

A Study of Tibetan Self-Immolations:

February 27, 2009 – March 30, 2012

The History, The Motive, and The Reaction

Tibetan Women's Association
www.tibetanwomen.org

This report is dedicated to the Martyrs of Tibet.

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What is Self-Immolation?

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Self-Immolation is the act of lighting oneself on fire, often in a statement of resistance. As of March 30, 2012, 34 Tibetan monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen have pursued such means to draw attention toward the increasingly desperate situation in Tibet.

These demonstrators have called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, and for freedom inside Tibet. They have given their lives for the religious freedom of their people, and have departed from their friends and family in the hopes that their sacrifice would be the last of its kind.

With a unique sense of impassivity, each protester has proclaimed the Tibetan and human right to basic respects and has refrained from demonstrations of painⁱ.

“The whole point is to have that added element, in many ways, of stoicism. For most people, the concept of even burning yourself on the stove is something that you can already feel just by talking about, and it’s extremely painful. The idea of lighting oneself on fire is beyond the level of pain that most people are willing to endure,” said Rodger Baker of the global intelligence firm Stratforⁱⁱ.

Some believe that such mastery of the body is possible because of spiritual disciplineⁱⁱⁱ, though Tibetans of all ages and occupations have committed self-immolation in a similar, admirable manner.

The History of Self-Immolation

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Politically-motivated self-immolation originated in 1963, when a South Vietnamese Buddhist, Thich Quang Duc, burned himself in protest of Diem’s discrimination against religious minorities. Four monks and one nun followed his lead, and eventually the Diem regime collapsed. Self-immolations succeeding Thich Quang Duc confirmed that this practice had been adopted as a form of political resistance.

The first Tibetan to commit self-immolation in 1998, Thubten Ngodup^{iv}, lit himself on fire after Indian police halted a hunger strike in New Delhi organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress.

Columbia University Tibetologist Dr. Robert Barnett asserts that self-immolation is an uncommon practice in Tibetan History. “There are records, a very few, but references to self-immolation as a religious practice in the mythical past, where people did it to show devotion to Buddha. So we can not say completely that this is not a Buddhist practice, it has happened in the ancient past,” he said. “We have to be clear. This form of protest by burning oneself to death or setting oneself on fire is really completely new in modern Tibet. We do not really have any precedent for this... As a political practice this is completely new^v.”

As Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay recently reiterated that the Kashag discourage Tibetans inside Tibet from taking extreme measures.

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Who is Self-Immolating?

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"Before (protests) used to be just in the main city among the lower middle class groups, but now we are seeing also farmers and nomads in the countryside, and even some student demonstrations. It's not just monks anymore. And there have been trials of famous leaders from the Tibetan business community too, extremely wealthy Tibetans who stood to gain the most from loyalty to the state," recalled Dr. Barnett^{vi}.

Since February 27, 2009, 29 men and 5 women have self-immolated, and 24 of the 34 are known to have died following the act. Their ages range from 17-44, and their occupations range from monk to nun, from student to official, and from farmer to mother. Some have come from the Sichuan Province, some from Qinghai. A few were well known in their communities, while others resided as simple citizens. Tibetans from all walks of life have demonstrated against the injustice consuming their homeland.

Self-immolation as a sort of political protest, though by no means regular, occurs more than is commonly known in China. According to a report by The Telegraph, Chinese self-immolation incidents are reported a few times each year, often involving casualties of repressive government action. A largely underreported self-immolation occurred in Tiananmen Square on October 21, 2011, committed by a 42-year-old male who later survived the incident^{vii}. Foreign Policy author Christian Caryl mused, "[the] unusual degree of detail in the government's statement (regarding the self-immolation) suggests an eagerness to dispel any connection between Wang's attempted self-destruction and the recent events in Tibet^{viii}."

