



Self Immolation in the History of Tibetan Freedom Struggle.

The modern day self-immolations among the Tibetan community are known to have occurred in 1998. Thupten Ngodup was the Tibetan who sacrificed himself for the cause of the Tibetan people. He set himself on fire in New Delhi, India on the 49th day of a hunger strike that was organized by the Tibetan Youth Congress, protesting against the Chinese rule. Because the authorities had not allowed the protest to continue in their hunger strike, Thupten Ngodup sought to bring awareness to this cause in this extreme way.

Eight years later, on November 23 2006, another Tibetan named Lhakpa Tsering self-immolated. He was the president of the regional Tibetan Youth Congress of Bangalore. He set himself on fire outside the Taj Hotel in protest of the Chinese occupation in Tibet.

A few years after the 2006 incident, a strong self-immolation movement began. February 28th , 2009 a Tibetan named Tapey, marked the first of several self-immolations that have continued to this day, the majority being inside Tibet. Since 2009, there has been a consistent amount of people self-immolating and the number of self-immolations has dramatically increased to 111 in just the last four years.





Chronology of Self-immolation incidents inside Tibet.

For our December 2012 to March 2013 issue of the quarterly newsletter, Voice, we have continued to publish the chronology of self-immolation incidents inside Tibet from the last newsletter (August-November). The number goes from 77 to 111.

Age: 25
Gender: M
Date: 19th Nov, 12
From: Kangtsa
Status: Deceased



25 years old Wangchen Norbu died after burning himself on 19th November, 2012 around 8 pm in Kangtsa (Chinese: Gangca), an area adjacent to the hometown of the late Panchen Lama in Tsoshar region in Yazi (Chinese: Xunhua) county, Amdo.

According to the sources, Norbu set himself ablaze near Kangtsa Gaden Choephelling Monastery and shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, release of the Panchen Lama and freedom for Tibet.

78. *Name: Tsering Dhondup*
Age: 34
Gender: M
Date: 20th Nov, 12
From: Labrang
Status: Deceased



Tsering Dhondup, a Tibetan man in his thirties set himself on fire on 20th November, 2012 at around 9:00 am. He was both a farmer and nomad and from Chungan village in Amchok Shang, Labrang, Ganlho prefecture, Gansu province.





79. Name: *Lubhum Gyal*
Age: *18*
Gender: *M*
Date: *22 Nov, 12*
From: *Dowa township, Rebkong*
Status: *Deceased*



18 years old Lubhum Gyal self-immolated on 22nd November, 2012 in the main street of Dowa township in Rebkong. According to the sources, Tibetans gathered at the scene of Lubhum Gyal's self-immolation and disregarding official warnings, they took his body for cremation near Dowa monastery where monks conducted prayer rituals.

80. Name: *Tamdrin Dorjee*
Age: *29*
Gender: *M*
Date: *23 Nov, 12*
From: *Makor village, Tsekhog, Rebkong*
Status: *Deceased*



Tamdrin Dorjee, 29 years old Tibetan self-immolated on 23rd November, 2012. He was from Makor village in Dokarmo township, in the Tsekhog area of Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren), Manlho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai province. According to a Tibetan exile source, "As the flames blazed higher, he could be seen putting his hands together in prayer, shouting long life to the Dalai Lama."

81. Name: *Tamdrin Kyab*
Age: *23*
Gender: *M*
Date: *23 Nov, 12*
From: *Luchu township, Gansu*
Status: *Deceased*



23 years old young Tibetan Tamdrin Kyab set fire to himself at around 10 p.m near the Luchu river. According to the sources, local people did not know about his self-immolation because it happened at night, and it was only in the morning that people found his body and took it back to his





home. Local Tibetans and monks from Shitsang monastery gathered at his home to pray and offer their condolences.

Tamdryn Kyab was formerly a monk at Shitsang monastery. He disrobed in 2007 to help his nomadic family.

82. *Name: Sangyal Dolma*
Age: 17
Gender: F
Date: 25 November, 12
From: Dokarmo, Tsekhog, Malho
Status: Deceased



17 years old Tibetan nun Sangyal Dolma passed away in her self-immolation protest on 25th November, 2012. She protested in front of the Chinese government office in Dokarmo town of Tsekhog, Malho, eastern Tibet. Her nunnery was located near Sangag Mindrol Dhargeyling Monastery. According to the sources, a large number of local Tibetans gathered to carry out the last rites of the martyr and she has left a note before carrying out her fiery protest.

83. *Name: Wangyal*
Age: 20s
Gender: M
Date: 26 November, 12
From: Serta
Status: unknown



Wangyal, a young Tibetan man around 20s had self-immolated on 26th November, 2012. Wangyal set himself on fire in front of the golden-horse statue at the local ground in Serthar. Chinese authorities immediately arrived at the immolation site and took away Wangyal's body.

84. *Name: Kunchok Tsering*
Age: 18
Gender: M
Date: 26 November, 12
From: Amchok, Labrang
Status: Deceased





Self Immolation

18 years old teenage Kunchok Tsering passed away in his self-immolation protest today in Amchok region of Labrang, eastern Tibet. He set himself on fire near a mining site in the region, the same place where Tsering Dhondup passed away in his fiery protest on 20th November.

According to the sources, Kunchok Tsering was the son of Phagkyab, 40 and Gonpo Tso 37 and married to Sangay Tso, 19.

85. *Name: Gonpo Tsering*
Age: 24
Gender: M
Date: 26 November, 12
From: Luchu, Kanlho
Status: Deceased



24 Years old Gonpo Tsering, a father of three children, self-immolated on 26 November, 2012. He raised slogans for Tibet's freedom, human rights in Tibet and the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

86. *Name: Kalsang Kyab*
Age: 24
Gender: M
Date: 27 November, 12
From: Kyantsa township, Dzoeg County
Status: Deceased



24 years old Kalsang Kyab self-immolated on 27th November, 2012. According to the sources, while walking toward the government office, he poured petrol on himself and started shouting the slogans and then set himself on fire as he reached the entrance. He continued repeating them many times before he collapsed to death.

87. *Name: Sangye Tashi*
Age: 18
Gender: M
Date: 27 November, 2012
From: Labrang
Status: Deceased (Yet to get the details)



88. *Name: Bande Khar*
Age: 21
Gender: M
Date: 28 November, 2012
From: Tsoe region of Kanlho
Status: Deceased



According to the source, 21 years old Bande Khar from Tsoe region of Kanlho self-immolated on 28 November, 2012 at around 7 pm (Local time). He raised slogans calling for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the release of Panchen Lama, freedom for Tibet and the protection of Tibet's environment. Following his self-immolation, monks and local Tibetans gathered at his residence to offer prayers.

Bande Khar was the son of Tsering Thar and Kunsang Dolma, he has two siblings; elder brother Jampa and younger brother Sangay Dhondup.

89. *Name: Tsering Namgyal*
Age: 31
Gender: M
Date: 29 November, 2012
From: Luchu region of Eastern Tibet
Status: Deceased



Tsering Namgyal, 31 years old Tibetan man set himself on fire on 29 November, 2012 in Luchu region of Eastern Tibet. According to the sources, he self-immolated near the local Chinese government office in Luchu and passed away in his fiery protest.

Tsering Namgyal was married to Choekyoung Tso and they have two daughters, Dorjee Kyi, 7 and Kalsang Dolma, 3.

90. *Name: Kunchok Kyab*
Age: 29
Gender: M
Date: 30 November, 2012
From: Dzoega, Ngaba
Status: Deceased





Self Immolation

29 years old Kunchok Kyab from Dzoerge self-immolated on 30 November, 2012. He was whisked away immediately from the spot by Chinese security forces. According to the sources, Kunchok Kyab was now presumed dead as the Chinese authorities returned his ashes to his family, following which monks and laymen of all ages gathered to pray for his departed soul.

91. *Name:* Sungdue Kyab
Age: Late teens
Gender: M
Date: 2 December, 2012
From: Bora, Labrang
Status: Unknown



On 2 December, 2012, Sungdue Kyab in his late teen self-immolated on the main road near Bora monastery. The protest carried around 3:40 pm (local time) and Chinese police arrived at the site within minutes and took him to Kanlho People's hospital. His family and friends were barred from visiting him at the hospital.

92. *Name:* Lobsang Gedun
Age: 29
Gender: M
Date: 3 December, 2012
From: Golog
Status: Deceased



29 years old Tibetan monk Lobsang Gedun from Penag Kadak Troedreling monastery, Golog has self-immolated on 3 December, 2012. According to the sources, with folded hands he raised slogans after setting fire to himself and local Tibetans rushed to the spot to prevent the Chinese security forces from taking away the body. They took the body to the local monastery to pray.





93. *Name: Pema Dorjee*
Age: 23
Gender: M
Date: 8 December, 2012
From: Luchu
Status: Deceased



23 years old Pema Dorjee passed away in his fiery protest on 8 December, 2012. He self-immolated close to the main assembly hall of Shitsang Garser monastery in Luchu in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province.

Pema Dorjee lived around 30 kilometers from the monastery and had gone there to pray at the time of the anniversary of Tsonkhapa's passing. At the time of his self-immolation there were many people at the monastery. He shouted for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and called for the unity of the Tibetan people. According to the sources, Pema Dorjee left his photos and identity card with his motorbike before his self-immolation.

94. *Name: Kunchok Pelgye*
Age: 24
Gender: M
Date: 8 December, 2012
From: Dzoerge, Ngapa
Status: Deceased



24 years old monk Kunchol Pelgye from Taktsang Lhamo monastery, Dzoerge, Ngapa on 8 December, 2012. He ablazed himself outside the main assembly hall of the Taktsang Lhamo Kirti monastery. Kunchok Pelge joined his hands in prayer and called for His Holiness the Dalai lama to live for 10,000 years and return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kirti Rinpoche to Tibet.

Kunchok Pelgye had been a monk at the Dringwa Sumdo monastery in Dzoge since he was a child and in 2010 he joined the larger monastery of Taktsang Lhamo to study scripture and philosophy. After the incident, the Chinese authorities have surrounded the monastery and villages under a security blockade.





95. *Name: Wangchen Kyi*
Age: 17
Gender: F
Date: 9 December, 2012
From: Tsekhog county in Malho
Status: Deceased



Seventeen year old student Wangchen Kyi died after setting fire to herself at around 8pm in the evening on December 9, 12 in the Dokarmo nomadic are a of Tsekhog (Chinese:Zeku) county in Malho (Chinese: Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai (the Tibetan are of Amdo.) Wangchen Kyi called for the long life of the Dalai Lama and of the Tibetan people as she set herslef ablaze, according to reports from exile Tibetans in contact with people in the area.

96. *Name: Passang Lhamo*
Age: 62
Gender: F
date: 13 Sept, 2012
From: Yulshul, Kyegudo
Status: Hospitalized



After the devastating earthquake in Kyekundo, a Tibetan woman named Passang Lhamo had self-immolated on 13th September,2012 in the China's capital city of Beijing to protest against the land confiscation by Chinese authorities.

On 26th June, 2012, Tibetans from Kyekundo staged a peaceful protest against the land confiscation by the Chinese authorities and at the time, a Tibetan woman named Deckyi Choezom self-immolated but the Chinese authorities extinguished the fire and arrested her. Her where abouts are unclear.

Passang Lhamo is the second female who self-immolated to protest against the land confiscation by Chinese authorities. According to the reliable sources, she is hospitalized at the moment.





97. *Name: Tsering Tashi*
Age: 22
Gender: M
Date: 12 Jan, 2013
From: Amchok
Status: Deceased



22 years old Tsering Tashi from Amchok region of eastern Tibet set himself on fire on 12 January, 2013.

At around 1 pm (local time), he self-immolated in the middle of Amchok town in Sangchu region of Kanlho, eastern Tibet. According to the sources, local Tibetans were able to rescue his body from falling into the hands of Chinese security personnel and they carried the body to his home in Keynag village and monks performed prayers.

98. *Name: Tsering Phuntsok/Drubchog*
Age: 28
Gender: M
Date: 18 Jan, 2013
From: Drachen village, Ngapa
Status: Deceased



On 18 Jan, 2013, 28 years old Tsering Phuntsok self-immolated in front of the local Chinese police station in Drachen village of Khyungchu region. He passed away at the site of his protest and Chinese security personnel taken him away to nearby town of Barkham. It is also said that Chinese authorities cremated him without informing any of his family members.

According to the sources, before Tsering Phuntsok set himself on fire, he joined his hands in prayer and said 'Gyalwang Tenzin Gyatso' (His Holiness the Dalai Lama). Following the immolation, heavily armed Chinese security forces arrived in the Darchen town and surrounded the entire region and currently, local Tibetans are under a tense atmosphere.

Drubchog was husband of Rigpa and father of two young daughters, aged five and three. His father, Kyogpo proudly said "My son died for the justice and freedom of the Tibetan people. I don't have an iota of regret." to the visitors who came to offer their condolences.





99. *Name: Kunchok Kyab*
Age: 26
Gender: Male
From: Bora, Labrang
Date: 22 Jan, 2013
Status: Deceased



On 22 Jan, 2013, 26 years old Kunchok Kyab from Bora self-immolated at around 12 pm (local time) near Bora monastery. It is confirmed that he passed away in his fiery protest and his body was taken away by Chinese authorities to an undisclosed location. According to the sources, a large number of local Tibetans gathered at around 7 pm and marched (local time) to rescue Kunchok Kyab's body from the Chinese authorities in order to perform the customary last rites. However, Chinese authorities issued a strict warning barring even a single monk or a lay person from visiting Kunchok Kyab's home to perform the last ritual.

Kunchok Kyab is survived by his wife Kharmo Thar and one years old son.

100. *Name: Lobsang Namgyal*
Age: 37
Gender: Male
From: Ngapa
Date: 3 February, 2013
Status: Deceased



37 years old Lobsang Namgyal is the 100th known Tibetan, who self-immolated under China's rule since the wave began in 2009. Due to the intense security clampdown in the region, the news of Lobsang Namgyal's fiery protest reached exile on 13 February, 2013. According to the sources, he set himself on fire near the local police building in Zoege at around 6 am (local time) and passed away at the scene of his protest. While he was engulfed in flames, he shouted slogans for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he ran towards the local police building. Chinese security personnel took away his body from the site and carried out his cremation without informing his family members, later his ashes were handed over his family.





Sources reveals more reports that Lobsang Namgyal gone missing for two weeks in September, 2012 and later it was confirmed that he was taken into custody by Chinese security personnel for unknown reasons. After his release, local Chinese authorities made it difficult for him to continue his study at monastery and forced him to stay away with his relatives in the nomadic pastures. Before he set himself on fire he came to the Kirti monastery to offer prayers. Lobsang's identity was confirmed when police found his identity card and a letter from inside a bag near the protest site. However, the content of the letter is yet to reveal.

