

No faith in the state

Tibetans speak about religious restrictions

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A Tibet Watch report for Free Tibet Campaign

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With thanks to Sue Byrne, Emilie Hunter (contributing author, Chapter 1), Robert Barnett, Tsering Topgyal, Nyima Tsam, Namlha, Jampa, Samdup, Jan Willem den Besten, Sophie Bod, Matt Whitticase and Tibet Watch Trustees.

With special thanks to the late David Arnold Smith and his niece, Louise Veys.

Tibet Watch is a research, education and analysis charity (Registered Charity Number 1114404).



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A DECADE IN NYITSO MONASTERY

“About 10 years ago officials, led by senior cadres of Tawo county, came to our monastery to make the monks apply for permits to be monks. There was very strong opposition from the monastery and the officials left without carrying out their work.

“Since our monastery is what the Chinese Government describes as ‘not-so-well-disciplined’, in 2001 they opened a police station near us to keep an eye on the activities of the monastery. There are about 50 policemen stationed there.

“In 2003 Tawo county officials came back to make us fill out forms for identity cards and permits. This time they were very strict and would not hear any objections.

“When they summoned all the monks together and told us to submit photos and forms with our signatures and fingerprints, Nyima Gyaltzen took off his monk’s robe in front of the officials and said there had never been such rules in the Tibetan religious tradition. If the officials were going to impose such rules, he would rather leave. Then he left the monastery and went on a pilgrimage to Lhasa.

“In 2004, when the situation seemed to be getting better, Nyima Gyaltzen came back to

the monastery. A few days later the police came to arrest him. They said they were arresting him because while he was in Lhasa, people were spreading ‘free Tibet’ leaflets. Nyima Gyaltzen was accused of being involved.

“Everyone knew the real reason he was being arrested was because he refused to co-operate with the officials. He’d even said then that he did not want to be a Communist monk, which obviously the Government would not tolerate. He was sentenced to four years in prison for the crime of ‘involvement in a splittist movement’.

“Due to all these troubles and restrictions, many monks escaped to India. Most of our khenpos [abbots] and tulkus [reincarnated lamas] are here in India. So now there are only few monks left looking after the monastery.

“Since making the monks carry passes, the atmosphere in the monastery has become very tense. New monks cannot join the monastery, those who were in the monastery gradually left as they could no longer bear the trouble caused by all the official visits and the problems getting permission for anything – even holding a religious gathering.

“For example, in 2004 the Lama of our monastery was going to give a teaching to the local people. We had been told that we had to ask for permission to hold any religious gathering, so the khenpo and two other senior monks went to the religious department of Tawo County to request permission. It was denied.

“The reason given by the officials was that the Government regarded ours as one of the not-so-well-disciplined monasteries in our region. The officials also said that the Government was always very magnanimous with any monastery that upholds the official religious policy and the Communist rule, but this generosity cannot be extended to monasteries which are still ‘unstable’.

“Also in 2004, His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] recognised a tulku of a lama called Karnia Lama. As soon as the tulku was recognised some monks left with him to take him to India. Two days later, when the Chinese officials realised the tulku had been taken, the police from Tawo County tried to get him back. They followed them as far as Lhasa, but fortunately the monks succeeded in smuggling him into India.

“In July 2005 the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama [see Case study 3] went to Phakn yi monastery, 70 kilometres away from our monastery. A few days before his visit, officials from Tawo County came to our monastery and told us we had to go to see him, too. But on the day of his visit, no monk from our monastery went, only some leaders from the township and the county.

“I heard that when it was proposed that the Chinese Panchen visit our monastery, the local leaders said they dared not take responsibility for his safety, because our monastery was ‘not-so-well-disciplined’. So the visit was cancelled.