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Women and Self-Immolation

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According to Tsering Tsomo, executive director of the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, "women's suffering is even greater because China's attack on the dignity of the human person" is coupled by its "attack on the dignity and rights of women [...] Our sources have told us of the policies implemented inside Tibet" such as the "one-child policy". Under existing Chinese law, this policy does not apply to the country's ethnic minorities^{ix}.

Of the 30 self-immolations that have occurred since 2009, women have committed 5 of these acts, including 2 nuns and 3 laywomen.

To learn more about the severe infringements on women's rights in Tibet, see other Tibetan Women's Association publications such as: *Tears of Silence: A Report on China's Birth Control Policy in Tibet* or *Breaking the Shackles: 50 Years of Tibetan Women's Struggles*.

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Why Self-Immolation?

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An anonymous letter written by an exiled Tibetan from Ngaba and released by the International Campaign for Tibet stated that over 100 monks and other locals have disappeared, and that the immolations were a response to the repressive conditions. "In short, the occurrence of suicide as protest in Ngaba is because many people there cannot see how to go on living," the letter said. "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^x."

The worldwide response to the Tibetan self-immolation epidemic seems to confirm such desperation as tragically effective: numerous government officials around the world have begun calling for a response to this practice.

"They [self-immolators] know while the West has backed the Arab Spring, with China it talks with a much quieter voice," said the Dalai Lama to BBC.

Many point to the self-immolation of a cart owner in Tunisia as the catalyst for the Arab Spring, a revolution in the Middle East and Northern Africa that spawned dozens of additional self-immolations. Notably, the first Tibetan self-immolation occurred 21 months before Mohammed Bouazizi's tragic act^{xi}.

"The blame lies with the Chinese government and its very hard line, insensitive policies," said Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay. "Tibetans are really desperate now. It's very tragic. Very sad. Very painful. [...] Even when Tibetans gather for a peaceful protest for a couple of hours, the Chinese are indiscriminately shooting at them^{xii}."

As Sobha Rinpoche, a revered Tibetan teacher who self-immolated on January 8th, 2012, stated in his audio testament, "I am giving away my body as an offering of light to chase away the darkness, to free all beings from suffering^{xiii}."

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On the Kirti Monastery and Ngaba

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Kate Saunders of the International Campaign for Tibet provides a western analogy to depict the situation in Ngaba, "In Tibet, the monasteries serve the function of universities. What is happening now is like a military blockade of Oxford and Cambridge. It's as if the UK tried to prevent students from studying anything except what the government wanted them to study. There is no breathing space^{xiv}."

Ngaba has endured a "six-fold increase in spending on police, prisons and other parts of the public security apparatus since 2002." Many relate heightened security measures to self-immolation^{xv}.

According to the International Campaign for Tibet, 18 of the 30 self-immolators are from Ngaba, Sichuan province, 9 of the 30 were monks at the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, 8 of the 30 were former monks at the Kirti monastery in Ngaba, and 2 of the 30 were nuns from the Mame Nunnery in Ngaba.

These numbers have attracted scrutiny, placing the question of blame on the shoulders of the exiled Kirti Rinpoche, head of the Kirti Monastery. Kirti Rinpoche has lived in exile in India since 1959, and has offered numerous statements pertaining to his views on self-immolation.

In his address to US Congress^{xvi} Kirti Rinpoche explained,

"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 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 a controversial comment on Buddhist views of self-immolation, Kirti Rinpoche asserted, "Throughout your successive rebirths, never relax your vigilance in upholding the truth of the Buddha's excellent teaching for a single moment, even at the cost of your own life.”

Many took this statement to reflect an encouragement of self-immolation, though the context of Tibetan authorities and religious figures must be taken into consideration. Condemning such acts would be dishonorable to the grave sacrifices these fallen Tibetans have made, and such acts painfully diminish the vulnerable number of Tibetans remaining in the world today. Yet, it seems undeniable that self-immolation has placed Tibet back on the agenda of many governments around the world, which proves to be a tragically redeeming factor for those who have surrendered themselves.

Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay offered a statement that subtly expressed his difficulty in responding to self-immolation: “Although suicide is violent and prohibited in Buddhism, some Buddhists believe it depends on the motivation. If you do it out of hatred and anger, then it is negative. But if you do it for a pure cause . . . It’s such a complex theological issue. You can’t go either way or have a definitive answer^{xvii}.”

Though Tibetans, their elected officials, and their spiritual leaders can understand, mourn for, support, and relate to the individuals who have sought this path, self-immolation is inevitably a personal

choice over which governments and religious entities retain limited control. The enormity of such a decision, the unimaginable pain, and the act of relinquishing one’s own life is a concept climbing beyond the reach of authorities.

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His Holiness The Dalai Lama’s Response to the Tibetan Self-Immolations

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In an interview at the Bodh Gaya Kalachakra in January 2012, His Holiness elaborated on His views regarding Buddhism and self-immolation^{xviii}.

“Basically, the suicides are also a kind of violence. Now you see, again it depends on many other factors. Basically, violence and non-violence ultimately depend on a kind of motivation and purpose. So it’s difficult to sort of judge these individuals, their motivation. If the motivation is anger, hatred, like that, then negative. If the motivation, some different thing, then more positive motivation, then more difficult to judge like that.”

When asked why He did not try to stop the acts, He remarked,

“I always describe them [Tibetans], they are our boss. So decision is in their hands not my hand. If I try to control them, then my explanation as a boss, is a hypocrisy. Morally, whatever decision up to them. But in anyway, recently, this is some people you see ask me these things, then I express. Now, the Chinese government, they have the responsibility, we are refugees, you see, we have no responsibility. But some Chinese officials, they point out, they put the blame on us. So immediately, I respond, please come here, investigate thoroughly, whether we started these works or not.

Like in 2008, the Prime Minister Jiabao himself accused me, that all the clashes, we started them. Immediately, I also expressed, please, some officials come and international media, come. Look, at all the files, all the records of my speech, please look. So this time also, you see, not death, no. But then, the real sort of responsibility is on them.

“Now time has come, they must, sort of look at what's the real causes. They say lot of money, give them [Tibetans], lot of construction, lot of sort of development, but still such things happen. And also Chinese government compel to increasing soldiers, security personnel and at every corner of the street, some cameras, even in classrooms some cameras. Why? Now, 60 years they utilized various methods but failed. Now they must think what is wrong, what are the real causes? That is important. I already have expressed that 1.3 billion Chinese people have every right to know the reality. Once they know the reality, the 1.3 billion Chinese people also have the ability to judge what is right what is wrong. So government heavily puts censorship just stops the information, it's actually immoral. How awful, they're cheating their own people. Now let people know how's the reality. And the government also must carry thorough investigation...

“So accordingly they may act. So, now here, the simple thing is, people thought of China as the most populated nation, very important nation. Now their policy must be a realistic policy, not just ideas, and just suppression. That's absolutely wrong. Long run, very harmful, for their own sort-of image, for their own successful future, like that.”

In an interview with the BBC last November, His Holiness responded to questions regarding His views on the effectiveness of self-immolation^{xix}:

"The question is how much effect [the self-immolations have]", the Dalai Lama said. "That's the question. There is courage - very

strong courage. But how much effect? [...] Courage alone is no substitute. You must utilize your wisdom."

When asked whether he feared the actions could make life worse for people in Tibet, He answered, "Many Tibetans sacrifice their lives. Nobody knows how many people killed and tortured - I mean death through torture. Nobody knows. But a lot of people suffer. But how much effect? The Chinese respond harder."

A Comparative Study of World Reactions to Self-Immolation since the First Self-Immolation on February 27, 2009

(34)^{xx} March 30, 2012: **Tenpa Dargey**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti Monastery, *Age*: 22, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(33) March 30, 2012: **Chimey Palden**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti Monastery, *Age*: 21, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Serious condition.