Lobsang Namgyal was son of Karkho and Kar Kyi, he has eight siblings. Currently it is reported that his relatives are being closely watched by the police, their phone calls are being monitored and his younger brother Lobsang Sangay was detained for a few days following the protest.

101. Name: Drugpa Khar

Age: 26

Gender: Male

From: Amchok, Kanlho

Date: 13 Febuary, 2013

Status: Unknown/ injured



On 13 Febuary, 2013, 26 years old Drugpa Khar self-immolated in Amchok town in Sangchu region of Kanlho at around 1 pm (Local time). According to the sources, he was son of Tamding Tsering and Tamding Tso and father of three children. His yongest child is one year old and the eldest is six. Further information about him is not available

(Exile)Name: Druchen Tsering

Age: Below 30

Gender: Male

From: Nepal

Date: 13th Febuary, 2013

Status: Deceased



A Tibetan monk self-immolated on 13th Febuary, 2013 near holy Buddhist stupa of Boudhanath. It was 8:20 am(local time) when he ablazed himself. According to the sources, the monk ran few steps shouting slogans against China before he collapsed on the ground. He breath his last breath at the





Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital at around 10:30pm (Local Time), according to the doctors, he was in very critical condition and had received 96 per cent burns when he was admitted in the hospital.

This self-immolation was coincided with the 100 years of the declaration of the “Tibetan Proclamation of Independence” by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama.

102. Name: Namlha Tsering
Age: 49
Gender: Male
From: Labrang
Date: 17 Febuary, 2013
Status: Unknown



49 years old Namlha Tseing form Amdo Labrang self-immolated on 17 Febuary, 2013 at around 5:40 pm(local time). Eventhough his current status is unkown, eyewitnesses have expressed fear over his death.

103. Name: Rinchen
Age: 17
Gender: M
From: Kyangtsa region of Dzoerge
Date: 19 February, 2013
Status: Deceased



On 19 February, 2013, two Tibetan teenagers, Rinchen and Sonam Dhargey set themselves on fire in Kyangtsa region of Dzoerge, eastern Tibet. Rinchen was only 17 years old and Sonam Dhargey was only 18. They self-immolated at around 9:30 pm (local time). According to the report from TCHRD, both Rinchen and Sonam Dhargey attended the local primary school in Kyangtsa, after completing his primary school, Rinchen attended another school in Wenchuan for few years and moved to Qinghai to work. At the time of self-immolation, Rinchen was on his Losar (New year) holiday with his family in Kyangtsa. Rinchen was the son of Dhondup Tsering an late Aadon. According to the report, the families of the two teenagers ar in possession of theri bodies.





104. Name: Sonam Dhargey
Age: 18
Gender: M
From: Kyangtsa region of Dzoeg
Date: 19 February, 2013
Status: Deceased



On 19 February, 2013, two Tibetan teenagers, Rinchen and Sonam Dhargey set themselves on fire in Kyangtsa region of Dzoeg, eastern Tibet. Rinchen was only 17 years old and Sonam Dhargey was only 18. They self-immolated at around 9:30 pm (local time). According to the report from TCHRD, both Rinchen and Sonam Dhargey attended the local primary school in Kyangtsa. Sonam Dhargey was the son of Tsering Dhondup an Takho. According to the report, the families of the two teenagers are in possession of their bodies.

105. Name: Phagmo Dhondup
Age: 20s
Gender: M
From: Tshoshar, eastern Tibet
Date: 24 February, 2013
Status: hospitalized



Phagmo Dhondup self-immolated on 24th February, 2013 in the ancient Jhakhyung Monastery in Palung region of Tshoshar, eastern Tibet. He set himself on fire within the monastery premises at around 8pm (local time). The monks at the monastery took Phagmo Dhondup to a nearby hospital for treatment, his current well being is unknown. According to the source, monks are holding prayer service for Phagmo Dhondup and local Chinese authorities tightened the security at monastery. Phagmo Dhondup is the son of Shawo and has a sibling.

106. Name: Tsezung Kyab
Age: 27
Gender: Male
From: Luchu region of eastern Tibet
Date: 25 February, 2013
Status: Deceased





Self Immolation

27 years old Tsezung Kyab self-immolated on 25 February, 2013, in front of the mani prayer hall of the Shitsang Monastery in Luchu region of eastern Tibet at around 1:30 pm (local time). According to the sources, the large number of Tibetans who were taking part in religious rituals at the monastery surrounded Tsezung Kyab's body and rescued it from falling into the hands of Chinese security personnel. He passed away in his fiery protest.

107. Name: Sangdag
Age: Unknown
Gender: Male
From: Dhiphu Monastery, Ngaba
Date: 25 February, 2013
Status: Unknown



On 25 February, 2013, another Tibetan monk called Sangdag self-immolated to protest against Chinese occupation. He is a monk of the Dhiphu monastery, he set himself on fire on a main road in Ngaba district at around 10am (local time). According to the report released by the exile based Kirti Monastery in Dharamsala, soon after Sangdag carried out his protest, Chinese personnel arrived at the scene and doused the flames and taken him to a hospital in Ngaba but shortly after that they took him to another place. His current whereabouts and status is unknown.

108. Name: Lobsang Thokmey
Age: 28
Gender: Male
From: Kirti Monastery, Ngaba
Date: 26 March, 2013
Status: Deceased



A Kirti Monk Lobsang Thokmey self-immolated on 16 March, 2013 at around 2:40 pm (local time). He passed away in his protest. According to the sources, Lobsang Thokmey doused his body with kerosene in front of his monastic quarters in the west of the Kirti Monastery and started running towards the east.

“Lobsang Thokmey was in flames as he began running with the Buddhist flag in his hands, before he could reach the main gate, he fell on the ground”





according to the report released by Kirti Monastery in exile. The report also said that a large number of Chinese security personnel arrived at the hospital soon after Lobsang Thokmey was admitted and later forcibly took away the deceased's body to the regional headquarters of Barkham.

Lobsang Thokmey is son of Rogtrug and Depo and has one sister and three brothers. He became a monk at Kirti Monastery at a young age and was currently enrolled in the parchin class. He is the 108th Tibetan who set on fire to protest against the repressive policy of China.

109. Name: Kunchok Wangmo
Age: 30s
Gender: Female
From: Dzoeg region of Ngaba
Date: 13 March, 2013
Status: Deceased



A Tibetan woman Kunchok Wangmo Self-immolated at around midnight of 13 March, 2013, the date mark the eve of Xi Jinping's formal selection as the new President of China. She passed away in her fiery protest. She is the 15th Tibetan Woman and 109th Tibetan to set on fire to protest against Chinese rule and demand for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibetan people.

Kunchok Wangmo is in her 30s and from Dzoeg region of Ngaba, eastern Tibet. Chinese authorities took possession of Kunchok Wangmo's body and carried out the cremation without informing her family members. They later handed over the remains.

Kunchok Wangmo's husband Doma Kyab, has been arrested after he refused to comply with local Chinese authorities's orders to declare internal family feuds as the reason for her self-immolation. The present condition and whereabouts of Kyab are not known.

110. Name: Kalsang Kyi (Kalkyi)
Age: 31
Gender: Female
From: Dzamthang, Ngaba
Date: 24 March, 2013
Status: Deceased





Self Immolation

31 years old Kalkyi from Yultso village in Dzamthang county self-immolated today around 3:30 pm (Tibet time). Kalkyi set herself on fire near Zamthang Jonang Monastery in Dzamthang township in Golok Pema, Ngaba in Amdo region, eastern Tibet. According to the sources, local Tibetans protected her body from Chinese authorities and taken to the monastery to say the prayers. She is married to Drupe and has four children; a young daughter and three sons. She is the 110th Tibetan and 16th Tibetan women from Tibet to set on fire to protest against China's repressive policies.

*111. Name: Lhamo Kyab
Age: 43
Gender: Male
From: Kanlho, Amdo.
Date: 25 March, 2013
Status: Unknown*



Self-immolation number now tolls to 111. Lhamo Kyab, a 43 years old Tibetan man set himself on fire today in Medshul Town of Sangchu county, Kanlho, Amdo province of eastern Tibet (Chinese: Xiahe Xian, Gannan prefecture in Gansu). He set himself ablaze in a forest where he works as a forest guard.

According to the sources, he doused himself in kerosene and jumped into into a fire which he started with timber wood. Right after the protest, a large number of armed security personnel arrived at the location and surrounded the area. The situation in under strict surveillance.





A reader's impression on new edition of A Study of Self-Immolation

Reader: Karen

A Study of Self Immolations documents all the self-immolations by Tibetans between April 1, 2012 and February 25, 2013. At the time of writing, four more self-immolations have occurred on March 17, 18, 24 and 25 2013. LobsangThogmey, a monk from Kirti Monastery, Kunchhoek Wangmo, a 30-year-old woman, Kalsang Kyi, 31 years old woman set themselves on fire in Ngaba Prefecture and Lhamo Kyab, 43 years old man from Medshul town of Sangchu county, Kanlho. Wangmo's husband DolmaKyab was detained by Chinese police after refusing to blame domestic problems for her protest. Kalsang Kyi was a mother of four.



This short volume published by TWA covers “the history, the motive, and the reactions” to the self-immolation movement. Since April 2012 the number of self-immolations has tripled. This book chronicles these incidents of protest one by one, describing the immolator's background, age, place of residence, and occupation when these details are available. In doing so, TWA pays tribute to these martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the Tibetan cause.

This issue also contributes to the larger discussion about the reasons why Tibetans are committing these tragic acts of resistance. Indeed, this trend is difficult to stereotype as a movement by a specific group: self-immolation has become a universal approach by Tibetans from all walks of life. TWA notes that nuns, students, herdsman, farmers, taxi drivers, and monks have all chosen this path of demonstrative resistance. Tibetans under Chinese rule are subject to extreme censorship policies regarding media and the Internet, so there is little room for conventional forms of protest: “Self-immolation became the only way that some Tibetans felt would bring global attention to their condition and hopefully then influence it in a positive way.” The act of setting oneself on fire is both a desperate and powerful move – and it is meant to shock the world into looking





and listening. As the well-known Vietnamese monk and peace activist ThichNhatHanh states, “To express one’s will by burning oneself is not to commit an act of destruction but to perform an act of construction, that is to say, to suffer and to die for the sake of one’s people.”

Self-immolation is a reaction to the increasing discrimination Tibetans face in their own country, which includes Chinese government-issued reforms that discourage the use of Tibetan language and cultural practices. But as the resistance movement has strengthened, “so have the actions to harness the people.” TWA, along with four other NGOs in exile (The Tibetan Youth Congress, Gu Chu Sum, the National Democratic Party of Tibet, and Students for a Free Tibet India), has recently released statements to the press that urge the Chinese government, especially the new leaders in power, to respond to negotiations issued by the Central Tibetan Administration, and to quit their oppressive policies in Tibet. This book thoroughly documents TWA’s reactions, the reactions of the Tibetan community, and the reactions of international governments as the self-immolation toll has increased.

A Study of Self Immolations serves as a general resource on the 34th through 107th Tibetan self-immolations. It brings the people, the reactions, the governments, and the protests together in a one volume. This study is, most importantly, a call for the Chinese government and the international community to address the current emergency in Tibet. TWA maintains that the Chinese government must acknowledge the importance of the Dalai Lama to the Tibetan people” and to engage in a “broader and more substantive dialogue with Tibetan representatives.” International governments should rethink their approach to the Tibetan issue, understanding it is as not just a human rights problem but as an issue tied to Asian and global security, of increasing geopolitical significance.” Ultimately, unless the causes of self-immolation are directly addressed, these forms of protests will only continue to occur.



Global Human Rights Day



On 10 December of 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has become a universal standard for defending and promoting human rights. Every year on 10 December, Human Rights Day marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration. It is celebrated around the globe that “All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms”. However, many people across the globe are denied to have fundamental rights and treated unequal. Tibetans inside Tibet are part of this many people who are still suffering under colonization and imperialism. It has been more than six decades since Tibet lost its independence and Tibetan people struggle for its lost freedom. Within these six decades, the communist party of China has implemented crule laws, rules and tactics to genocide the ethnic culture, religion and language of Tibetans. This callous policy has wounded the hearts of Tibetans and compelled to adopt stronger resistance.



In the history of Tibetan people's freedom struggle, self-immolation is the highest non-violent protest that Tibetans adopted so far. This self-immolation is clear expression of frustration and helplessness to live freely in their own country. Even though the self-immolation tolls to 89 and the situation inside Tibet has become extremely severe and intense, to this day, China has not taken any steps to resolve the conflict. Instead, China has responded with more oppressive reaction by tightening security, closing Tibet off from the outside world, arresting family, relatives and neighbors of the immolators and even begun to criminalize any attempt.



As it is said "Human Rights Day presents an opportunity, every year, to celebrate human rights, highlight a specific issue, and advocate for the full enjoyment of all human rights by everyone everywhere." , we the Central and Regional Tibetan Women's Association wrote an appeal letter to the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and all the Friends of Tibet and urged to interven in this critical situation of Tibet.





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

To solve Tibet issue with help from these powerful bodies, we have developed the following four significant points that can serve as action for these leadership bodies:

1. UNO must send their peacekeeping operations into Tibet.
2. International leadership must recognize that self-immolation and other peaceful protests occurring inside Tibet as the highest form of non-violent acts.
3. Under the safe guard of International forces, Tibetans must have self determination rights.
4. International leaderships must put pressure on China to end their colonization of Tibet and closely monitor the Han Chinese imperialism.



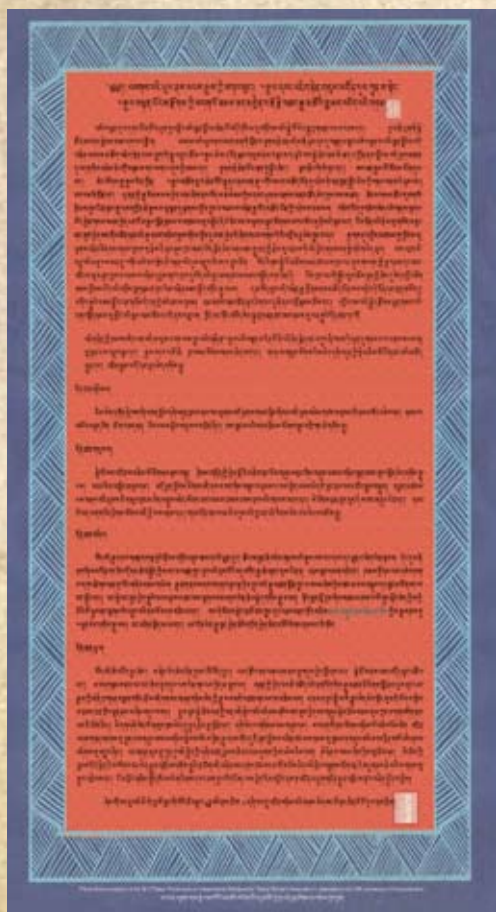
On 10 December, five non-governmental organizations: Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibeta Women's Organization, Gu-Chu-Sum, National Democratic Party of Tibet and Students for Free Tibet, based in Dharamsala have organized a peace march from McLoed Ganj to Kajari (lower Dharamsala).