“At the end of 2005, a respected khenpo came to Nyitso from India to give religious education to the monks. Because he was from Nyitso monastery originally he should have been allowed to stay with us, but, knowing he was visiting from India, the officials made everything very difficult. We were thirsting for the knowledge he had to share. There was so much work he could have done with us, but he was only given permission to stay for two months. Officials told him that if he tried to stay longer he would be arrested.”¹

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Executive summary

During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government was responsible for the destruction of more than 6000 monasteries in Tibet. The contents of these monasteries – religious images and statues – were destroyed or looted, and millions of ancient and priceless manuscripts burnt. This is recorded fact.

Unfortunately it has always been extremely difficult, throughout the decades of Communist Chinese occupation, to gain an accurate picture of life in Tibet's monasteries and nunneries.

The most reliable sources of information are the monks, nuns and lay people who every year make the dangerous and arduous journey from Tibet to Dharamsala, India – home to the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government-in-exile and one place where Tibetan religion can thrive unfettered by Chinese restrictions.

For the past two years, Tibet Watch researchers in Dharamsala have been interviewing monks and nuns who have fled religious restrictions in Tibet. This book tells their story: the story of a decade when the limits placed on religious practices since the 1980s became even more rigorous, when control of every aspect of Tibetan Buddhist life has been placed firmly in the hands of the occupying Communist regime. They have shared their stories with the promise of anonymity, fearing repercussions for family and friends left behind.

At his last meeting with the young Dalai Lama, Chairman Mao leant over and whispered: "You know, religion is very harmful to the development of a nation. First of all, it acts as a hindrance to material progress and secondly, it weakens the race. Your mind is somewhat like a scientist's, so you can understand what I mean. Religion is poison."

Mao may be long gone, but the poisonous attitude of the Communist authorities towards Tibetan Buddhism lives on.

The Communist Party has established and maintains a stranglehold on the Buddhist faith. Tibetan monasteries and nunneries, which were once home to thousands of monks and nuns, now have their numbers limited to hundreds. Religious education, which once

began at a very early age, cannot now commence until the prospective monk or nun is 18 – and has passed a political exam. Travel between monasteries, crucial for the best possible education, is severely curtailed. 'Work teams' regularly visit monasteries and nunneries to deliver 'patriotic education', the twin purposes of which are to compel the faithful to denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, and to swear allegiance to the Chinese 'motherland' before their religion.

On the other hand, considerable investment has been made in restoring many of the monasteries destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. This outward appearance of a thriving religious life in Tibet serves two purposes. Not only does it serve as a basis to maintain the Chinese government's myth that there is freedom of religion in Tibet, it also attracts a large number of western Buddhists and other tourists.

The reality of so-called religious freedom is described by a monk from the Kumbum monastery in Huangzou County:

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"The officials used to visit the monastery occasionally before 2005, but during that time, it was all very formal. They came, had a brief meeting with the heads of the monastery and then they went away. They had nothing to do with us, the ordinary monks. After 2005 that changed. Whenever the officials came, the monks all had to take part in meetings and patriotic education.

"In 2006, officials from the County announced that there were too many monks in the monastery and that the number of the monks

should be restricted. There is a school run by the monastery that is for children who will become monks. They attend this school until their formal religious education begins. The officials said that from that day of announcement, no new monks, especially child monks, would be allowed to join the school.

"The atmosphere is becoming increasingly uncomfortable with this new rule today, that regulation tomorrow, more and more restrictions every day. Life in the monastery is much more difficult."²

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The restrictions to religious life described in Chapters 1 and 2 and the details of 'patriotic re-education' outlined in Chapter 3 raise serious questions about Chinese government claims that religious freedom exists in Tibet.

One of the chief objectives of patriotic re-education is to compel monks and nuns to denounce the Dalai Lama. The respect and admiration this Nobel Prize winner garners wherever he travels is a constant thorn in the Chinese government's side.

The Dalai Lama has said that, if he dies while in exile from Tibet, his reincarnation will be born in exile. This is an unacceptable scenario for the Chinese authorities, who have introduced a series of laws to control the process of reincarnation.