(32) March 28, 2012: **Lobsang Sherab**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti Monastery, *Age*: 20, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

31) March 26, 2012: **Jamphel Yeshe**, Male, *Occupation*: Volunteer, *Age*: 27, *Location*: New Delhi, India, *Status*: Deceased.

(30) Mar 17, 2012: **Sonam Dargye**, Male, *Occupation*: Farmer, *Age*: 43, *Location*: Qinghai Province, Rebkong, *Status*: Deceased.

-(Japan) Apr 5, 2012: Japanese Parliament passes resolution expressing grave **concern over Tibetan self-immolations** and urges Chinese government to end repressive policies^{xxi}.

-(Nobel Peace Laureates) Apr 3, 2012: 12 Nobel Peace Laureates sent letter to President Hu Jintao urging him to “respect the Tibetan people” and resume “meaningful dialogue” **in response to self-immolations**^{xxii}.

-(US) Mar 30, 2012: US Senate passes resolution S. 356 and House introduces resolution H. 609 calling on the Chinese government to end repressive policies targeting Tibetans, address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people, and allow unrestricted access to foreign journalists and diplomats to Tibet^{xxiii}.

-(EP) Mar 30, 2012: MEPs Mr. Edward McMillan-Scott and Ms Kristiina Ojuland hosted the second annual seminar on Tibet **highlighting the spate of self-immolations** in the European Parliament today. Over 100 people, including members of the European Parliament, Parliamentary assistants, diplomats, Representatives of NGOs, Tibet Support Groups, members of the Belgium Tibetan Community, EU officials and the member of the Press attended the event^{xxiv}.

-(Cambodia) Mar 29, 2012: Cambodian MP Mr. Son Chhay writes open letter to President Hu Jintao calling for negotiations to resolve the issue of Tibet. President Jintao is scheduled to visit Cambodia March 30-April 2, 2012^{xxv}.

-(UN) Mar 22, 2012: UN agrees to send special rapporteurs to investigate situation on ground in Tibet, indefinitely ending 30-day hunger strike by 3 Tibetans staged outside UN Headquarters in New York^{xxvi}.

(29) March 16, 2012: **Lobsang Tsultrim**, Male, Occupation: Monk from Kirti Monastery, Age: 20, Status: Deceased

(28) Mar 14, 2012: **Jamyang Palden**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Rongpo Monastery, *Age*: 34, *Location*: Qinghai Province, Rebkong, *Status*: Unknown.

-(UK) Mar 22, 2012: UK Government delegate to the UN Human Rights Council today called on the Nepal to protect the rights of Tibetans living in the Himalayan Kingdom^{xxvii}.

-(Australia) Mar 19, 2012: Ambassador Frances Adamson is seeking Beijing's permission to visit Tibet **to examine the reasons for Tibetan self-immolation**, in addition to a request for an Australian parliamentary delegation visit under similar circumstances^{xxviii}.

-(US) Mar 17, 2012: US Senator Mark Rubio speaks to **Senate in response to self-immolations**. "If China is indeed a growing influence on this planet, are these the values that would replace the American values on this world stage? Are these the values that will replace our belief that all individuals are created equal with certain rights that come from the creator? Are we prepared to retreat on the world stage and allow that to happen without speaking out against it?"^{xxix}

-(UN) Mar 15, 2012: Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon expressed concern for health of three Tibetans on an indefinite hunger strike in New York. Assistant Secretary General Ivan Simonovic visited them on March 13 and met a representative of Tibetan Youth Congress, the organization behind the strike^{xxx}.

-(EU, France, UK, Czech, Germany, US) Mar 14, 2012: EU, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Czech and USA raised human rights in Tibet at the UN Human Rights Council 19th Session in Geneva during the three-minute oral statement under Item 4: Human Rights Situations That Require The Council's Attention^{xxxi}.