Central and Regional Tibetan Women's Association commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Tibetan Declaration of Independence issued by His Holiness the thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1913.

(Distributed the copies of Tibetan Declaration of Independence in exile communities to honor and support the truth of history.)



We, the Tibetan Women's Association, stand firmly for the undeniable truth that no one can rewrite and remake history. History is a record of facts, which speaks the truth of the past.

As vividly described in the five points of Tibetan Declaration of Independence, Tibet was an independent nation from the time of King's reign. The 33rd king Songtsen Gampo took the Princess of China as his bride and then the 37th king Trisong Dhetsen declared "Tibetans are happy in Tibet and Chinese in China" (འོད་བོད་ཡུལ་ན་སྤྱི། རྒྱ་ཡུལ་ན་སྤྱི།) Hence, these two races and nations are destined to belong to their own territories. During the epoch of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and Manju dynasty of China, there was tight, religious bond between





Tibet and China. The two territories supported and assisted each other and that relationship was purely based on religion. It was never meant that one should be under the other's occupation. However, with the aggressive military power and cruel intent of occupying the whole region of Tibet, China invaded Tibet. Eventhough His Holiness the thirteenth Dalai Lama fled into exile in Mongol and India, he returned back to Tibet in 1913 and with haste, he cleared Chinese population from U-Tsang region and started to implement the same method to clear the remaining Chinese population in Kham and Amdo regions. Then he declared Tibet as an independent nation, which holds its own future vision and has enough strength to guard its land and people.

It is out of China's arrogance and shamelessness that she illegally occupies Tibet with the untruthful idea that this region is an inseparable part of mainland China. However, in reality, Tibet has become a victim of colonization like many other nations that have been by a hostile strength of another nation. Likewise, China's invasion of Tibet started in 1949 and forced the Tibetan leaders and about ten lakhs of Tibetans to flee into exile.

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama repudiated the Seventeen points Agreement that China forced Tibetan delegates to sign under duress. This renunciation signifies that Tibetans continue to refuse to stay under the brutal occupation of China and it is also a clear response to the fabrication that China says Tibet is its inseperable part of its mainland.

We, the Central and Regional Tibetan Women's Association, support the genuine Middle Way Approach in dealing with the intense situation of Tibet, which is the policy maintained under the grace and blessing of His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, we honour, respect and stand for the truth of our history and the work of our ancestors that visibly marked Tibet as an independent nation.

Copies of Declaration of Independence issued by His Holiness the XIIIth Dalai Lama were distributed as a way to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Tibetan Declaration of Independence and to serve as a symbol of truth for our nation.





Self-Immolation toll reaches ‘ONE HUNDRED’, five ngos organize a march on 18th February.



On 18th Feb 2013, to mark the self-immolation number reaches hundred, five non-governmental organization: Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's Association, Gu Chu Sum, National Democratic Party of Tibet and Students for Free Tibet jointly organized peace march and prayer session in Dharamsala.

Over sixty years of Chinese rule has created a crisis in occupied Tibet. Repressive policies and the severe crackdown have provoked an unprecedented wave of self-





immolations by Tibetan monks, nuns and laypeople, the vast majority of whom have lost their lives. To date we have seen a staggering 102 self-immolations in Tibet alone. At least 86 of these protesters are known to have died. The self-immolators have repeatedly called for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Freedom for Tibet. On 13th Feb when Tibetans in exile all over the world observed centennial of Proclamation of Tibetan Independence by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama, a Tibetan named Drugpa Khar, 26, set

himself ablaze in Amchok town in Sangchu Region of Kanlho. In a similar case Drupchen Tsering (Druptse) 25 years old monk self immolated in Nepal on a same day. The latest case of self-immolation happened only yesterday 17thFeb 2013 in Ambo Labrang Market.

Ignoring the condemnation from leaders across the world, the Chinese government has instead further intensified the suppression of Tibetans in Tibet. This had resulted in a surge of recent self Immolation protest. These protests have been met by Chinese security forces open fire on peaceful





demonstrators, killing several Tibetans and seriously injuring many more. Moreover we are now seeing a new level of repression by punishing not only the family of the self-immolators but the entire community.

Five NGOs strongly condemn the Chinese government's response to the recent protests and immolations in Tibet, which are only exacerbating the situation and the suffering of Tibetans.

Moreover, In an attempt to shift the blame for the wave of self-immolation protests in Tibet, the Chinese government has launched a chilling crackdown and a massive smear campaign that paints Tibetans as criminals and religious fanatics and accused H.H the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in exile. Therefore, we strongly condemn and call for Chinese Government to stop the crackdown and this ludicrous disinformation campaign and we caution the International community and news media.

Common demand of Five Ngos:

- * A coordinated international response by world leaders to act upon China's repressive measures in the affected regions and across Tibet, and to institute multi-lateral mechanisms to advocate for the rights of Tibetan people.
- * For the Chinese government to reassess the draconian policies, which have lead to the immolations and protests in Tibet, and engage with respected community and religious leaders in Tibet in an effort to improve the lives of ordinary Tibetans.
- * For UN representatives and media groups to be allowed to travel freely in Tibet to be able to determine the impact of Chinese policies in Tibet and the level of individual freedom.





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

- * Furthermore, we call upon supporters of Tibet, and human rights advocates worldwide to show their support for Tibetans in this difficult time and to raise the issue with their local parliamentary representatives.





Joint statement by the Five NGOs to commemorate the 54th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day.

10th March, 2013.



10th March, 2013 marked the 54th year of the Tibetan National Uprising, a day when thousands of our brothers and sisters stood defiantly against the Chinese occupation and many sacrificed their lives. It is also a day of hope and pride in our relentless struggle to restore freedom for our country. Tibetans and Tibet supporters around the world are commemorating this day.





We stand in solidarity and extend our deepest respect to all the Tibetan martyrs who have sacrificed for the cause, and convey our heartfelt prayers to their families.

The so-called Seventeen Point Agreement, which was signed under duress in 1954, stated that all the internal governance of the Tibetan Autonomous Region is under the authority of the regional Tibetan government. Nonetheless, China clearly defied the terms of

this agreement. Within eight years, from 1951 to 1959, Chinese forces proved that this agreement was nothing but an instrument to fulfill their larger agenda of genocide. This fallacy made Tibetans realize that only Tibetans can govern their land and thus has further driven Tibetans to actively sustain their identity. The struggle for Tibet's freedom is a choice made by the Tibetan people.



Over one hundred Tibetans have self-immolated. Thousands of monks, nuns, and laymen and women from all walks of life have carried out peaceful demonstrations against China's repression. People around the world who respect truth and value universal peace have stood by us to support our cause. Today our struggle has a global recognition.

The self-immolations of more than one hundred Tibetans over the past few years have further defined our struggle whereby we





can witness how our freedom struggle has now reached a new era. This year we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Tibetan Independence issued by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama. In 1913 His Holiness made this declaration to prevent the Manchu forces from invading Tibet, and to make clear that there exist only a religious tie between Tibet and China.

This year also marks the transition in Chinese leadership. Thus considering the aforementioned factors we should seize every opportunity to advance our movement and thereby ensure Tibet's swift freedom. It is clear our struggle is now reaching a turning point.

In commemoration of the 54th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising



Day, we, the five non-governmental organizations resolve to;

- * To date, more than one hundred Tibetans both inside and outside Tibet have self-immolated to protest against the inhuman policies of the Chinese Government. If the international committees of the world fail to recognize the nonviolent struggle of the Tibetan people, it will be a great loss to the spirit of all non-violent struggles and will be an indication to the world that the colonization and suppression of one nation by another is permissible and can be carried out without consequences.



- * If China's newly-elected leaders fail to implement policies that favor freedom and human rights and continue to rule with oppressive force, China will continue to be viewed as a world criminal.
- * We ask citizens of China to look at the history of China's occupation of Tibet, and realize the illegality of this occupation. Moreover, we wish to make clear that despite over sixty years of China's rule in Tibet, Tibetans have endlessly expressed their desire to be free from the occupation.
- * March 10 Tibetan National Uprising Day is a day remembered by every Tibetans. Each and every day Tibetans risk their lives for our freedom struggle. With China's repression in Tibet further



intensifying Tibetans inside Tibet and everywhere have started learning and adopting various modes of non-violent resistance. It is our commitment to Tibetans everywhere that we will never yield to China's oppression and Occupation.

Joint appeal of five NGOs"

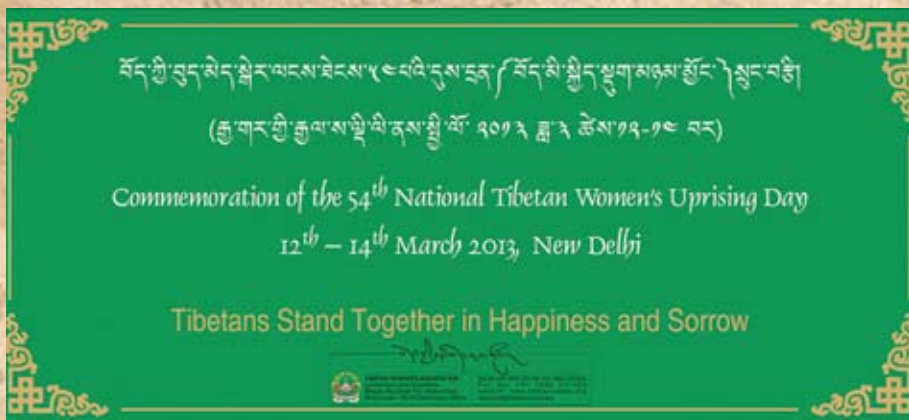
- * China must stop the arbitrary arrests of innocent people and the family members of self-immolators who are accused of unfounded charges. China must release all the political prisoners currently suffering inhuman torture.



- * The Chinese government must stop its repressive crackdown on the Tibetan people in the three Provinces. China should open the doors of Tibet to all international delegates and allow free media to carry out observations and research on the situation of Tibetans in Tibet.
- * We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the government of India for their undying support and request that the Government of India issue a strong statement in light of the current human rights violation and crisis in Tibet. With the growing China's geographical influence on India, Indian Government should realize that Tibet's freedom their only true solution.



Central and Regional Tibetan Women's Association Commemorate the 54th Anniversary of National Tibetan Women's Uprising Day





Statement:

Tibetan Women's Association commemorated the 54th anniversary of National Tibetan Women's Uprising Day on 12th March, 2013.

March 12, 1959 is a significant day in the history of Tibetan women, a date on which Tibetan women rose against the brutal crackdown of the Chinese government in the capital city of Lhasa. The Tibetan Women's Association is an organization of Tibetan women from all three provinces of Tibet that



constantly work together to mobilize and support for the Tibetan political struggle. It is also a non-governmental organization approved by the Central Tibetan Administration in Exile.

12th March is the day on which thousands of Tibetan women peacefully resisted the Chinese forces in Lhasa. They delivered petitions to the embassies of India, Bhutan, Nepal, and to representatives of Muslim committees to notify them about the critical situation of Tibet, and to urge them to intervene in this serious matter. During this uprising, hundreds of Tibetan women lost their lives in the brutal crackdown, and many of them were arrested. We also cannot neglect to remember the massacre of the leaders of the arrested women. In 1966, at the time of the Cultural Revolution, these women were taken east of Sera Monastery and killed. A few of them were taken to places in Lhasa, and to Poo lingka, Nyimo and





Shigatse to be murdered at the hands of Chinese authorities.

We remember and honor the great sacrifices that all these martyrs have made to preserve our culture, identity, and freedom. In their name, we vow that these hardships will not be had in vain. We continue to stand resolutely united in a firm commitment of utmost service to the cause of Tibet.

Since 2009 to 25 February 2013, one hundred and seven people have self-immolated to protest against the occupation of China. Out of this number, fourteen are female: four nuns, two students, and eight mothers. Twelve of these women died in the protest and two are hospitalized. Ninety three men have self-immolated. Eighty eight out of hundred and seven

were succumbed to death, and sadly, nineteen of them haven fallen into the hands of Chinese authorities. In India and Nepal, six exiled Tibetans have set themselves on fire. Three of them lost their lives: Martyr Thupten Ngodup, Martyr Jamphel Yeshe, and Martyr Druptse.



We, the Tibetan Women's Association, pay homage and respect to all the martyrs who sacrificed their precious lives for the cause of Tibet and its people.





Killings and torture, the separation of the Tibetan people from its spiritual and ethnic head by forbidding them to keep photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (as well as to express their reverence and faith in him), the denial of the freedom of religion, the deterioration of the Tibetan environment by mining, diverging the rivers, deforestation, force resettlement of nomads – all these repressive policies are the core cause of Tibetan self-immolations.

Since the causes of Tibetan suffering are policies initiated by the Chinese government, the United Nations and International committees must stand for the truth, and pressure Chinese leaders to stop these blatant human rights abuses. Today, China fails to have the strength to accept this truth, and instead blames His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration. This is an absolute invalid accusation that refuses to acknowledge the failure of their own policies.



The families and neighbors of self-immolators face imprisonment and detention. TWA continuously





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

fights against unfair imprisonment by Chinese authorities, and distributes the reports of detention of innocent Tibetans across the globe. TWA would like to convey to a message to the Chinese government: the more Chinese authorities' crackdown on Tibetans, the more resistance they will have to challenge. The ultimate power of the truth cannot be diminished or extinguished.

TWA strongly urges the General Secretary of United Nations and the United Nations high commissioner for Human Rights to operate a committee to do intensive research on the actual causes of self-Immolation. While urging all the Tibet Support groups, parliaments and all the governmental



and non-governmental organizations to intensify their voices for the cause of Tibet, we also would like to note our heartfelt gratitude for their undying support and help.

The re-establishment of TWA is meant to fulfill the struggle for Tibet as initiated by the great heroines who lost their lives in resistance. It is also to raise the voices of Tibetan women and to assert our presence on various international platforms, including conferences on human rights and women's rights. We also join together to speak up on Tibet's environmental issues. TWA seizes every opportunity to appeal to and urge international bodies to intervene in our struggle, and to make the truth known to the world.





Through our past experiences and observation, we have found that it is very important to have scholars, especially female students, who have done specialized studies. Thus from 2010 to 2012, TWA issued scholarships to five young women. This year, on the 54th anniversary of the Tibetan Women's Uprising Day, in honor of those female self-immolators, we issue scholarships to female students who plan to do work either on gynecology or pediatric studies. If anyone who wants to know about this scholarship program, please see the TWA website. In our work to empower Tibetan women to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their male counterparts



in society, we hosted the Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training in December 2012.