In September 2007, State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5 made it illegal for any Tibetan religious leader to recognise reincarnations without their permission and approval. Further details of this are explored in Chapter 4 and Appendix 2 is a full translation of the order:

Despite all this, despite decades of bullying and persecution, despite the imprisonment and torture of generations of religious leaders and adherents, despite ruthlessly crushed uprisings, Tibetans stubbornly refuse to to abandon their religion and culture. On a daily basis they find ways to rebel, hiding banned images of the Dalai Lama close to their hearts, lighting banned incense, whispering banned prayers. At times, as illustrated in Chapter 5, resistance comes out into the open.



Chapter I

The unwritten law

“The Chinese understand that Tibetan religion is the root of Tibetan identity and therefore they want to destroy it.”³

What freedom of religion could mean in Tibet

Of the seven international Covenants⁴ and four UN Declarations⁵ which define, protect or allude to freedom of religion or religious practices, one of the most significant is the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

China signed the ICCPR in 1998, but has not ratified it.

When a country signs and ratifies this Covenant it must submit reports to the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) on the measures it has taken to protect and promote the human rights contained within the Covenant.⁶ These rights include the right to life,⁷ the right to a fair trial,⁸ and freedom from torture.⁹ States can also sign the First Optional Protocol which enables the HRC to investigate complaints of human rights violations committed in the State.

Under Article 18 of the ICCPR, States are required to provide a minimum standard of freedom of religion for everyone.

There are various rights within freedom of religion, including the freedom to have or to adopt a religion of choice, and to practise the religion of choice through worship, observance, practice and teaching.¹⁰ The right to religious freedom is not absolute and can be limited by the State if doing so is deemed necessary to protect public safety, health, order, morals, or fundamental rights of others.¹¹

Under Article 18 Tibetans (and Chinese) would have the right to believe in and practice Tibetan Buddhism – or any other religion.

Tibetan Buddhists would be able to practise their faith freely, in public and in private, to worship the Tibetan Buddhist deities of their choice, observe the rituals and ceremonies of choice, practise the schools of Buddhism they choose and receive teachings from any religious figurehead, so long as such practices did not negatively affect the fundamental rights of others.

It would also mean the Chinese government could not restrict such religious activities and would be obliged to ensure parents are allowed to choose the appropriate religious education for their children.¹²

In addition, the Chinese government would be required to submit regular reports to the HRC.¹³ These reports would have to include the measures taken to adopt the rights included in the ICCPR, and any difficulties encountered in implementing such rights,¹⁴ including the right to life,¹⁵ right to fair trial,¹⁶ freedom from torture.¹⁷

The Chinese government does none of these things and the reason is straightforward: **although China has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it has so far failed to ratify the Covenant.**

What ‘freedom of religion’ does mean in Tibet

“Our monastery is small and many of the older generations who faced tremendous hardships during the Cultural Revolution are afraid to speak about their experiences, so the younger generation don’t fully understand the reality of what has happened in Tibet.”¹⁸

There is no law in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) guaranteeing freedom of religion.

Instead, freedom to a religious *belief* is defined in the Chinese Constitution under the fundamental rights and duties of citizens, alongside the duty of citizens to uphold the socialist values of the Chinese State. In addition to the Constitution, there are references to freedom of religion in a selection of other laws, including the right to religious belief in national autonomous areas,¹⁹ the right to religious property,²⁰ the right to stand for election regardless of belief,²¹ and the prohibition of educational discrimination.²²

Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution provides a limited right to enjoy religious belief. However, unlike the ICCPR, this does not include the right to religious practice or the right to specify the methods in which religious belief may be manifested. While the ICCPR states that no one shall be subject to religious coercion, the Chinese Constitution (in keeping with the country’s atheist values) declares that citizens can be neither compelled to believe in religion nor prevented from believing in religion.²³ This is a significant indicator of the state attitude to religion and religious practice – particularly when read along with the duty to uphold socialist values.