(27) Mar 10, 2012: **Gepey**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti Monastery, *Age*: 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(26) Mar 5, 2012: **Dorjee**, Male, *Occupation*: Unknown, *Age*: 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(25) Mar 4, 2012: **Rinchen**, Female, *Occupation*: Laywoman, mother of three, *Age*: 32, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(24) Mar 3, 2012: **Tsering Kyi**, Female, *Occupation*: Laywoman, Middle School student, *Age*: believed 19, *Location*: Gansu Province, Maqu, *Status*: Deceased.

-(China) Mar 14, 2012: Premier Wen Jiabao at press conference after annual NPC session: *"We do not agree with such extreme actions to interfere and hurt social harmony. The young Tibetans are innocent and we feel deeply pained by such behavior."* Later, in response to situation in Syria: *"China has, in its own way, worked intensively on the relevant parties to push for a political dialogue process (In Syria). We believe that the demand for democracy by the Arab people must be respected and truly responded to. I believe this trend towards democracy cannot be held back by any force^{xxxii}."*

-(Germany) Mar 10, 2012: 1,212 cities, municipalities and counties all over Germany hoisted the Tibetan national flag at town halls and public buildings, as well as displaying the flag on their websites to affirm on behalf of thousands of their citizens "the Tibetan people's right to self-determination and protest against the violations of human rights and the destruction of the Tibetan people's culture, religion and national identity^{xxxiii}."

-(Luxembourg) Mar 7, 2012: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister met with NGO 'Friends of Tibet' and expressed concerns over self-immolation. Assured FOT that pressure is applied to China through political contact and EU-China human rights dialogue^{xxxiv}.

-(USA) Mar 7, 2012: Secretary of State Hilary Clinton urges China to play a "Constructive role... commensurate with its new standing" on the 40th Anniversary of President Nixon's visit to China in 1979 at the US-China Conference at the US Institute for Peace^{xxxv}.

-(UN) Mar 7, 2012: UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food Oliver De Schutter stated to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva his extreme concerns regarding **self-immolation** and the connection to forced settlement of Tibetan nomads. He expresses his frustration with being unable to visit Tibet to conduct an independent report^{xxxvi}.

(23) Feb 19, 2012: **Nangdrol**, Male, *Occupation*: Possibly layperson though still unknown, *Age*: 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(22) Feb 17, 2012: **Damchoe Sangpo**, Male, *Occupation*: Bongthak monastery Monastic Official, *Age*:38, *Location*: Qinghai Province, *Status*: Deceased.

(21) Feb 13, 2012: **Lobsang Gyatso**, Male, *Occupation*: monk from Kirti Monastery, *Age*: 19, *Status*: Unknown.

(20) Feb 11, 2012: **Tenzin Choedron**, Female, *Occupation*: Nun from Mame Dechen Chokorling or Mame nunnery, *Age*: 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(19) Feb 9, 2012: **Sonam Rabyang**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Lab monastery, *Age*: mid-30s, *Location*: Qinghai Province, Kham, *Status*: Unknown.

(18) Feb 8, 2012: **Rinzin Dorje**, Male, *Occupation*: Possibly a monk, ties to Kirti monastery though still unknown, *Age*: 19, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Amdo, *Status*: Unknown.

-(Czech Republic) Feb 29, 2012: Deputy Prime Minister Schwarzenberg expresses serious unease over escalation of tensions, **in a response to self-immolations**^{xxxvii}.

-(USA) Feb 15, 2012: CECC calls His Holiness “the best hope for restoring stability to Tibet^{xxxviii}.”

-(**China**) Feb 14, 2012: Premier Wen Jiabao: "*Any attempts to incite a small number of monks to take extreme acts to undermine stability in Tibet is not in the interests of development in Tibet or the interests of Tibetans. Such attempts have no popular support [...] We respect and protect Tibet's ecological environment and traditional culture, respect and protect religious freedom in Tibet.*" Jiabao ended by stating, "*Our Tibetan countrymen are an important part of China's family of ethnic groups. They are our brothers*^{xxxix}."