Since in exile Tibetans are scattered all around the world, it is quite a challenge to preserve our culture and traditions. In fact we often fail to give attention to these important matters. People inside Tibet struggle to preserve the culture – even under the duress of occupation, they work harder than us to preserve our identity. It is the request of TWA to the older generation, and especially women, to educate children about the values that exist in our culture and promote the values of human compassion and the spirit of harmony cultures. We should emphasize speaking Tibetan, and learning the Tibetan language. We should learn from other nations about modernization, but remain true to our traditions.





TWA's expansion is now represented by 56 regional chapters and 16,000 members across the globe, which stands for TWA's commitment to "Advocacy for Home and Action in Exile." Today, Tibetan women around the world pray for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We commemorate this day with the deepest of hopes for human rights, peace, and freedom in Tibet and the other regions of the world where peace is held hostage by brutal regimes.

With affirmation of our full faith in the leadership of His Holiness! Long Live His Holiness and May the Tibetan people be soon united in a Free Tibet!

From 12 to 14 March, 2013, the Central and all the Regional Chapters of Tibetan Women's Association across the India and Nepal converged in New Delhi for the 3-day mass campaign. The program include public meeting, women's peace rally, prayer meeting, silent protest and all-women lobby campaign.

As Xi Jinping formally assumed the Chinese presidency today, 200 Tibetan women staged a 'shout-out to Chinese leaders campaign' at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi coinciding with the concluding session of the 3-day mass solidarity campaign. Members of Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) screamed at Xi Jinping's figurine, shouting out three slogans: 'Xi Jinping, end the repression in Tibet,' 'Xi Jinping, resolve the Tibet crisis now,' and 'Xi Jinping, face the Tibet Challenge.'





The ‘shout out to Chinese leaders campaign’ is first of its kind, wherein 200 Tibetan women from 33 chapters from across India and Nepal screamed on top of their voices raising 3 demands directly addressed to China’s new president Xi Jinping.

In the light of the gross human rights violations inside Tibet, the situation in Tibet is exacerbated by a deepening crackdown by the Chinese government on any forms of peaceful expressions for freedom by the Tibetan people, thus deepening the anguish Tibetans feel.

For the last 29 years of TWA’s history in exile, TWA has been



appealing and requesting the Chinese leadership to peacefully resolve the issue of Tibet. But their stringent and repressive policies have engendered a forbidding situation wherein we are witnessing an unprecedented spate of self-immolations inside Tibet, of 107 Tibetans including 14 Women. The Chinese leaders have time and again deliberately mishandled the crisis in Tibet.

“Therefore today, as Xi Jinping formally assumes the title of president and as we commemorate the 5th anniversary of the ‘2008 spring uprising in Tibet,’ we are shouting out to the Chinese leaders to review their failed policies in Tibet, to end the crisis inside Tibet and significantly to fulfill the genuine aspirations of the Tibetan people who sacrificed their lives calling





for 'freedom for Tibetans inside Tibet' and for 'the dignified return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama back to Tibet'," said Tashi Dolma, president of TWA.

TWA's general secretary Nyima Lhamo said "with this campaign, we want to remind the new Chinese leadership that the moment is now for them to face the Tibet challenge. The Chinese government must realize that Tibet presents an opportunity for them to present themselves as a civilized and progressive society and fulfill their claimed domestic policy of harmony and foreign policy of progress."

The TWA organized '3-day mass solidarity campaign' titled 'Tibetans stand together in joy and sorrow' included sit-in protest, lobbying Indian leaders, peace march, prayer meetings and signature campaign. The sit-in event at Jantar Mantar saw a stream of visitors and speakers who addressed the gathering. Shri Nitin Gadkari, former President of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said that he is 'aware of the grim situation inside Tibet and remain saddened over the heightened repression.'



"I have and will always stand by the Tibetan people and their unwavering struggle for freedom," said the BJP leader.

Smt Jaya Jaitley, former politician and now a social activist, lauded the spirit of Tibetan women and assured Tibetan women that 'these impeccable tenets of the Tibetan non-violent struggle and the powerful role of Tibetan women will persevere and bring triumph to the Tibetan freedom movement.'

Other speakers for the 3-day campaign included Ms Kamla Bhasin, Women empowerment activist, Ms. Radha Bhatt, Gandhian and social activist, Dr. Alana Golmie, Burmese democracy activist and few members of the Tibetan Parliament in exile among many others.

Through this mass campaign the Central and Regional TWA has placed 5 demands addressed to the





1. United Nations to send their delegation to visit the affected areas in Tibet.
2. The International Community to express solidarity with the self-immolation protests inside Tibet.
3. Chinese Government to review their failed repressive policies in Tibet.
4. International media to gain fair and free access into Tibet.
5. World Governments to pressure China to engage in a dialogue with the envoys of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration.



Tibet Advocacy Campaign in New Delhi, March 2013



Indian Parliamentarians call on Prime Minister to raise Tibet with Chinese leaders

The three-day Tibet Advocacy Campaign was held in the Indian capital city of Delhi from March 13 – 15, coinciding with the budget session of

the Indian Parliament. The advocacy team met with over 20 members of the Indian Parliament from both the houses Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, and also with politicians from various political parties: Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Shri Inder Singh, Shri Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Shri Joseph Toppo, Shri Sansuma Kungkur Bwiswmuthiary, Shri Rishang Keishing, Shri Takam Sanjoy, Dr. Karan Singh, Ms. Agata Sangma, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav,

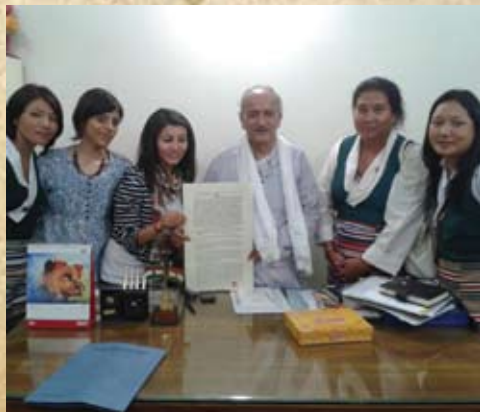




Smt. Smriti Irani, Prof. Anil Kumar Sahani, Shri Baishnap Parida, Shri Pradeep Battacharya, Shri Sohan Potai, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, Dr Pradeep Balmuchu, Shri Deeraj Sahu, Dr. Ajay Kumar, and Shri. Ninong Ering, Minister of State, Minority Affairs.

The campaign was jointly organized by Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) and Students for a Free Tibet India (SFT India), with additional help from the International Tibet Network in light of the unprecedented series of self-immolations of Tibetans. It aimed to rally diplomatic intervention to address the grim situation inside Tibet.

The advocacy team engaged the Indian Parliamentarians in active discussion meant to ensure government support and tangible action, so as to bring about multilateral pressure on Chinese leadership to resolve the Tibet crisis.



They appealed to the parliamentarians to urge Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to raise the issue of self-immolation in Tibet during his meeting with Chinese president Xi Jinping at the upcoming BRICS summit, scheduled to be held in Durban from March 26 -27, 2013.





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

Mani Shankar Aiyar, former minister and current member of Rajya Sabha, told the advocacy team that the self-immolation protests inside Tibet are critical and need urgent intervention. Thus, he noted, there is a possibility that the Indian leadership will issue some kind of diplomatic expression to the Chinese government.

Ram Vilas Paswan, former minister and current Rajya Sabha MP and chief of the Lok Janshakti party, produced a copy of a letter dated January 22 that urged the Indian prime minister to “sympathetically look into the matter of heightened repression in Tibet.” Paswan also produced a subsequent February 9 acknowledgement from Dr. Manmohan Singh.



In what the swiftest response to the advocacy campaign, independent Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Chandrasekhar tweeted about the self-immolations in Tibet, and also sent a letter to the Prime Minister about the issue. “I urge you to support the cause of Tibetan freedom by issuing a strong statement in light of the current human rights violation and crisis in Tibet, and to raise this issue with the Chinese President at the upcoming BRICS meeting on 26 and 27 March 2013, in Durban, South Africa,” wrote Rajeev.

Within two days, eleven MPs signed the “Stand up for Tibet” pledge, which has already garnered 50,000 signatures. Copies of the signed pledge and an exclusive appeal letter were delivered to the Prime Minister’s office on March 18.

The team also met with leaders and office bearers of national political parties to discuss and deliver the advocacy kit. In addition, the campaign





Political Affairs

requested the Indian parliamentarians to invite His Holiness the Dalai Lama to address the Indian Parliament, and to also invite Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the political leader of Tibet, to speak on the situation of Tibet to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Indian Parliament.

The advocacy campaign will be an on-going campaign in India with frequent follow-ups with Indian lawmakers.





Alternative BRICS Summit in Dharamsala



Press Release

Tibet Campaigners demand action from BRICS leaders as Xi Jinping attends first summit as China's Head of State

25 March 2013

Dharamshala: As government leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and China prepare to meet for the BRICS Summit in Durban, Tibetans demand action for Tibet as China's new President Xi Jinping travels to Durban for his first summit as Head of State, and highlight Xi Jinping's Tibet Challenge.

A two-day summit starting tomorrow will witness a historic meeting of Xi Jinping with government leaders from Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa in Durban, South Africa, while the self-immolations in occupied Tibet - now totaling at least 110 - show no sign of abating. "In the months





since Xi Jinping was elevated to the top of the Chinese Communist Party, there has been an increase in China's hardline response to dissent in Tibet, with a heightened military presence, mass detentions and a campaign to "criminalize" family members of self-immolation protesters." said Tashi Dolma, President, Tibetan Women's Association. "These actions and China's anti-Dalai Lama propaganda are exacerbating tensions in Tibet. Through this campaign we will explain the nature of Xi Jinping's "Tibet Challenge", and call on BRICS leaders to act collectively and with principle, to press Xi to lift China's crackdown and urgently review China's policies in Tibet."

"Tibet is Xi Jinping's number one challenge and he has to address the legitimate grievances of Tibetans living in occupied Tibet and bring about an end to the tragic wave of self-immolations." said Dorjee Tseten of Students



for a Free Tibet India. "Recently Indian MP Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar urged Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to raise the ongoing critical self-immolation issue inside Tibet with his counterpart Xi Jinping at the BRICS summit. This is also a challenge to other BRICS leaders not to shy away from this reality, and press President Xi to use his new position to find a just and lasting solution for Tibet."





Tibetans and supporters from the BRICS nations have issued a joint statement urging their respective government to discuss the Tibet issue with Xi Jinping. We received news of another self-immolation yesterday by a 30 years old mother of four. Tibetans inside Tibet are continuing to resist against brutal security measures by Chinese police. “Tibet today is one of the most repressed and closed societies in the world, where merely talking on the phone can land you in jail. Support for the Dalai Lama can be prosecuted as an offence against the state,” Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee said.

We have also sent an open letter to the embassies of the BRICS nations in India including Indian PM office. In the letter we asked concerned government not to hide from the truth about China’s brutal repression of the Tibetan people. We appealed them all to urge President Xi to alleviate the situation by lifting the crackdown in Tibet and urgently review China’s policies in Tibet. We have also urged them to press Mr. Xi to allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit all Tibetan areas as a matter of urgency.





A Report from Empowerment Through Action Desk: Third series of Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training

THIRD TIBETAN WOMEN'S ADVANCED LEADERSHIP TRAINING



Date: 18th – 27th December 2012

Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi

Pre-Training

The TWA coordination team made our way to Delhi on the night of 15th December, a few days preceding the start of the Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training on the 19th. Pre-training preparations included: purchasing the training kit (stationery, yoga mats, water bottles, group prizes, mementoes for the panellists and trainers), finalizing the speakers and their travel mode, setting the menu, and arranging the Magnolia conference hall for the concluding panel discussion. The large stanchions





in the room were decorated with the TWA logo. We also made sure all the technology was in order, checking to ensure all the presentations, videos, sound systems were functioning and easily accessed.

The spacious hall thus transformed into a setting fit for training our 25 participants, we welcomed the guests on 18th December. The team succeeded in making the training space at the Gandhi Peace Foundation comfortable and appealing as to welcome the participants traveling from near and far.

Training synopsis:

The ten-day 'Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training' (December 19 – 27) was held at the Gandhi Peace Foundation. We had 25 Tibetan women attend from many parts of India, including Chennai, Dharamsala, Gujarat, Gangtok, and Delhi. These women came from various backgrounds: there were graduate students, professional workers, political activists, and teachers. This time the training course was divided more or less into outdoor and indoor training; the Christmas holidays happened to be the sole reason for the slight changes. The 3rd series welcomed professional trainers including Lynda O. Lepcha, Director of Holistic Training Solution, New Delhi; Irene M. Santiago, Chair and former Chief Executive Officer of the Mindanao Commission on Women, and Convener of the Mothers for Peace Movement in the Philippines; and Tenzin Dhardon Sharling, member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and Co-Chair of the International Tibet Network. These women helped lead three main phases of training: identifying, understanding, and building leadership skills.

Once again, the Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training was generously funded by the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, through the Tibet Fund and the National Endowment for Democracy based in the United States. This training intensive encouraged hands-on experience of leadership. Activities included instruction in event management, an ambush lobbying of Indian leaders and opinion makers, participation in NDTV's "The Big Fight," a panel discussion with women leaders, implementation of social empowerment projects in Delhi, and also included cultural exposure trips to Akshardam, a Hindu temple complex.





18 December, Tuesday

Our phones commenced ringing early on in the morning, as participants began arriving from Dharamsala. Others continued to arrive throughout the day, registering, picking up their training kits, and obtaining their accommodation assignments. The welcome dinner, followed by formal welcome address by the TWA President, marked the start of events.

19th December, Wednesday

The first day of the training began with a morning yoga session; it was beautiful to see how the whole group was slowly starting to come together. The Lhakar day began with a formal welcome address by the TWA President, which gave insight into the training's history, purpose, and objectives. TWA's General Secretary introduced the trainees and coordination team through the ice-breaker game "Two Truths and Lie." As we played, the laughter never seemed to end. The game "Secret Friend" was next introduced to the participants, the whole purpose being to maintain secrecy throughout the training period, but in the past we have witnessed many secret friends remain the best of friends in their real lives after the programs. The participants were then given the opportunity to decide on the ground rules that they wish to abide by for the rest of the training program. The participants were then divided into four groups with an elected team leader and time manager; the groups named themselves "Thenthuk Dolma," "Talaash," "Unity Six," and "Himalayan Queens." The





groups were graded for their basic leadership skills and overall group performance.

The next session was more of an orientation; TWA's General Secretary led a session on "Proposal Writing." This talk was meant to help the groups in their work on a social empowerment project designed to make the Tibetan presence felt in the Indian capital city. The session also featured last year's participant Tenzin Choedon, now a staff member at TWA. She spoke on her experiences and shared her group's tips on winning the previous year's bonus prize.

The participants were then introduced to the concept of "Ambush Lobbying," which was a practical outbound training exercise arranged for the following day. The presentation guided the participants through what, why, and who to lobby, followed by an interactive discussion with plenty of questions.