Far from guaranteeing religious freedom, Article 36 imposes two significant limitations. First is the right of the State to confine religious belief to what it defines as *normal religious activity*. Second is the exclusion of foreign religious leaders or organisations, thereby outlawing the involvement of religious figures such as the exiled Dalai Lama (or the Pope).

Neither the Constitution nor other laws define what constitutes 'normal' behaviour: Experience over the last 26 years has demonstrated heavy State control over all aspects of religious practice and belief. This means the State can and does restrict religious practice by maintaining control of the definition of 'normal' religious behaviour and through policies which aim to restrict, suppress or punish religious practices.

What the Chinese constitution does do is oblige all citizens to follow the policies of the State – particularly upholding the Four Cardinal Principles.²⁴ Thus the Constitution empowers the State to define religious practice and insist on the submission of any citizen's faith to the policies of the State.²⁵

Therefore, while Tibetan Buddhists are legally entitled under Article 36 to the right to a religious *belief*, how that belief is put into practice is limited by the Chinese state's definition of '*normal*' religious activities. Furthermore, under Article 33 of the Constitution socialist duties to the State must always take priority over religious belief.

A particular burden on Tibetan Buddhists is the banning of religious figures living outside of China's control (notably the Dalai Lama) from engaging in any religious affairs or practices in Tibet.²⁶

The Chinese government's definition of what constitutes '*normal*' religious activity is not detailed in any law which could be challenged. Instead it appears in a series of policy documents,²⁷ including State Council White Papers,²⁸ regulations,²⁹ ordinances,³⁰ circulars,³¹ and others.³²

While laws are required to be made public, regulations, ordinances and circulars often remain confidential, circulated only to government and Chinese Communist Party officials.

Religious laws, rules and regulations are produced by the State Administration for Religious Affairs,³³ Ordinances, circulars and opinions may be distributed by lower level organs, such as Prefecture level Communist Party Committees, while White Papers are prepared by the State Council. In addition, in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), work teams play a leading role in establishing particular control mechanisms for religious practice and control of monasteries and nunneries.

Key Policy Documents for Tibetan Buddhism

The key published policy documents which regulate and control religious belief and practice are:

- Basic Viewpoints and Policies on Religious Issues during Our Country's Socialist Period, 31 March 1981 (known as "Document 19")
- Document 6 CCP Central Committee/State Council circular on some problems concerning further improving work on religion, 5 February 1991
- White Paper on the Freedom of Religious Belief in China, 1997

- Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) 2005
- TAR Measures for Implementing the 'Regulations on Religious Affairs' (Experimental), 1 January 2007
- Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism, 1 September 2007

While some such documents are made public, a number remain secret, with many obscure from the public domain. The breadth of documents produced by Communist Party Committees at the prefecture level demonstrates the Party's dominance over the parameters of religious practice and belief.³⁴

Such documents usually regulate what has become known as 'patriotic re-education' of religious establishments where 'Democratic Management Committees' are established to enforce the State-approved interpretation of religious practice and belief on the members of religious premises or places of worship.

The effect of Chinese law and religious policy is to restrict its definition of normal religious practice in Tibetan Buddhism, beyond any reasonable understanding of its powers as defined under Article 18 of the ICCPR.

By providing the State with the power to define normal religious activity, the Chinese Constitution effectively short-circuits the small religious freedom it provides.

While it remains outside the remit of the UN Human Rights Commission (because it has yet to ratify the ICCPR), China can, with impunity, continue to dispatch 're-education' units to interrogate lamas, abbots, monks, nuns and religious lay people and to force them to denounce their religious leader, the Dalai Lama.

Failure to ratify the ICCPR provides shelter from the internationally recognised illegalities of the forced disappearance and imprisonment of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama (see Case study 3 for more details), and the arrest and suspended death sentence of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche (see Case study 5).