-(USA) Feb 11, 2012: President Barack Obama raises Tibetan concerns during Chinese VP Xi's visit in statement^{xl}.

-(Italy) Feb 9, 2012: Resolution 7-00763 Verneti calling on EU to raise issue of Tibet during EU-China Summit on February 14th, 2012^{xli}.

(17) Jan 14, 2012: **Lobsang Jamyang**, Male, *Occupation*: Formerly of Andu monastery, *Age*: 21, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(16) Jan 8, 2012: **Sonam Wangyal (Golog Lama Sopa)**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk and respected religious figure in area, *Age*: 42, *Location*: Qinghai province, Amdo, *Status*: Deceased.

(15) Jan 6, 2012: **Tsultrim**, Male, *Occupation*: Formerly of Kirti monastery, *Age*: 20s, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(14) Jan 6, 2012: **Tennyi**, Male, *Occupation*: Kirti monastery, *Age*: 20s, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(13) Dec 1, 2011: **Tenzin Phuntsong**, Male, *Occupation*: Kirti monastery, *Age*: 46, *Location*: Chamdo, Kham (Eastern Tibet), *Status*: Deceased.

-(USA) Feb 8, 2012: Frank R. Wolf releases statement calling for Chinese Ambassador Locke and US President Obama to voice concerns, **in a response to self-immolations**^{xlii}.

-(Germany) Feb 4, 2012: Chancellor Andrea Merkel expressed concern over issue of Tibet during visit with Chinese leaders in Beijing^{xliii}.

-(USA) Feb 2, 2012: Senate Resolution 356 to Congress calling for resumed dialogue, **in a response to self-immolations**^{xliv}.

-(France) Jan 25, 2012: France issues statement expressing deep concern over recent events in Tibet and China, **in a response to “serious events that occurred on Monday, or self-immolation**^{xlv}.

-(Australia) Jan 15, 2012: Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd affirmed **concern for self immolation reports** and called on the Chinese Government to address underlying causes of tension in Tibet^{xlvi}.

-(USA) Jan 12, 2012: In press statement State Dept. spokeswoman Victoria Nuland expresses White House **concern over self-immolation reports**, repeats call to restore dialogues, free press, respect human rights^{xlvii}.

(12) Nov 3, 2011: **Palden Choetso**, Female, *Occupation*: Nun from Ganden Changdup Choeling monastery, *Age*: 35, *Location*: Sichuan province, Kham, *Status*: believed Deceased

-(EP) Nov 30, 2011: European Parliament urges EU to reassess dialogues with China in response to worsening human rights situation, **a response to self-immolations**^{xlvi}.

-(Denmark, Norway): Nov 26, 2011: Danish and Norwegian Parliamentary officials met with Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay and expressed strong support for Tibetan struggle, promising to raise issue in parliament^{xlix}.

-(Switzerland): Nov 22, 2011: Swiss government met with Kalon Tripa Lobsang Sangay and expressed **concern regarding self-immolations** in Tibet as a “very worrying” expression of Tibetan desperation^l.

-(USA) Nov 17, 2011: Congress writes letter to Chinese Ambassador Locke calling for Locke’s visit to Tibet to conduct a fact-finding mission, **in response to self-immolations**^{li}.

-(USA) Nov 11, 2011: At APEC Meeting in Honolulu, HI, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton **expresses alarm over self-immolations** and calls on China to “embrace different path^{lii}.”

-(South Africa) Nov 11, 2011: Members of Parliament call on South African Government to speak out against Chinese oppression as a state that has benefitted from overcoming Apartheid, **as a response to self-immolations**^{liii}.

-(Canada) Nov 6, 2011: Members from all four federal parties of the Canadian Parliament address the House of Commons with statements in support of Tibet and condemning the crackdown in Ngaba, **as a response to self-immolations**^{liv}.

-(USA) Nov 3, 2011: At House of Representatives meeting, Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues and Commissioner Maria Otero repeats government requests that the Chinese government address policies that threaten religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of Tibetan people^{lv}.