The morning was heavily loaded with lots to listen and grasp. The afternoon session was an exposure trip to the "Akshardam," also referred to as Delhi Akshardam or Swaminarayan Akshardam. The temple complex contains millennia of representations of traditional Hindu and Indian culture, spirituality, and architecture. The building was developed and constructed by 3,000 volunteers and 7,000 artisans. Nevertheless this was not merely a sightseeing trip, it was a part of a challenging "visualization" project for group members. Not even a pen or paper was allowed in the temple, so it was all about one's ability to observe, grasp, and get hold of minute details. When we got back, the evening session had the groups draw a blueprint of a Tibetan Akshardam. We called the day off after the groups presented their creations to the whole community of participants.

Quote from participant: "After attending this training I felt the importance of [having] such trainings in our community where we can have more knowledge, exposure, excitement and experience. A fantastic training".

20th December, Thursday

As per the previous day's presentation on Ambush Lobbying, the groups readied themselves for an outbound practicum training. This was an exercise designed to give trainees a chance to experience what it looks and feels





like to lobby. The TWA coordination team handed each a group a lobbying kit containing papers with the details of Tibetans who have self-immolated since 2009, copies of the pledge, and their travel and lunch allowance. At 9:30am the groups dispersed from the training venue, but some groups remained at their tables and strategized their plans. The organizing team had made it very clear to the trainees that the quantity is less important than the quality of people they use to lobby.

The groups reunited at the venue at 5:30pm, much happiness upon their faces. The groups had lobbied throughout the day and got eleven prominent Indians to sign the pledge. The signatories included members of Indian Parliament, politicians, senior journalists, and social activists.

Many of the trainees expressed a wish to be a part of a planned lobby day. Ambush Lobbying was a way to give these women an introduction to the process, and to give them hands-on lobbying experience.

The day concluded with group strategic meeting.

Quote from participant: _

“I feel like I, too, have the potential to make a difference in our society. For this task, self-confidence is a must, which I feel this workshop has helped to develop in me”.





Phase Two, Building Leadership Skills

21st December, Friday

Lynda Ongel Lepcha, the Director of Holistic Training Solutions, yet again kindly assented to our request to lead a three-day training on building leadership skills. The first day focused on “Leading the Self”: our brain at work, understanding one’s self, and creating plans for action. Lynda began by explaining how our brain functions while at work. She looked



into the reasons why our brain often feels so taxed, and also elaborated on the challenge of avoiding distractions and maintaining focus. She discussed ways in which we can take full advantage of our mental resources, how to develop and maximize our insights to solve seemingly insurmountable problems, how to keep cool in any situation in order to make the best decisions possible, how to collaborate with others





more effectively, how to make providing feedback more easily, and how to effectively change other people's behaviour.

The next session got even more interesting as we looked into "Understanding the Self through Social Styles." The whole idea was to come to an understanding of one's own communal behaviors, and to develop awareness and understanding of dominant social styles. The trainees were grouped according to their styles, and in their groups they brainstormed the strengths and weaknesses of each kind of social style. It was interesting to see how comparable personality types were placed in the same group. The final presentations, which featured feedback between groups, proved both hilarious and revelatory.

Ten trainees of the Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training got the opportunity to participate in "Big Fight," an interactive programme on NDTV 24x7. The programme featured people from all different walks of life, expressing their views on the topic of discussion, "Are Indian cities safe for women?". It was moderated by Mr. Vikram Chandra.



Quote from participant:

"First of all I am really grateful that I got this opportunity and I would like to say thank you very much...Overall I found it all really well planned. All the members of TWA have worked really hard to make this training successful and I think you all have done really well. Thank you."



22nd December, Saturday

The second day of training given by Lynda was themed on “Team Leading.” Having come to an understanding of their personal social styles the previous day, the trainees were then made to work in groups to understand the varying social styles of their teammates. This helped the teams understanding one another better, thus improving their overall group performance.

The trainees were then introduced to a very important aspect in planning for success: the Time Management principle. Participants learned how to keep up with a “Time Management Inventory,” and the training head further elaborated on maintaining a “Time Management Grid.” We



took many lessons and tips from this session, including strategies to balance different areas of your life, clarify your values and goals, and how to use a productivity system that fits you personally. We also learned that many important tasks like building domain competency, improving soft skills, career planning, setting goals, giving back to society, and other less tangible endeavors are often overlooked because they rarely or never appear on our “To Do” lists. Even if they do appear, they will always be last, and most always will given the least priority among other tasks.

The afternoon session featured a practical workshop on performing effective “Coaching and Feedback.” At



this time trainees were introduced to the GEARS Model – “Goals, Evaluation, Alternatives, Results, and Support.” A trainee volunteered to be “coached” in front of the whole group by our master trainer. Then team members took the exercise into their own hands, taking turns in leading coaching sessions within their groups. While an individual led a one-on-one coaching session with another team member, the remaining teammates helped the process by throwing out open-ended questions. It was fulfilling to see many happy faces as the goals of the exercise became more clear, and alternativeways to achieve effective coaching revealed themselves.

The groups worked on their group projects before we called the day off.

Quote from participant:

“Great exposure through the outbound training sessions like NDTV studio participation, project implementation, and lobbying”.

23rd December, Sunday

“Leading Organizations” was the theme as Lynda led the training for the third day. The other main topic was “Innovation,” which included discussion of the strategies and “tools” of innovation. Lynda explained that creativity and innovation are not interchangeable concepts. Trainees were then introduced to ways in which people have used their ability to come up with new ideas and products, to harness to creative ideas, and to bring them to market in a profitable manner. Further, key components of innovation,





types of innovation, the “three seeds” of innovation, and the “sweet spots” of innovation were introduced to the trainees with examples relating to products in the market. We also looked into “red ocean strategy” and “blue ocean strategy” concepts.

The trainees were then grouped according to their regions for ease of communication. The teams had to choose and implement a follow-up project as per the need and interest of the group. The groups worked together on a project planning worksheet, and it was impressive to see what they came up with.

Lynda's three day training concluded. TWA's President thanked our master trainer for her commitment and dedication with a presentation of a small gift.

Quote from participant:

“I have really enjoyed the ten days. The opportunity to meet all those ladies, the life lessons I learned, and the quality training which I have received have been the greatest gifts for me. I believe that in the coming new year each of us will be a better person. I wish every Tibetan woman receives this opportunity in the future.”

24th December; Monday

Irene M. Santiago, the Chair and former Chief Executive Officer of the





Mindanao Commission on Women and Convenor of the Mothers for Peace Movement in the Philippines, was the head trainer for the day. In 2005, she was nominated with 1,000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Irene began the day with a very powerful video screening that touched on her first topic – “Women Being Taken Seriously.” This was followed by a group discussion on women’s leadership roles in present Tibetan society and in the exile movement, and the ways in which women’s roles and status have changed in recent years.

The next topic was “From Participation to Influence,” which highlighted the importance of being keeping a strong voice as women in a women’s association, in mixed organizations, and as parts of movements with regional and international links. As we assessed women’s leadership roles in these spheres, we attempted to decipher strategies to increase women’s leadership roles. We also discussed tactics on how to make women’s interests part of mainstream concern, by looking further into the pros and cons of women’s caucuses and committees.

The after lunch session was a presentation on “Getting Attention for Women’s Issues,” as well to how to engage in effective advocacy. A workshop on planning a successful advocacy campaign followed; the indicators were explained in detail, with plenty of group discussions, role playing games, and presentations to engage the trainees.





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

TWA's President thanked Irene M. Santiago with a traditional Tibetan scarf and a small souvenir from the Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training.

Quote from participant:

"This training helped me in getting to know myself better. TWA should continue with this training in the future."

25th December, Tuesday



Every evening during the training period, the groups had diligently dedicated time to work on and prepare their projects, and finally came the day to present and implement the projects.

Mr. Lhakpa Tsering la, Career Consultant and Project Officer of Empowering the Vision, kindly accepted our invitation to serve as a judge.

The team Unity Six's project title was "Today's Readers, Tomorrow's





Leaders,” and their project implementation site was the Trukman Slum area. The objective of the project was to promote education for children by distributing educational kits and giving workshops. The team divulged that most of the children in the slum area are unaware of importance of education, and kits will essentially help in spreading and stressing the significance of knowledge. Therefore, we plan to invest in putting together these kits. They team returned content after spending quality time, motivating, and exchanging ideas with the children at the slum area, and for being able to bring a smile to many hearts.



The Himalayan Queens titled their project “Love and Light,” and their beneficiaries comprised of 73 physically and mentally challenged orphans in Missionaries of Charity located at Jangpura, New Delhi. The aims and objectives of the team were to make our presence as Tibetans felt in the Indian Community, a symbolic gesture of thank you to India for their hospitality for the past 53 years. The group hoped to make the children there feel loved and cared for, and to make their 2012 Christmas a very special and memorable one. The team was deeply moved when they met with the children at the missionary charity. Many team members expressed a newly felt gratitude for their own physical health and wellbeing. They greatly cherished the moments they could spend with the children, and treasured the simple assistance they could offer.





The team Talaash had their project titled “TO OUR DADADADI AND NANA NANI – We Love You” (“To Our Grandparents – We Love You”). The project aimed to reach to the people who perhaps need love, care, and attention the most. The team hoped that through their service, they could to convey to the youth the importance of caring for and respecting our elders.

The ultimate purpose of the project was to make the Tibetan presence felt in the capital city, and to express a heartfelt “Thank You” to India and its citizens for their hospitality, friendship, and support to the Tibetans over the past 50 years. The project hoped to show our utmost respect and thanks to the generation who helped make our lives much easier. The team believed



that this project was their humble way of adding smiles to the world and making it a happier place. One of the key messages of the project was to connect to our core value systems of love, respect, and care. This team was beaming with happiness upon their return, holding fast the truth of the old adage, “the more you give to others, the more you get in return.”





The winning team ThenthukDolma's project title was "We Can Feel For You." Their first presentation slide read, "It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving," a quote from Mother Teresa. Their main objective in implementing this project was to let the poor cycle rickshaw pullers know that we care about and realize the hardship they have to go through every day to earn a minimal income. The team aimed to supply rickshaw drivers with winter clothing (especially needed in the freezing Delhi winters), to make them feel cared for, to show respect for their hard work, and to thank them for their service. At the same time, group members used this opportunity of exchange to share with them our backgrounds, our history, and our identity, and to make the presence of Tibetans felt in the most positive way possible.





Everyone returned to the venue feeling content and satisfied after being able to touch the hearts of many under-privileged sections of society. Trainees felt that they were able to build bridges of understanding between themselves and the people they met, and believed they tapped into connections that emphasized our oneness as human beings.

Quote from participant:

"It was invaluable, fun, and effective for many of us. The organizers have worked really hard which I really appreciated."

26th December, Wednesday

The teams dispersed around Delhi in the morning to advertise the final day's panel discussion. Two teams took the responsibility of hanging posters around Delhi University, while two other teams worked on distributing the invitation cards to important and prominent offices around Delhi. The trainees were also given the option to attend the hour-long teaching of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the TCV Day School, Majnu Katila, Delhi.

Ms. Tenzin Dhardon Sharling, Member of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and Co-Chair of the International Tibet Network, was our trainer for the day. Dhardon Sharling focused mainly on building effective communication skills. The session began with an ice-breaker in the same





vein as this topic; it was a fun way to learn and explore the ways in which human communication is a unique blessing. Trainees were quickly briefed on the basics of communications skills, and moved deeper into the topic.

The trainees also did an exercise in which they wrote a review on Twitter about an article featured in one of the leading news magazines of India. It was impressive to see the teams emerge with brief but compelling reviews.

The most fun part of the session was an activity called “AD ZAP,” a way for groups to practice marketing their message via the media. Each team was to create a TV ad for a new product, and in doing so demonstrate their creativity, innovation, and effective communication skills. Each ad had to demonstrate an appeal to a clear target audience – e.g., Indian or International? Women, men, or all? The team had to be able to answer questions about their product. Team ads were as follows:

Himalayan Queens

–“Dabang Gum,” a new





energy gum. Tag line: “Dabang gum khao, Energy pao” (“Have Dabang gum and get energized”).

ThenthukDolma

– “Punch,” a new protection spray. Tag line: “Fear no more”

Talaash

– “Kangsha,” a new socks brand. Jingle: “Feel the Feet.”

Unity Six

– “Ring – ring,” a new candy to raise your height. Tag line: “ring ringkhao, lambay ho jao” (“have ring ring and get taller”).

Teams were graded and given feedback by trainers according to their success at delivering their message, marketing their product, and creativity in product design.

A special evening



As it was the final evening of training, we had a special farewell dinner followed by the revealing of secret friends. The teams held an impromptu





talent night where groups and individuals performed songs and dances.

Quote from participant:

“Thank you TWA for providing such an opportunity, I feel very happy and satisfied that 2012 came to an end so nicely. This training was the best Christmas gift I gave myself, and it was all possible because of you guys. Thanks a lot and god bless.”

27th December, Thursday



TWA's Third Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training concluded with a conference on "Women's Leadership Roles in Asia." Addresses were given by veteran Indian women leaders: Dr. Kiran Bedi, India's first and highest woman ranking officer and political activist; Jaya Jaitley, former political leader and social activist; Dr. Alana Golmei, activist for Burmese human rights; and Radha Bhatt (Radha Bhen), leading activist and chairperson of the Gandhi Peace Foundation. These women's talks marked the concluding session of ten days of Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training (TWALT), organized by the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA).



Twenty-five young participants of TWALT from exile pockets in India—Sikkim, Chennai, Gujarat,





Dharamsala, and Delhi – were joined by guests and the press at Magnolia auditorium of the India Habitat Center, New Delhi. The two-hour discussion touched on the ways in which over the past centuries women in Asia have been key figures in the promotion of non-violence; from homemakers to nation builders, they have led on the path to progress and advancement.

Moderated by DhardonSharling, activist and member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile, the discussion established that women in Asia, and particularly Tibetan women, have persevered as agents of positive change in the 21st century.

Dr. Bedi stressed that leadership is both innately personal and professional, and that true leadership involves realizing that “you are what you are from inside out.” Dr. Bedi cited His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, and Mahatma Gandhi as exemplary leaders who are “leaders in performance and not in position.”



Jaya Jaitley, spoke about “three symbols of leadership: the jail – preparing you for the sacrifice of freedom in pursuit of greater freedom, the spade/shovel –representing individual action in cleaning the drain, and the ballot box – making you deserving of a leader.” Jaya lauded Tibetan women for being exemplary





leaders and for walking the right path. “Women are instrumental in peacekeeping because they will not resort to violence... they have the strongest weapon – the strength of will.”

Radha Bhatt stressed that leadership prowess is already exhibited by the common people in villages in Asia, evidenced by their every day acts of defiance. Radha expounded that leadership at the grassroots level provides bedrock support, a foundation for bigger movements in society. She also reiterated Gandhi-ji’s message of how individual action can bring about change: “Be the change you want and expect to see in society, and in this way Asia can become a harmonious region on the globe.”