The Chinese State is regularly criticised for its widespread violations of religious freedoms. These and other human rights violations (such as forced disappearance,³⁵ torture,³⁶ and arbitrary arrest and detention) have been cited by the United States Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC),³⁷ various parliamentary declarations³⁸ and human rights organisations.³⁹ These criticisms by themselves are legally meaningless.

Over the last 25 years, the PRC has received significant international aid and development aimed at developing rule of law in China – including efforts to reduce the death penalty through legal regulation, to ensure fair trial procedures, humane detention facilities and practices. Despite this, China has evaded its obligations to introduce meaningful civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights throughout its jurisdiction.

Because China is not required to submit Country Reports to the HRC (nor is the Commission empowered to hear complaints on the wide range of allegations of human rights abuses committed in China), there are limited options for challenging violations of freedom of religion committed by China against Tibetan Buddhists (or members of any other religion).

One option is to pursue international crimes such as torture through national courts.

As this report goes to print, one such case is under investigation. In Spain, the forced disappearance of the 11th Panchen Lama, and the torture of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns due to their religious beliefs, is being considered under the principle of *Universal Jurisdiction*.⁴⁰

State Administration for Religious Affairs

In 1998, the same year China signed (but failed to ratify) the ICCPR, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) was created.

SARA operates with a broad mandate, most of which violates freedom of religion as defined in Article 18 of the ICCPR. Instead of protecting freedom of religion, the primary function of SARA is to *'ensure that citizens with religious belief conduct normal religious behaviour'*.⁴¹

The means at its disposal to ensure such behaviour allow SARA to survey and probe into religious status and theories, to determine religious policies, and to supervise and promote adherence to its policies.

On the one hand, the Chinese state presents Tibetan Buddhism as a feudal, backward theology in competition with socialist concepts of progress and economic development, while on the other hand sculpting the reconstruction of the monasteries and nunneries that it once destroyed, in order to present its own version of Tibetan Buddhism.



Chapter 2

Death by a thousand cuts

“The main problem is the inner difficulty of mind. There is a lack of freedom of speech, so other people cannot know what we are really thinking. Although from the outside everything may look good, there is great fear in every Tibetan mind.”⁴²

Visitors to Tibet often comment on the large numbers of monks who seem free to practise their religion without restriction.

These tourists may not be aware that the monasteries where they see hundreds of monks were once home to thousands of monks. Nor might they be struck by how few children they see (religious education, which traditionally began at an early age, cannot, under new Chinese government restrictions, commence until age 18).

Tourists see the monasteries and nunneries, which have been repaired after the ravages of the Cultural Revolution, they see the religious practitioners in their robes and they take their photos. Then many go home to tell anyone who asks them about restrictions on religion in Tibet that there is none.

What tourists and other official visitors cannot see is the complex system of administrative control and restrictions which makes it virtually impossible for Tibetan monks and nuns to practise their religion in a meaningful way.

This system of control was strengthened in 1996, since which time there has been rigorous implementation of official religious policy to ensure the activities of monasteries, monks and nuns remain under the strict control of the Chinese authorities.

Key restrictions imposed on Tibetan monasteries in 1996

- Prospective monks and nuns ordered to pass an entrance examination.
- Limits have been placed on the number of monks and nuns admitted to monasteries and nunneries. All monks and nuns must acquire a permit or identity card before they can enter monastic life.
- Monks and nuns must be 18 years old before they can begin religious education.

- Monks and nuns are only allowed to stay in institutions for which they have an official permit.
- Monks and nuns are restricted from travelling outside their own monasteries.
- Any reconstruction or renovation of monasteries must be approved by government departments. (Unapproved rebuilding does occur but is prohibited and can be demolished.)
- Police stations have been situated in or near monasteries.
- Monasteries are required to make money through tourism or other enterprises.