-(USA) Nov 2, 2011: At House of Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Self-Immolation meeting, Congressman Frank Wolf protests US Collaboration with Chinese Space Ambitions, **as a response to self-immolation**^{lvi}.

-(Germany) Nov 1, 2011: Three German Parliamentarians write open letter to Chancellor Merkel urging her to raise the issue of Tibet with President Hu Jintao at the G20 summit^{lvii}.

-(UN) Nov 1, 2011: Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association Kiai , and UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression La Rue, expressed grave concern over heavy security measures in Ngaba. Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances Sarkin criticizes forced disappearances in Tibet. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention expresses concern over arbitrary detention of monks in Sichuan province. Independent Expert on Minority Issues Izsák calls on Chinese authorities to fully uphold rights of minorities^{lviii}.

-(Poland) Oct 28, 2011: Deputy Director of Asia and Pacific writes appeal to Tibetan community expressing utmost concern and condolences regarding acts of self-immolation. Noted Polish presentation at the EU-China Summit regarding diminished human rights standards between EU and China^{lix}.

-(EP) Oct 25, 2011: European Parliament passes Urgency Resolution on Tibet: B7-0564/2011 urging the Chinese

(11) Oct 25, 2011: **Dawa Tsering**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kardze Monastery, *Age*: 38, *Location*: Kardze, *Status*: Unknown.

(10) Oct 17, 2011: **Tenzin Wangmo**, Female, *Occupation*: Nun from Mame Dechen Chokorling nunnery or Mame nunnery, *Age*: 20, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(9) Oct 15, 2011: **Norbu Damdrul**, Male, *Occupation*: Formerly of Kirti monastery, *Age*: 19, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(8) Oct 7, 2011: **Choepel**, Male, *Occupation*: Formerly of Kirti monastery, *Age*: 19, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(7) Oct 7, 2011: **Kaying**, Male, *Occupation*: Formerly of Kirti monastery, *Age*: 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

(6) Oct 3, 2011: **Kelsang Wangchuk**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk at Kirti monastery, *Age*: 17, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Hospitalized.

(5) Sept 26, 2011: **Lobsang Kelsang**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti monastery, *Age*: believed 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Hospitalized.

(4) Sept 26, 2011: **Lobsang Kunchok**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti monastery, *Age*: believed to be 18, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Hospitalized.

government to address self-immolation situation, allow press and monitors into area, and respect human rights. Called on EU and member states to pressure Chinese government to resume dialogues. And raise issue at G20 summit, **as a response to self-immolations**^{lx}.

-(USA) Oct 11, 2011: Spokesperson Victoria Nuland repeats White House **concerns regarding self-immolation trend**, call for Chinese respect of human rights^{lxi}.

(3) Aug 15, 2011: **Tsewang Norbu**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Nyitso monastery, *Age*: 29, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Tawu, *Status*: Deceased.

(2) Mar 16, 2011: **Phuntsok Jarutsang**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti monastery, *Age*: 20, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Deceased.

-(Estonia) Aug 18, 2011: President Ilves meets with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and calls the maintenance of Tibetan religion and culture “one of the great humanistic duties of our time^{lxii}.”

-(USA) Jul 16, 2011: President Obama meets His Holiness the Dalai Lama during his visit to Washington, DC for the Kalachakra despite Chinese calls to cancel the meeting^{lxiii}.

-(USA) Jul 13, 2011: At Roundtable discussion, Maria Otero reiterates US administration goals, support for organizations assisting Tibetan welfare, linguistic preservation, sustainable development, environmental preservation through financial support awarded to states supporting refugees in South Asia^{lxiv}.

-(USA) Jun 2, 2011: At hearing on status of implementation of Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, Daniel Baer discusses the Administration’s actions and goals for Tibet, Implementation of Tibet Policy Act of 2002, establishment of a consulate in Lhasa, and efforts to translate English reports into Tibetan^{lxv}.