Dr. Alana Golmei shared her early experiences of fleeing from conflict in Manipur and getting involved with the Burmese human rights struggle. “You cannot run away from a problem and you cannot expect another position of power or authority to solve your problem, but you should [try to develop] the solution.” Dr. Alana expressed her thoughts on the importance of networking and advocacy skills in the human rights struggle, and said that Tibetan women “should reach out, expand and build a strong base to ensure the sustenance of the struggle and the movement.”

The panel discussion was





followed by lunch; it was an opportunity for the trainees to interact with and learn from the speakers and invitees.

Quote from participant:

"This kind of leadership training is a huge investment by TWA for creating future women leaders. I feel blessed to be a part of it."





Conclusion:

These young women participants shared a commitment to take strident steps in their everyday lives to perfect their leadership skills, to carry the mantle of female leadership. They thus hope to continue on within a legacy of women's leadership, and thereby secure a safe and sound future for women across the globe.

The Tibetan Women's Association extends deep gratitude to the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, the TIBET FUND, and the National Endowment for Democracy, all based in the United States, for having supported us with the much needed financial aid that made this training possible. We also thank our amazing participants who made this training happen with their enthusiastic presence and active participation. We look forward to being able to create many more such platforms to empower and encourage women to climb to higher scales of leadership both in personal and professional fronts. Thank you, sponsors, for making this project a reality.





Report from TWA Empowerment through Action Desk

TWA spearheads three-day women's empowerment training at Norgyeling Tibetan settlement, Maharashtra



The three-day women's empowerment training at the Norgyeling Tibetan settlement was held from February 27 – March 1, 2013 as per the request and coordination of the Norgyeling office. The training highlighted the need for and the importance of women's empowerment, as well as basic leadership topics including communication skills and team building.





Women Empowerment



TWA's General Secretary Nyima Lhamo began the day with a talk highlighting women's empowerment and gender sensitization. Her presentation brought forward the real need for women empowerment programs in the community and underlined the many societal expectations and stereotypes present in our society.

Participants were amazed at how their own notions and ideas had societal influence, and the term "gender" gained an enhanced meaning. They then had a chance to share their thoughts and ideas with the trainer through questions, group presentations, and role playing games. Nyima ended the session by reminding the participants to search their own experiences and discover answers for themselves, as a way to develop personal views on the subject.

In the afternoon, Nyima led a session on communications skills. Through various exercises attendees were introduced to methods of effective communication. Some confessed that they never before thought communication skills were important enough to be trained in and discussed.



The final topic of the day was the importance of teamwork. Participants shared many laughs during exercises like "the great egg drop game" and "creating the biggest structure." It was a delight to watch the participants perform the tasks with creativity and enthusiasm. The exercises tested the groups' team





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

effectiveness and management. We concluded the session by reviewing the importance of teamwork before everyone joined together for a group picture.

On March 1, TWA's General Secretary gave a presentation on Tibetan Women's Association in great detail, covering its history, mission, convictions, and activities. The objective was to bond and connect with the masses through the association's activities, and to encourage and motivate the women in the settlements to become a part of TWA.

TWA's Women Environment and Development officer Tenzin Choedon also led a discussion on women's safety. The participants had the best of laughs throughout the session, as it was full of practical examples and





Women Empowerment

demonstrations. Choedon talked about the general safety concerns of women, and then looked into strategies to avoid danger, as well as the best ways to react.



Conclusion:

Tibetan Women's Association remains thankful to the settlement office of Norgyeling for their invitation to serve as a resource, for giving TWA an opportunity to live up to our convictions, and to help empower and strengthen our women and community. TWA believes that this empowerment project at Norgyeling will set a positive example for other settlement offices in our exile community.





One Billion Rising – 14th February 2013



As per United Nations statistics, one in every three women is a victim of violence. On behalf of all these women, the One Billion Rising campaign



was organized in over 207 countries across the world to raise a shared voice against all kinds of violence against women. It was organized on 14th February 2013, a day already dedicated to expressions of love and affection. One Billion Rising was a demonstration of the urgent desire of women across the globe to live without the constant threat of violation, rape, and attack. 14th February





2013 marked the largest global action in history to end all the violence and discrimination against women and girls.

Here in Dharamsala, TWA and Jagori organized a daylong event to celebrate One Billion Rising. In the morning, women and men from Dharamsala as well as a few foreigners joined with the two NGOs to form a human chain and marched through Lower Dharamsala. Participants sported pink ribbons labeled “Stop Violence Against Women,” and shouted slogans in Hindi, Tibetan, and English.

The campaign continued into the afternoon. A sizable number of men and women from all backgrounds came to show their solidarity at the evening candlelight march. The regional president of Jagori, Jetsumna Tenzin Palmo, and the regional TWA president addressed the audience at the final rally at TCV Day School. Tenzin Palmo highlighted the forms of discrimination against women, and noted that this prejudice even exists in Buddhism. Women and men are the same, she insisted, except men may sometimes have “bigger muscles.” She called for men to support women, and for women to support each other in their struggle. Tenzin Palmo’s nuns sang a beautiful song on female empowerment, and the program concluded with a dance performance prepared by Jagori.



Although a one-day campaign cannot stop all the injustices carried out against women, it has surely helped the cause, and also inspired many men to stand for women. Some of the past victories of One Billion Rising include:

- * Brought together people across movements and causes – mobilizing communities such as migrants, women in prison, domestic workers, urban poor, LGBTQI, farm workers, the disabled, and many more.



- * Created the opportunity for councils of indigenous women to participate in global problem solving.
- * Created global solidarity and strength cutting across borders, races, class, religions, sexual orientation, ages, genders. Reignited solidarity between women's organizations in various countries. Rekindled the ethos of sisterhood amongst women on a global scale.
- * Brought to the surface the intersection of issues both causing and affecting violence against women: patriarchy, poverty, corporate greed, environmental plunder, imperialist policies, religion, militarization, interventions of outside countries, immigration, labor export policies, nationalization of industries, political repression.
- * Engaged masses on a deeper, more embodied level through dancing, poetry, singing, and art.
- * Produced massive media exposure, discourse, and advocacy on violence against women issues. It also created or was the catalyst



for the development of millions of women citizen social media journalists telling their own narratives by picking up cameras.

- * Created solidarity and safe and free space, through creativity and numbers, for violated women to tell their stories, many for the first time, and heal their trauma by dancing in public, communal open spaces.



Women Empowerment



- * Inspired millions of men to stand and rise as allies, deconstructing patriarchy alongside women.
- * Galvanized and empowered legislators to generate legislation in support of ending violence against women and girls globally. Created an opportunity for globally linked women's councils to lobby at all levels of government and UN.
- * Increased funding and support for programs and education to end violence against women and girls. Made violence against women impossible to ignore and never to be marginalized again. Reminded the world that women united will never be defeated.





A Report from Women Development and Environment Desk; Tibetan Women's Association's presence at COP18

Reporter: Tenzin Choedon, Women's Environment and Development Desk officer, Tibetan Women's Association.



First of all, the Women's Environment and Development Desk (WEDD) of the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) would like to acknowledge the travel fund from the Global Fund for Women for providing this great opportunity allowing the WEDD officer to attend the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in the Qatar National Convention Center, (Doha, Qatar) from 26th November to 7th December. It was one of the largest conferences ever held in Doha with an estimated





17,000 people in attendance. There were delegates from 194 nations along with more than 7,000 members from different non-governmental organizations, and also around 1,500 journalists from Qatar and all over the world, who covered every day news and happenings during the conference.

Although the funding was meant for two people, unfortunately due to a lack of an accreditation only one staff member from TWA was able to attend the COP18. Nevertheless, TWA used this occasion as an opportunity to print three different kinds of stickers (500 copies each), a banner (unfortunately it was not allowed to be in the QNCC), and also published a brochure on Tibet's rivers entitled "A Clarion Call for the 9 Downstream Nations Receiving Tibet's Water." TWA also made 300 copies of videos of projects accomplished by WEDD and republished 500 copies of the book on Tibetan nomads *Purging the Treasure House*, 500 environmentally-friendly bags, and 500 badges with different slogans such as "Save Tibet Third Pole" and "If Tibet dries, Asia dies."



2nd December 2012

Although the events had started on 26th November, I was accredited only for the second week of the conference and thus did not arrive in Doha until 2nd December. I want to extend my thanks to the University of East Anglia, who helped me out in the last minute.

From the airport, I went straight to my hotel. After getting refreshed, I went to the Qatar National Convention Center (QNCC) in hopes of getting registered. But as it was Sunday, the security guard and the volunteers told me that I could not register until the next day. Because I was not registered, they did not let me get into the conference. So, I went back to my room the first day quite empty-handed.





3rd December 2012

I left my room early in the morning for the Qatar National Convention Center (QNCC) where registration started around 9:00 am. After waiting a long time in line, I finally got registered around late morning. Immediately afterwards I walked around so as to get to know all the areas of QNCC, a huge center with many large conference rooms, meeting halls, exhibition

booths, side event rooms, delegation rooms, and other spaces.

I went to meet the delegates from India, and the environment minister was already occupied. I left my business card with his assistant who said he would try and squeeze me into the minister's very busy schedule. I then went over to the Chinese pavilion and attended their "High-Level Seminar on Climate Change" which happened to be taking place the moment I arrived. Then I explored the various exhibit booths where all the countries and big NGOs have their kiosks and stalls. After that I found the Gender CC–Women for Climate Justice and the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) kiosks. I wanted to talk with their representatives and get some contacts for future reference, but unfortunately there was no one available at both desks during my rounds. Nonetheless, at WEDO's kiosk there were photos of men and women holding messages displayed on a large board. I got some paper, wrote my own





message, got my photo taken, and hung this picture next to the others. I also wrote down my contact information in Doha just in case they tried to reach me. No message came, however, and around 7:30 pm I returned to the kiosk and left on their desk my visiting card with a book on nomads and the DVD of compiled videos.



In the evening, after walking around and getting more familiar with the place, and also checking out the side events, I went to the Doha Exhibition Center (DEC). However, feeling pressure to return to QNCC to attend the Bangladesh events, I did not explore the full area of the DEC.

4th December 2012

In the morning I took a taxi with others from our hotel to the Intercontinental Hotel of Doha to attend the Green family breakfast meeting. To our surprise there were a few members of the European parliament in attendance. The meeting discussed green organizations in different countries that are working towards climate protection. Seizing this opportunity I distributed information kits to everyone including the nomad book *Purging the Treasure House*, brochures on Tibet's water and rivers, as well as stickers and badges. The meeting lasted an hour, after which we went straight to QNCC, where I had an appointment for an interview at the climate change studio of the UNFCCC.





In the interview I talked about the displacement of nomads under various Chinese policies and the difficulties that ensue. I stressed the problems faced by nomad women, who are essential in keeping Tibetan culture intact. I also talked about the lack of human rights in Tibet, and the desperation of these voiceless people in the form of self-immolation.

interview.

Below is the link to my

<http://climatechange-tv.rtcc.org/cop18-world-must-rise-up-to-protect-tibetan-women-and-nomads/>

After the interview, I met a Bangladeshi delegate in front of the Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) kiosk. I introduced myself and we talked about damming and water diversion activities going on in Asia, which is negatively impacting the lives of Asian people.

5th December 2012

On Wednesday, 5th December, I joined up with the Asian youths' climate movement at QNCC, where we performed a short skit to alert the nations and people of Asia to save the mountains and glaciers, which are melting at fast rate, and to also preserve the rivers (most of which flow from Tibet) before it is too late. In the group there were a few Chinese students. They were visibly uncomfortable when I asked them to help and join me in campaigning against the displacement of Tibetan nomads. Their excuse was that they were done working for the day, and that they were planning on using the next day of the conference to explore the surrounding city.

In the afternoon I met two delegates from Laos. I introduced myself, and asked them to give me only two minutes of their time. I spoke on Tibet's role as Asia's water tower, which they had of course already known.





Women and development



I also told them that WEDD's mission this year is to create a strong network with them and other NGOs in their country, in order to put pressure on China to sign the UN water sharing agreement, and to become a member of the Mekong River Commission. The damming and diversion of rivers is a serious problem that needs to be addressed, as a billion people are dependent on these rivers for their livelihood. The

delegates agreed with me, but did not have much to say in response. I am thinking their silence may be because the Lao government recently approved Xayaburi “mega” dam on the lower Mekong River, despite opposition from neighboring countries and environmentalists. I gave them a brochure on the “Clarion Call for the 9 Downstream Nations Receiving Tibet's Water,” along with *Purging the Treasure House* (both TWA publications), and some stickers and badges too.

Later that day I attended an event on grasslands climate change mitigation and adaptation potential, presented by Mongolia's International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). Mongolia has vast grasslands like Tibet, and the speakers highlighted some important facts. Grasslands cover 26% of the earth's surface and store 8% of global carbon, yet the majority of them have suffered degradation, which lends itself to an increase in carbon storage which simultaneously increases productivity (biomass and livestock), food security and nutrition, adaptation capacity, and resilience.

6th December 2012

In the morning as soon as I got to QNCC, I decided to go to the plenary to observe the session that was taking place on the second to last day of the conference. I sat towards back of the observers' seats and remained there for half an hour listening to the speakers from different countries.





Afterwards I met a few representatives from different places and organizations, including Ms. Gotelind Alber of Gender CC. We exchanged information about our respective organizations. I asked about the possibility of Gender CC helping register members from TWA for the next COP, which is going to be held in Poland. She told me that, to do so, TWA members would have to apply for membership of Gender CC. We exchanged visiting cards in hopes we will be able to work together in the future. I also



met with Mr. Abhu Nasir Khan of Bangladesh, a very frank and down to earth person. We shared the same anxiety about the damming and diversion of the rivers that has become prevalent almost everywhere across Asia. We talked about the importance of raising grass roots level awareness on the impact of these practices on the environment and people's livelihoods.

That morning I met quite a few people with whom I was able to talk about TWA, Tibet Third Pole, and other issues. I shared my concern about the accreditation problems we faced this year, expressing that if it was easier to get accredited more of us could have attended the conference and thus achieved much more. They kindly promised to see if they could help me get more accreditation next time for COP19. I definitely feel it is important to have more Tibetan faces at this huge conference in order to educate the international community about climate change in Tibet.

I gave them all eco-friendly bags with brochures and stickers with information on Tibet's water. During the day I also distributed Tibet Third pole brochures and stickers in the plenary and to passersby in the conference hall.





7th December 2012



Last day at the conference was very busy as many participants were forced to quickly wrap up their kiosks. Frustration lingered in the air as the governments were taking a long time to come to any decision on the Kyoto Protocol. Before everyone packed up to leave I took one more look around, and came across Mr. Basanta Raj Gautam, Manager of REDD+ and Sustainable Forestry. He told me about the project pledge “100

Million Trees by 2017,” undertaken by the ENO School in Rio. As TWA and its regional chapters around the continent always plant trees on World Environment Day and sometimes even on the birthday of His Holiness, I was very interested in this project. Mr. Basanta said he would be happy to do his part to help me in any way.

