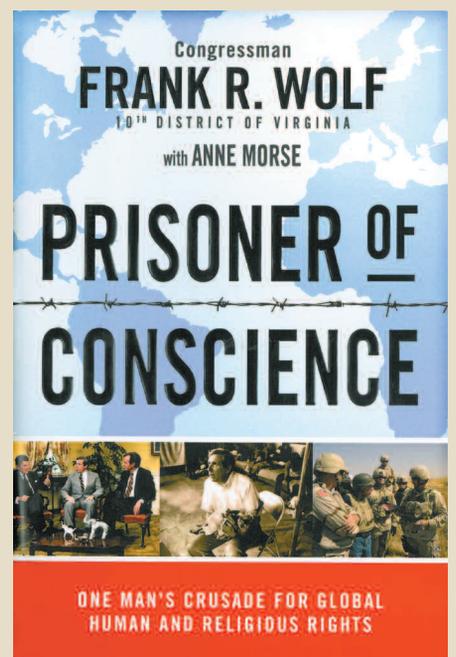
Prisoner of Conscience takes a clear-eyed look at the victims of political and religious persecution overseas. The author, a long-time U.S. Congressman from Virginia, has long been an ally of Tibet and has supported funding for Tibetan causes through his position on the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee.

In his book, Rep. Wolf outlines his often-daring travels to personally witness the repressions of authoritarian regimes. He was the first to enter Tibet without an official minder (in 1997) and was the first western official inside a Soviet prison camp (in 1989). He notes that he's battled for international humanitarian causes since the mid 1980s when he was

shocked after visiting famine victims in Ethiopia and those oppressed by the dictatorship in Romania.

“What I saw and experienced in Ethiopia and later in Romania fully awakened me to the suffering of other people. As both a U.S. congressman and as a Christian, I knew I had to do something about it.”

His life of service to those abused by oppression makes a fascinating book and includes journeys taken to the world's most troubled regions — regardless of official opposition. The results of his journeys has been a voting record in Congress clearly influenced by a commitment to human rights. We recommend this book by a good friend to Tibet.



Membership Corner

In Memoriam: Václav Havel



On December 18, 2011, Václav Havel, the playwright and former Czech president, died. He was a member of the International Campaign for Tibet's International Council of Advisors and an inspiration to many.

The Dalai Lama had visited with Havel in Prague just a few days before; he wrote a condolence letter to Havel's wife, Mrs. Dagmar Havlova. "The world has lost a great statesman whose steadfast and unflinching determination played a key role in bringing freedom and democracy to then-Czechoslovakia."

The Dalai Lama recalled that he had the privilege of first meeting President Havel in February 1990, months after the Velvet Revolution, "which he had led with an extraordinary display of people power." ICT sincerely appreciates the example Mr. Havel set for the Tibetan people.

Thanks to Our Members!

We asked our members to share the news with friends and family about the self-immolation of monks and nuns in Tibet, so the news would ripple out across the globe. And you responded! By our estimates:

- Over 15,000 ICT supporters have shared the stories of those who have self-immolated with friends and family via social networks and email.

- ICT supporters have spread the word of what's going on inside Tibet in over 80 countries around the world.

- As of this printing, over half a million people have signed an online petition seeking access for an independent mission to review the situation inside Tibet.

We thank you for your help. For more that you can do, see the opposite page.

To Keep You Informed

Across the nation, ICT senior staff often meet with supporters and allies in executive briefings where they can learn more about the issues and meet with like-minded new friends. On Dec. 7th, one of these briefings was held in San Francisco. Attendees were updated on the situation in Tibet and the advancement of Tibetan democracy by Lodi Gyari, ICT Executive Chairman and Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Mary Beth Markey, ICT President, summed up the critical importance of united support. "It's always wonderful to have the opportunity to be amongst such devoted friends of Tibet and to hear directly what concerns them about this issue. It certainly helps inform our work as we advocate for the Tibetan people in Washington and national capitals around the world."



Tsering Bawa performed on traditional Tibetan instruments at the 2011 executive briefing in San Francisco. ICT was delighted to connect with over 100 supporters in the area that evening.

Take Action: Two Ways You Can Help

The repressions in Tibet have become so arduous that monks, nuns and laypeople are self-immolating in protest. Their actions demand that the world witness their anguish and alter the way each nation and each person supports Tibet. The ruling Chinese government fears international condemnation; they do what they can to minimize or hide the desperation of those who are willing to die for Tibetan freedom.

We who support Tibet must do everything we can to ensure that those who suffer are not forgotten. We offer two ways that you can help:

First, **make a generous contribution now** to the International Campaign for Tibet. This newsletter has a reply envelope at the center spread; please use it to return your special contribution now in support of our mission to inspire Tibetan support in capitals around the world.

If the envelope is gone, please send your contribution to ICT at 1825 Jefferson Place, NW; Washington, DC 20036.

As of this printing, 17 Tibetan Buddhists have taken the desperate step of self-immolation; perhaps in their honor, you could make a donation in a multiple of 17 (a gift of \$17, \$34, \$51, or more) to commemorate their extraordinary sacrifice.

Second, **spread the word**. Clip out the box below and post it on a community bulletin board where others can see. You might have an “announcements” board at work, or there could be a place for public notices at your grocery store. Perhaps you could pin it up at your local post office. Or send it to the editor of your local paper, along with your request that they print the information for everyone to see.

The more people we can alert, the brighter will shine our spotlight on Tibet, and on the Chinese repressions that are making life unlivable in a once-peaceful nation.

Thank you!

PLEASE CLIP HERE:

ATTENTION

As of January 2012, **seventeen Tibetan Buddhists in Tibet have lit themselves on fire** in a desperate protest of Chinese repressions.

These men and women opted to die so that their fellow Tibetans might benefit from your attention.

China is deliberately repressing Tibetan freedoms — including the repression of Tibetan Buddhism, one of the purest and most ancient forms of Buddhism.

The Tibetan people are deeply committed to peace, but **the brutality of the Chinese authorities is becoming unendurable**.

China wants to hide their cruelty; they want you to believe they're helping the Tibetan people. So look past the propaganda to the reality: People in Tibet are dying so you can know the truth.

For more information, visit the website of the International Campaign for Tibet at savetibet.org.

Thank you.



Visit us at savetibet.org

Stay in Touch, Connect with Others!



Join us for the online conversation
at our blog at weblog.savetibet.org

Visit our website in Chinese at
www.liaowangxizang.net



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International Campaign for Tibet



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[@LiaoWangXiZang](https://twitter.com/LiaoWangXiZang) (in Chinese)

Share us with your contacts and join in the Tibet
conversation. The more people who care about
Tibet, the bigger the impact we can have!

Pass the Word — Help the Planet!

When you're finished with this issue of *Tibet Press Watch*, why not
pass it on to someone who might be interested? By doubling your
issue's readership, you'll help avoid the landfills — and perhaps ICT
can make a new friend. Thank you!



From left to right: ICT Director
of Government Relations Todd
Stein, Assistant to the Kalon
Tripa Jigme Namgyal, Kalon
Tripa Dr. Lobsang Sangay,
Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT),
ICT Executive Chairman Lodi
G. Gyari and Representative of
His Holiness the Dalai Lama for
the Americas, Lobsang Nyandak.
The group met during the
Kalon Tripa's first official visit
to Washington, DC in November.
For more on this, please read
the story on page 11.