-(EU) Apr 1, 2011: EU Resolution P7 TA (2011) 0158: EU calls upon Nepal to respect Tibetan rights with special regard to Tibetan elections^{lxvi}.

-(USA) Feb 14, 2011: H.R. 699: Tibetan Refugee Assistance Act of 2011 introduced^{lxvii}.

-(USA) Jan 19, 2011: President Obama calls for further dialogue between the government of China and representatives of the Dalai Lama at a joint conference with President Hu Jintao^{lxviii}.

-(EP) Nov 25, 2010: Resolution RC-B7-0637/2010: European Parliament condemns Chinese One-Language Policy claiming it to be in violation of Article 4 of China's Constitution and Article 10 of the Regional Autonomy law^{lxix}.

-(USA) Feb 18, 2010: President Obama meets with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, praises Tibetan commitment to nonviolence and expresses strong support for preservation of unique Tibetan identity and protection of Tibetan human rights^{lxx}.

-(Canada) Jan 25, 2010: Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Cannon releases formal statement welcoming the resume of dialogue between representatives of Chinese government and of the Dalai Lama.^{lxxi}

-(EP) Dec 1, 2009: European Parliament Resolution OJ C 95 E, 15.4.2010: calls for an end to Chinese death penalty and way in which ethnic minorities treated before law in China. Condemns execution of two Tibetans and reopening of dialogue between representatives of the Chinese government and His Holiness^{lxxii}.

-(EP) Nov 27, 2009: European Parliament calls for Tibetan Priority points, the executions of two Tibetans and reopening of dialogues between representatives of the Chinese government and His Holiness, to be presented at EU-China Dialogue on Nov 30 in Nanjing^{lxxiii}.

- (World Parliamentary Convention) Nov 19, 2009: The Parliaments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Europe, France, Hungary, India, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Scotland, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom adopted the Rome Declaration on Tibet at the 5th World Parliamentary Convention on Tibet^{lxxiv}.

(1) *Feb 27, 2009*: **Tapey**, Male, *Occupation*: Monk from Kirti monastery, *Age*: 20s, *Location*: Sichuan Province, Ngaba, *Status*: Unknown.

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Notes on A Comparative Study of World Reactions to Self-Immolation Since the First Self-Immolation on February 27, 2009

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- Chinese reactions were included only when a significant change in rhetoric took place. Defensive responses by the government to the self-immolations were typical, with no commentary issued by significant Chinese officials until 2012.
- Effort was taken to include as many noteworthy events as possible. Tibetan Women's Association wishes to commend those who have taken a stand in the name of Tibet around the world, and apologizes for any action that may have been excluded.

-(EU) *Oct 29, 2009*: EU condemns executions of two Tibetans^{lxxv}.

-(USA) *Mar 11, 2009*: H.R. Resolution 226 calls on the government of the PRC to respond to the Dalai Lama's efforts to find a lasting solution for Tibet, **issued only days after Tapey's self-immolation**^{lxxvi}.

Conclusion:

As the global community now grieves for 34 individuals who have given their life in the name of Tibetan survival and the advancement of human rights everywhere, the time to ask difficult questions and pursue a solution is long overdue. Self-immolation is no longer conveniently an Asian issue: this practice and the worldwide response to it touches each and every nation that is guilty of withholding fundamental human rights from any citizen.

The brave, unimaginable sacrifices of those who have self-immolated will be forever honored. Tibetans, and humanity, are indebted to those who have given their lives so that the rest of us might see peaceful days ahead. Though as some continue to render life expendable, a forecast of greater peril also lingers on the horizon.

The choice to determine the future has not yet left our hands.

The world can no longer ignore the power of self-immolation: humanity is embarking on a deadly and slippery slope that is raising the cost of freedom and deafening the ears of those who sell it.

A dangerous precedent is forming as the world continues to address the Tibetan plight delicately.

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