The 1996 control measures, determined by the Chinese government, included the formation of 'Democratic Management Committees' (DMCs) in each monastery and nunnery.

DMCs were created to replace the monastic bodies which for centuries oversaw all religious and administrative aspects of monastic life. DMCs are composed of government-appointed or 'patriotic' monks. In some monasteries, they include Communist party cadres and government officials. Members of DMCs are all vetted and approved by the local government.

According to the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC), the attitude of DMC members toward religion varies within each monastery and across regions. Some DMC members do try to facilitate the religious purpose of a monastery by working to maintain a disciplined programme of scriptural study, but a shortage of qualified teachers and state control often undercuts Tibetan monastic study.⁴³

“Religious education was very poor, because we did not have experienced teachers who could teach us... Most of the senior monks were either killed or they escaped to India long time ago. For example, Lama Jenpa Choedak of our monastery, who is now 85. He escaped to Nepal during the Cultural Revolution and stayed there for 16 years. He is back in the monastery now, but he is too old to teach us. Also, it is very hard for us to get permission to travel in order to study at other bigger monasteries like those in Lhasa. Last year, the monastery asked for such permission. There had still been no reply when I left to come to India.”⁴⁴

Official pressure and presence is heaviest in monasteries and nunneries associated with the Gelugpa school in which the Dalai Lama was educated. Monasteries associated with the three other main traditions, the Kagyu, the Sakya and Nyingma, generally encounter less official interference in their affairs.

Entrance exam

All prospective monks and nuns must pass an examination before gaining admission to a monastery. In addition to questions to test their knowledge of Buddhism, the exam can also test their knowledge of Chinese political ideology.

“The questions are designed to test the allegiance of new monks to the Communist Party of China. Anyone who fails to pass the allegiance test is not given admission in the monastery.”⁴⁵

Identification

Since 1996 all new monks and nuns are required to obtain a permit before they can be admitted to a monastery. The permits list the name, date and place of birth of monks or nuns, and their parents' names, as well as displaying the fingerprint of the monk. A photo identity card is also required.

There is a long list of preconditions to being granted a permit: the process is deliberately bureaucratic and devised as a way of discouraging many from attempting to enter monastic life.

Each monastery has a quota and once this has been filled, no more permits will be issued. That said, a large number of monks often do live in monasteries without permits. Such monks are not allowed to participate in certain religious ceremonies such as prayer assembly. They must leave and hide when the 'patriotic re-education' (see next chapter) work teams visit the monastery.

Age restrictions

The work teams also check the age of individual monks and nuns. Whereas monasteries traditionally began educating children at a very young age, under Chinese law it is illegal for anyone to enter monastic life until age 18. If they cannot prove their age, they can be told to leave. Again, children under 18 are known to stay in monasteries, but, like monks without permits, they must go into hiding when officials visit the monastery.



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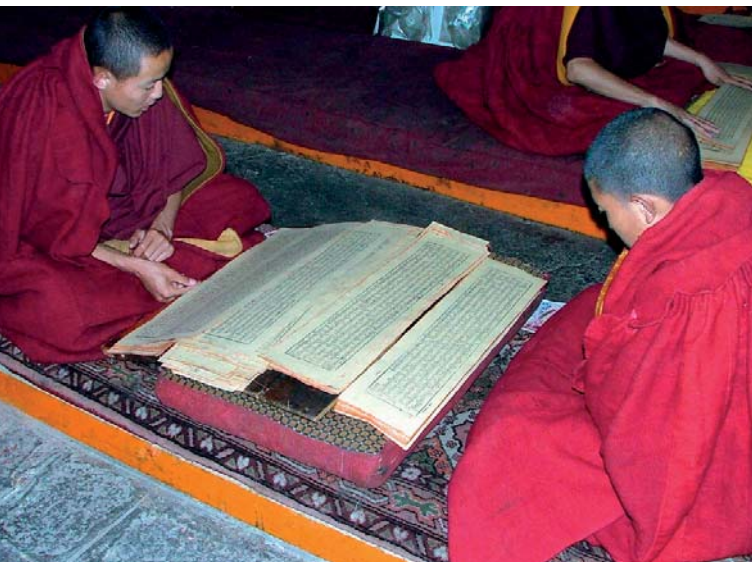
“There is a monastic school established by the Sershul monastery to provide preliminary education to young monks before they are officially admitted to the monastery. It is not a school with classrooms. It is a school that holds its classes in tents because the monastery was refused permission to build more classrooms. This school was established in the beginning of 2006.