Conclusion:

The Tibetan Women’s Association is thankful to the Global Fund for Women for making it possible for our representative to attend COP18 in Doha.

We are also very grateful to the Environment and Development Desk of the Department of Information and International Relationship, C.T.A. and the University of East Anglia for helping TWA get accreditation for the officer of its WEDD desk and to speak for the voiceless nomads in Tibet and to reach out to the world audience through the conference.





A Report from Women Development and Environment Desk; Solar Light Project for Phuntsokling (2013-2014)

Solar Street Light Project for Phuntsokling (2013- 2014)

19th February 2013

“Women’s Safety and Empowerment”



The workshop began by addressing “Women’s Safety and Empowerment.” The program was organized in the community hall of Camp No. 5. There were a total of 94 people attending this workshop, out of which 54 were women and the rest men. TWA had originally only called upon the women to attend, but the men of Phuntsokling joined the workshop to symbolically show their support.

The daylong workshop was divided into two parts. In the morning TWA talked about the safety concerns for women of Phuntsokling, and how to anticipate and avoid danger. Because the topic was one that affected





everyone, there was a lot of interest and enthusiasm for all the activities.

During the workshop, we came to learn that the solar street light project plays an important role in women's safety within the community. Women were worried about walking alone in fields (especially at night), due to concerns about Naxals and the local Indian community.

The afternoon section of the workshop covered women's empowerment and leadership. Although every individual was encouraged and given a chance to stand up and talk during the ice-breaking activities at the start of the day, during this session we made sure everyone truly made their voice heard in the community. Participants were divided into four groups; the first two groups were instructed to discuss the qualities of women and the second were told to discuss the qualities of a good leader. Later we compared the lists of the two types of qualities, and discovered that women do indeed have the abilities needed in solid leadership.





We also played two light games during the day that served as general refreshers for our mind and body. TWA concluded the day by facilitating discussion through passing around a soft ball, and asking each person to openly reflect on what they had learned from this workshop.

Feedback:

"This workshop was very helpful and informative. It helped us understand how to defend ourselves from an attacker, and we learned smart ways to fight back. It gave us the opportunity to express our opinions and especially helped us gain leadership qualities. Overall this workshop was a very active experience."-TenzinNyima

"All the workshops were interactive, which gave participants a chance for us to speak out on our views about the betterment of our settlement and women in general. We are very thankful to TWA for providing us with such an opportunity, and thank them also for the wonderful lunch."-Dechen

We learned that women's responsibilities are not limited to housework, and that we should actively participate in our community. We also learned that we have leadership qualities in us."-TseringDolma

20th February 2013

"Individual Strengthening"

The second day of the workshop addressed "Individual Strengthening," a program designed to help each individual realize their inner strength as





well as their larger responsibility in the community. There were a total of 50 participants, equally divided into 25 women and 25 men. The workshop was again organized in the community hall of Camp No. 5.

During the first half of the day TWA held various activities including “Puzzle Pieces,” a game that emphasizes that each and every person has a space she or he fits into, to complete the big “puzzle.” It was an exercise designed to stress that everyone has a specific – and important – reason to be in this world. The next activity, “Build a Bridge,” was also meant to underline everyone’s individual significance in the big picture. Participants remarked that this was one exercise that they could definitely relate to their daily life.



The second half of the day continued on this theme. The afternoon activities helped participants tap into their unique talents, and how to use these effectively in their community. There were also some discussions emphasizing that past mistakes could be amended, and that behaviors can be changed for the future, meant to booster a positive and progressive attitude among the group.





A few problems areas in the community and other projects that need to be developed were also addressed on this day. All participants were able to discuss these issues in groups and share how they were planning on using their newly discovered individual strengths to help Phuntsokling.

Feedback

"I feel very grateful to have learned so many things such as the importance of an individual's social responsibility, and the importance of cooperation: "united we stand, divided we fall." We also learned how to recognize our own skills, and how to use them in the right field at the right time. We are very thankful to you for organizing such a program."-TenzinLosel.

The workshop made us think about what we as individuals can contribute to our community. I think it's really helpful for us to work on developing each and every person in our society."-DhondupGyalpo.

21st February 2013

" C o m m u n i t y Strengthening"

The third day of the workshop saw a total of 44 participants, 29 women and 15 men. "Community Strengthening" was the focus of the day, and attendees were given the chance to get some practical learning experience in community development.





This day gave everyone a chance to share honestly their views on how people usually think and act in their community. “Trust Circle” was the first activity in which community members used physical trust to build a foundation of genuine feelings of emotional and intellectual trust.



Other exercises included “If Only,” “Community Dream,” and “Making it Happen.” Through all of these participants learned how to identify area where development is needed in parts of their community, how to set goals for improvement, and how to work together to make it happen by employing both individual abilities and teamwork.

Feedback:

“The workshop was a big success! The activities were effective and interesting, and thus we were able to actively participate and gain a lot of new knowledge. The people of Phuntsokling look forward to more workshops like these in the near future.” -TashiLhamo.

“It was my first time attending a workshop – if all the prior workshops were like today, then I regret not having attended any others so far! Thanks for coming to Phuntsokling.” -TenzinWangchuk.

23rd February 2013

“Environment and Renewable Energy”

The half-day workshop on “Environment and Renewable Energy” was held in the community hall of Camp No. 3. There were around 74 people in attendance, out of which 28 were male and 46 female.

For the first part of the workshop the participants were given very general information on renewable energy, and on solar energy in particular.





Voice -TWA's Newsletter

Keeping in mind the waste management project in Phuntsokling, and the accumulation of plastic waste in the Indian local markets close to the community, TWA gave talks that focused especially on the three R's –Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Feedback:

"Today's workshop was very informative. We learned about renewable energy and also about the importance of proper segregation of waste into recyclable and non-recyclable, the effects of waste on our health and environment, and how to easily reduce waste at home. Thank you TWA for such workshops."-Tsering





TWA submits a short report on Status of Tibetan Women inside Tibet to UPR

On March 4, 2013, TWA submitted a report to United Nations' Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of human rights. The UPR is an international platform where both national governments and NGOs can send in written submissions on the human rights situations of UN Member States. TWA felt a strong need to create a document for the UPR, as Tibetan women in Tibet today live under severe restrictions to their political, religious, reproductive, and social freedoms, despite China's adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995.

Of course, a report on the status of women inside Tibet is set apart from all the UPR reports submitted by NGOs for a number of important reasons. Tibetan women and all Tibetan people remain in the significant position of approaching the issues from not just a gender perspective, but from a perspective of living in a state of foreign occupation and exile. TWA maintains that the double struggle of justice for Tibetan women and justice for Tibetan people cannot be separated.

The review covers a variety of topics that have affected Tibetan women between 2005 through 2013: torture, imprisonment, discrimination in employment, lack of Tibetan education, resettlement, human trafficking, and religious persecution. Of particular importance are the reproductive rights violations against Tibetan women, which take the form of forced sterilizations and abortions. Tibetans are under considerable pressure to respect the birth control policies, and virtually all areas of Tibet are subject to some sort of birth quota. Urban Tibetans are allowed two children, while rural Tibetans are usually permitted between two and four. In some areas women must be between 25 and 35 years old to have children. Couples often have to be married for at least four years, and unmarried women are universally denied the right to bear children. Women are subject a variety of coercive measures if they do not or cannot comply with family planning measures. Regional birth control offices receive rewards or punishments depending upon how well they reach their quotas for their areas of jurisdiction.

The coercive enforcement of birth control policy can include fines, arrest, detention, degrading treatment, and physical force. Because the policies are sanctioned by the state, Tibetan women inside Tibet have virtually no way to challenge China's existing policies or how they are carried out. Often women





who cannot meet China's family planning standards are forced to undergo forced sterilization procedures. Many times these operations are carried out without anesthesia; one woman reported only having aspirin for the pain. Those who have out-of-plan births must pay a fine or receive an abortion.

One woman from Kham recalls graphic instances of women, almost nine months pregnant, being given "medicine" to induce labor. After the premature baby was delivered, it was then killed by being placed in a bucket of hot water. Testimonies such as this reveal that the actions of the Chinese government are ignorant and insensitive to the rights of Tibetan women. The intrusive nature of monitoring reproductive cycles is an invasion of their privacy and degrading to their humanity.

There were 12 police reports of trafficking of women and children from Tibet to Chinese provinces in 2010, and 37 reports in 2011. Because of large-scale resettlement projects by the Chinese, it has become increasingly common for nomadic women to seek a better life or means to support their families outside of Tibetan areas. These women have been moved into housing settlements and forced into a cash economy, their centuries-old skills suddenly useless. These women are usually poor, illiterate, and fluent only in Tibetan, making them particularly vulnerable in Chinese communities. All this takes place against a backdrop of China's sex ratio crisis and demand for brides. More than half of the 72 counties in the TAR have struggled with trafficking problems.

When examined together, these human rights violations indicate a type of genocide of the Tibetan people at the hands of the Chinese governments. These attacks on women through the implementation of birth control policies threaten the very survival of Tibetan people. TWA's UPR report concludes with a list of twelve recommendations to the People's Republic of China. Aside from insisting that China stop all the abuses detailed in the report, TWA recommends that China also international organizations unfettered access to Tibet so that they conduct thorough investigations of its institutions, policies, and practices. For too long Tibetans have suffered under brutal censorship laws, and are left little room to voice their opinions and dissent. China needs to create institutional mechanisms so that victims of torture, violence, and discrimination can report violations against them in a safe and confidential environment.

This report will be reviewed by the High Commissioner of Human Rights at the UN, edited into a ten-page report, and then discussed in October 2013 when the UN reviews the overall human rights situation of the People's Republic of China. TWA is both grateful and glad that the voices of Tibetan women will be a part of an international conversation on human rights.





Interns' Bit

Suffering Doesn't Discriminate

By Gloria Hart

As an intern for the Tibetan Women's Association, I enjoy volunteering my language and professional skills. In addition to writing, editing, and researching for the TWA, I am also teaching English, math, and computer skills to the students at Stitches of Tibet. I am originally from Tennessee in the USA, but I have spent the last few years traveling and working in a variety of places including many countries in Europe, as well as the Hawaiian islands in the Pacific Ocean. While traveling, I strive to participate in these diverse cultures by either working or volunteering. These experiences allow me to learn about the people, customs, and religions, while also giving me the opportunity to share my own culture and views with others.



In my country, many people are suffering from a variety of hardships. While I have volunteered within my own country and could have continued my volunteerism there, I felt it was important to contribute my skills in a foreign country and learn about different cultures. Unfortunately, people in every country encounter such difficulties as poverty, cultural prejudices,





racism and stereotypes, religious intolerance, torture and persecution, and gender discrimination.

These are global issues which concern numerous types of people; struggles and hardships don't discriminate. Because these issues feel very personal, a culture can easily be inclined to become self-centered and concerned only for their own problems. But now, more than ever, we are a part of a global community. Through technology, commercialism, the ease of travel and education, we have created a global community which shares knowledge and respect.

While it is important to always work towards creating change within our country and defending those who cannot defend themselves, it is also equally important for each of us to take the time and effort to be aware of the problems which people from other countries and cultures are also struggling to overcome. No matter what country we were born in or what our religion is, we are foremost simply people who are living in the same world, breathing the same air, and all striving for the same thing--happiness.

Learning from Tibetan Women

By Karen

My interest in the Tibetan issue first began my sophomore year of college when I was accepted into an exchange program with the Central University of Tibetan Studies in Sarnath. To prepare for the program, students were required to read fifteen or so books on Tibetan culture, history, and Buddhism – on top of our regular class work! Needless to say, a few of the books received more of my attention than others. I





remember fervently highlighting almost every sentence in Kapstein's *The Tibetans*, and practically drowning as I waded through the philosophy bits in John Powers' *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*.

My program at CUTS lasted the month of January 2010, with one week in Bodh Gaya at His Holiness's teachings. There I met Betsy Napper, director of the Tibetan Nuns Project. That was one of the first times I had ever really learned anything about the status of nuns, and the challenges they face as female monastics in a system that denies them opportunities equal to those of monks. Upon my return home, I contacted the US headquarters of TNP and arranged an internship for the summer. I really enjoyed my work at TNP, and also really loved living in Seattle, where the US office is located. The climate there is sort of similar to that of Dharamsala – mountains and lots of coniferous trees.

I concentrated in Buddhist Studies in college, and wrote my seminar paper on His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a commodified figure in the US. I analyzed His Holiness as a “bridge figure” between “East” and “West,” and looked at the ways he functions as alleviation of guilt and pain in American society. My final semester I also took a course called *Beyond Shangri-La*; the object of the class was to look closer at all the popular “myths” of Tibet that both enhance and obscure the real narratives of Tibetans before and after the diaspora. Part of the class was an oral history project in which we interviewed members of the Tibetan community in Western Massachusetts. Participating in this kind of research gave me the opportunity to compare my experiences in the exile communities of India with that of the US.

Through the Tibetan Nuns Project I found the Tibetan Women's Association. I applied for an internship and Nyima-la was gracious enough to accept me! I came to Dharamsala wanting to help wherever I was most needed. One of my main projects was to assemble a report on the status of women within Tibet today that we submitted to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review of human rights. The report covered gender-specific torture and violence against women (including reproductive rights violations), lack of adequate health care, discriminatory practices regarding employment and education, and human rights in Tibet. Before I began my research, I knew virtually nothing about the forced sterilization





of women who cannot meet China's birth limit policies. Most of the stories of women who have been coerced into these procedures are graphic and quite heartbreaking. Often women who cannot pay a fine to local family planning officials are forcibly sterilized without any kind of anesthetic. One woman reported that she had only aspirin for the pain.

As a Buddhist Studies major, I was also really interested in the religious oppression happening in Tibet today. Last year the Chinese government created the Monastery Management Committee (MMC), placing CCP officials in all 1,787 TAR monasteries to ensure that nuns and monks "become an important force in loving their country, loving their religion, observing regulations, abiding by laws, safeguarding stability, and building harmony." Officials must befriend monastics and then compile information on them and their family members, and "guide" them to be "patriotic and progressive." Nuns and monks are encouraged to "to actively vie with one another" to attain recognition for themselves and their monastic institutions. These issues – not to mention the forced resettlement of Tibetan nomads, the trafficking of Tibetan girls and women, and the clampdown on student protests against Chinese-language textbooks – all made a deep impression on me. I know I will return to the US with an enhanced understanding of China's colonial policies in Tibet.

I am very grateful to the women at TWA for being so welcoming and encouraging. I am truly so inspired by them and all the work that they do. I think the resources they provide are really incredible – I, for one, would love to attend one of their advanced leadership training sessions! I want to thank them again for their kindness and guidance.





Teacher's observation and her new project

By Gloria Hart



During the months of February and March, I have been teaching English and computer skills to the students at Stitches of Tibet. In order to use these skills while also learning more about another culture and sharing their own culture with others, I established the “Penpal Project.” I matched each student with a different friend of mine from North America. These penpals are women who live in a variety of places from Hawaii to Tennessee to Vancouver, Canada. The students and their new western friends wrote each other multiple times a week sharing pictures, describing their daily lives, and explaining foreign aspects of their respective cultures.

In addition to learning about the daily lives of Tibetan women, these western women also learned a great deal about the Tibetan struggle for freedom. Many of the students described Tibet, the current oppression at the hands of the Chinese government, and what their life is like now in India as refugees. Aubra Williamson, who teaches Spanish to high school students in Hawaii, was surprised to learn more about the difficulties which





Tibetans face being separated from their families and their homes while living in exile: “I consider myself fairly well-educated and knowledgeable about current events, but I had no idea that the degree of isolation the Tibetans experience is so severe.”

The students also shared many aspects of their heritage, which were completely unknown to these western women. Many of them described traditional Tibetan clothing, how to make Tibetan food such as momos and tsampa, and their Buddhist beliefs and love for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Asia Watson, who recently graduated from law school, describes learning more about the Tibetan culture through her penpal, Rinzin Lhamo: “Learning about my penpal has been a life changing experience for me. I appreciate the opportunity to share my life with someone halfway across the world, and in exchange have her share her life with me. Each day I look forward to an e-mail from Rinzin because I love learning about the Tibetan culture and Rinzin’s family.”

Although the communication between two very different cultures could sometimes be challenging, the penpals learned a great deal from the experience and have built new friendships as a result. Antonia Meadors, the owner of a store in rural Tennessee specializing in handmade products and supports local farmers and artists, describes how much she has benefited from these exchanges with her penpal: “This experience is giving me the chance to be more aware of how to communicate with someone from such a different culture.” Despite the challenges, she appreciates the importance of such cultural exchange. To illustrate her point, Antonia quoted Maya Angelou in her essay “Passport to Understanding” from her collection “I Wouldn’t Give Nothin’ For My Journey Now”: “Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.”

The students were very grateful for the opportunity to write and learn about someone from such a different culture. Rinzin Lhamo immensely enjoyed her exchange with Asia: “I like learning my penpal’s story and seeing pictures.” She adds that she had never seen pictures of the United States before and was very excited to see images of many beautiful places. Aubra was amazed by how excited the students were to participate in this





program: “The gratitude they show for such simple means of communication and knowledge that we take for granted is really incredible.” Many of the participants hope to continue this new friendship after the course ends at the end of March. Caily Lukow, who lives outside of Vancouver in Canada, has visited Dharamashala previously and hopes to return soon. When she does, she intends to meet her penpal, Tankho Lhamo. Tankho is very excited to potentially meet her penpal and declared, “I hope I will meet my friend, Cailey, next year!” Asia is also hopeful that her new friendship with Rinzin will continue after the SOT course ends: “I am confident that I now have a friendship that will last for a lifetime.”

Such cultural exchanges like the Penpal Project provide the opportunity for two very different cultures to interact, learn about their differences and similarities, and develop awareness and compassion for each other. Due to the precarious future of Tibet and the continued decline of the Tibetan population, Tibetans must strive to preserve their important and very unique heritage. Such cultural exchanges like this project enable Tibetans to share these very special traditions while also furthering the knowledge of Tibetan life and their struggle for freedom.





Students from Stitches of Tibet visited the Golden Temple



Seven students from Stitches of Tibet visited the Golden Temple, officially known as The Harmandir Sahib, in Amritsar, Punjab during the weekend of March 8-9th. Construction for this Gurdwara, a place of worship for Sikhs, began in the 1500s. In the early 1800s, the Gurdwara was covered in gold, giving it the nickname for which it is most commonly known now- The Golden Temple. This mesmerizing golden clad temple is surrounded by a large lake, or holy tank, which consists of holy water. Anyone is welcome to drink, sprinkle, or swim in the holy water- which all of the students enjoyed doing very much. Unlike other Gurdwaras, this temple was built with four entrances to symbolize that men and women from all religions and cultures are welcome to worship in the temple. Over 100,000 people visit the temple every day. The SOT students were amazed and astounded by the beauty of the temple. Tsiing Paldon remarked: “We enjoyed the Golden Temple very much!” The temple provides meals in their dining hall for anyone who is hungry. Volunteers prepare the donated food, cook, wash dishes, and serve the food to guests every day.





After dinner at the temple, the students went to the Wagah border ceremony at the Pakistan and Indian border. They said the ceremony was very crowded with much dancing. As the sun began to descend, the crowds on each side of the border chanted “Pakistan Zinabad” (Long live Pakistan) and “Hindustan Zindabad” (Long live India) prompted by men using microphones to energize the crowds. Then the Indian soldiers wearing green uniforms and the Pakistan soldiers wearing black provided an entertaining military routine which included kicking their legs all the way to their foreheads. After this energetic display, soldiers from each side shook hands, then simultaneously lowered their respective country’s flags.



The next morning, the women stopped at a nearby town to do some shopping and enjoyed the Shiva festival taking place in the streets. Many people were dancing, singing, and celebrating. The students had fun at the festivities and drank delicious lassis. After traveling by the inexpensive government buses in order to conserve money, they finally arrived home late Saturday night. The women greatly enjoyed participating in both Sikh and Hindu cultures during their weekend trip.





Report of Activities of Regional Chapters of TWA

December 2012 - March 2013

Bir

10/12/2012:



In solidarity with the martyrs who sacrificed their life for Tibet, RTWA Bir organized a candle vigil in which a large number of students from TCV school and monks took part.

Bylakuppe

16/12/2012:

RTWA and RTYC Bylakuppe organized an indefinite relay hunger strike which lasted for 34 days.





26/01/2013:

Members of regional Tibetan associations in Bylakuppe visited H.H. Kabje Ling Rinpochey who met with an accident in Goa. Rinpochey was glad that they all came to see him. They executives wished him speedy recovery.

16/01/2013:

Students from Alabama University visited Bylakuppe for a cultural exchange program. Each of the students lived with a Tibetan family during their stay. Executives of RTWA- Bylakuppe met with the students and were able to brief them about Tibetan Women's Association.



30 Jan - 2 Feb

During 4 days campaign From 30th Jan till 2nd Feb organised by Tibetan People's deputy in Delhi, RTYC and RTWA Bylakuppe jointly organised a mass protest rally in the town of Mysore with around 150 people which started from the Mysore palace ground to the DC office on the first day of the Tibetan People's deputy members campaign on 30th Jan. They also distributed the press release and many medias came to the coverage area





during the mass rally protest and the same has been published in many regional newspapers as well as Times, Indian express, deccan etc...

14/2/2013

On 14th Feb, as day of love and compassion RTWA and RTYC Bylakuppe held a mass prayer gathering as solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Tibet. This special day they had lighted more than one thousand butter lamps on behalf of our great martyrs who self immolated for the cause of our country.

The mass prayers begun at 9.30am and after serving a tea break to all our participants dispersed at 12.00pm. Here the gathering were around more than 250 people took part in it.

17th Feb 2013

RTWA Bylakuppe jointly associated with the BGS Apollo Hospital from Mysore held first Free Mega Health Check Up Camp. RTWA requested our chief medical officer from Tibetan medical center to hire us few consultation rooms on that day to arrange the free mega medical camp for the settlers in Bylakuppe. There were 7 specialist doctors 1) Cardiac, 2) Neuro, 3) Orthopedic, 4) ENT, 5) Pulmonary, 6) Gastro and 7) General physician. along with ECO and ECG technicians and nearly 4 staff nurses and 12 general nurses. As a social service we were so happy to gathered more of





the patients who got free health check up and those who are suffering from cardiac they were done ECO and ECG here itself. ECO and ECG rooms we have arranged it in our Tailoring center room.

The mega medical check ups went on very well . RTWA members were so happy to noticed that our older people who were not able to go far away to Mysore town can now visit this mega camp and also some of the local indians living in bylakuppe come for the check up at mega camp. However mega camps helped a lots for the needy people.

Dharamsala



12/01/2013:

RTWA Dharamsala organised a candle light vigil for Tsebha who self immolated for the cause of Tibet and on the very same day an Art Exhibition was showcased by a Japanese artist.

12/03/2013:

Tibetans in Dharamsala commemorated the 54th Tibetan Women's National Uprising Day. The day started with an inauguration of a Music album about self immolations by karma Dolkar. The Guest of Honor was former





TWA(Central) executive Ngawang Lhamo. After the function, a protest rally was organized from Mcloed Gunj to Lower Dharamsala

Dekyiling

12/03/2013:

RTWA Dekyiling along with other women associations in Uttarakand commemorated the 54th anniversary of Tibetan Women National Uprising Day with great honor. The chief guest of the event, Mrs Kanthura (State President of Mahila Congress) along with women of Utrkhand donated blood which was inked as an appeal letter to be sent to UN office.





Ontario, Canada



13/02/2013:

Regional Tibetan Women's Association – Ontario actively supported the event “100 years of Tibet's Independence Day” with RTYC, Toronto and SFT Canada in the rally as well as the scroll distribution.

12/03/2013



(54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day): As per the directive from Central TWA, executive members of RTWA – Ontario distributed press release and self immolation chart to passerby in busy downtown area. People were informed about our plight and many showed their empathy and support to our cause. In the evening, they held candle light vigil and the event started with reading statement from Central TWA, followed by speeches from important dignitaries and finally the vigil. Similarly, they actively participated in March 10 uprising day.





March 2013



(Canada Tibet Lobby Days): Regional Tibetan Women's Association-Ontario, took part in the Canada Tibet Lobby Days as one of the coalition member along with many others Canadian organizations representing Tibetan community associations. It was coordinated by the Canada Tibet Committee and supported by the Canadian Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, the Office of Tibet in New York, and the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile. They met with parliamentarians in Ottawa during the week of March 4 and in their constituencies during the week of March 11.





March 2013



(Fundraising event): RTWA – Ontario raised net profit of \$ 1508 from ‘Come Eat for a Cause’ momo event and the amount was wired to TWA Central on March 5, 2013. The proceeds from this event was meant for any sustainable Tibetan Women’s Project in Tibet. The credit of event success owes solely to Mr. Garab D. Serdok, owner of Tibet Kitchen who provided them the space with no charge.



Lhakar: RTWA-Ontario has been organizing Lhakar every Wednesday since January 2012 alternating with SFT Canada and RTYC Toronto. As a part of Lhakar, they organize numerous activities that symbolizes the event ranging from but not limited to culture/ language preservation, protest and historical narrations.

Workshops and Skill training:
Every month, RTWA-Ontario organizes two information sessions on topics ranging from health, immigration, employment, cooking and team work. Additionally, they have yoga and knitting session once every month.





Gangtok



RTWA Gangtok organized a prayer gathering for the martyrs who set themselves on fire.

Hunsur



Regional Tibetan Women's Association- Hunsur, organized mass prayer for the martyrs. Tea was served during the prayers.

Italy

10/03/2013:

Members of regional Tibetan Women's Association – Italy, along with thousands of Tibetans took to the street in Brussels, Belgium to





commemorate the 54th Tibetan National Uprising Day. The mass rally was organised to protest against the brutal crackdown in Tibet.

Ladakh



01/12/2012:

RTWA in collaboration with RTYC Ladakh organized a peace march in Leh which started from three different locations i.e. from Zampa, Agling and Choglam to Leh Jokhang. About 1000-1500 people participated in the procession to express their solidarity and to pay homage to the Tibetan martyrs. The guests of honor at the function were Ladakh Buddhist Association's General Secretary, Ven Konchok Gyatso and Ladakh Youth





Wing General Secretary, Mr. Tsewang Namgail, Vice president of the Tibetan Local Assembly and the President of Tibetan Freedom Movement.

12/03/2013:

Tibetans in Ladakh commemorated the 54th anniversary of Tibetan Women's National Uprising Day where students from TCV School and local Tibetan women took part in a solidarity rally. Several distinguished guests attended the function. The event was covered by a local newspaper (Greater Jammu) and was broadcasted in the local All India Radio.

Minnesota, USA





12/03/2013:

Regional Tibetan Women's Association – Minnesota, commemorated the 54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day along with other local Tibetans. The event started with prayers for the martyrs who self immolated for the cause of Tibet which was then followed by speeches from influential women dignitaries.

Mundgod



12/03/2013:

Members of Regional Tibetan Women's Association-Mundgod and nuns gather together to commemorate the 54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day.

25/01/2013:

Every twice a month, members of RTWA clean the old people's home in their locality.

Nainital





12/03/2013 (54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day)

Puruwala



10/03/2013:

A rally was organized by RTWA and RTYC-Puruwala to protest against the brutal crackdown in Tibet.

Switzerland



19/02/2013:

The Tibetan Women's Organisation in Switzerland (TWOS)—as partner of the 5th Geneva Summit for Human Rights & Democracy -has participated on this year's Summit with Kalon Dicki Chhoyang from Centran Tibetan Administration as main speaker for the cause of Tibet. The summit took





place in Geneva and fews weeks ahead the UN Human Rights Session in March.

12/03/2013:



The Regional Tibetan Women's Organisation in Switzerland (TWOS) commemorated the 54th Tibetan Women's Uprising day in Zurich with an information desk at Zurich's busiest shopping street 'Bahnhofstrasse' from 10a.m. to 5p.m.. With over 2000 flyer, informing about March 12, 1959, and most of all, the current tragic situation in Tibet.

In the evening, they gathered for a rally through Zurich-City towards the Chinese Embassy. With 107 candles, symbolizing the numbers of self-immolations (at that time), they called for ' a long life of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama', 'human rights in Tibet', 'Tibet is burning' etc. Over 120 people joined the rally, amongst others the abbot of Rikon monastery Ven Thupten Legmen, President and Vice-President of Tibetan Community in Switzerland & Liechtenstein Mr Lobsang Gangshontsang & Mr Sampa Dhondup, Chisur Tsering Dorjee la and Chisur Gangshontsang Ngawang la.





Tashi Palkhiel, Pokhara/Nepal

12/03/2013:



Tibetans in Tashi Palkhiel commemorated the 54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day by offering sangsol in the morning and reciting prayers for the martyrs who sacrificed their life for Tibet.

Tenzin Gang

10/12/2012:





RTWA – Tenzin Gang expressed their solidarity for the martyrs who set themselves on fire for the cause of Tibet by initiating a candle light vigil and one day hunger strike at Guwahati. They also offered prayers and sangsol for the long live of H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama.

Tsering Dhonden

12/03/2013:



On the 54th Tibetan Women National Uprising Day, members of RTWA – Tsering Dhonden wrote an appeal letter using blood which was donated by the people gathered at the function. Several Indian dignitaries attended the function.