“When I went there, I was told that restrictions had been put on the number of young monks attending the school. Because permission was not granted, the school is run as part of the monastery, but not in the name of a school. Education is absolutely free for everyone who wants to go there, and all the expenses of the school are financed by the monastery.

“The lama of the monastery is Thubten Namdak, generally we call him Sershul Tripa. He came to India in 1993 and he had an audience with His Holiness, asking what he thought should be done in the future. His Holiness advised him to go back to Tibet and do something meaningful for the local people, such as holding religious ceremonies and establishing schools. So the lama went back to Tibet and tried to establish a school, but was not granted permission by the Government.

“For the last four years Sershul Tripa has been under surveillance and he is no longer allowed to travel abroad. Before that time, he used to travel to many places such as Taiwan and Singapore – even to India where he had his audience with His Holiness. Now he must stay in the local area.”⁴⁶

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Study restrictions

In general, monks and nuns are only given permits to study at the nearest monastery or nunnery to their home. Monks or nuns seeking to gain admission to a monastery anywhere other than the region in which they were born are often refused. Indeed, work teams are known to use lack of valid permits as an excuse to expel individuals.

“So far I know of four monks who were expelled from our monastery because they were from a different region. This is an excuse for the government to restrict the number of monks.”⁴⁷

Travel

Traditionally monks and nuns could reside and study at any monastery or nunnery, but they must now apply for a variety of government permits in order to travel between monasteries or to teachings. Permits are routinely denied – particularly within the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). Whether deliberate or not, the effect is to limit the quality of education available to monks and nuns.

“We heard that Kenpo Lobsang Choedak of Tashi Lhunpo monastery [a very important monastery – the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama] was going to give a religious teaching at Tsomonling in Lhasa. That was around July last year [2006]. To go to the teaching, we got permission from the monastery. Then we went to the Hruji [secretary] of the township to ask for permission, which we were given. But when we went to the county police station, we were denied the permission. The excuse given by the police was that there was a national festival nearing, so it would be hard to move from place to place.”

Pilgrimages to India

Permits must also be obtained to go on pilgrimage or for religious teaching to India. It is almost impossible for monks and nuns to acquire the necessary permits to travel to India legally.

According to many reports, even those who are able to get a passport (usually only businesspeople, some officials, and people with good connections to the administration) are only allowed to go as far as Nepal.

Those who do manage to reach India almost always have to do so illegally. They are generally kept under constant surveillance when they return from India. In the case of monks or nuns found to have been to India, they are often told they cannot rejoin their monasteries. The Chinese authorities inside Tibet assume that returning monks and nuns have been exposed to what they consider to be the unacceptable ‘splittist’ influences of the exiled Tibetan community – especially the Dalai Lama.

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“In 2000, I came to India for a pilgrimage, originally I tried to apply for a passport and visa, but I was denied. So I came without any documents. After finishing my pilgrimage in India, I went back to Tibet.

“I was caught at a place called Huachoe in Ngari Prefecture by the Gong An [public security personnel].

“I was badly beaten. They handcuffed one of my hands and connected the other side of the handcuff to the beam of basketball frame in the police station and left me there overnight.

“The police also demanded I throw the photo of His Holiness that I had brought with me from India into the toilet. When I refused, some of the policemen tried to force me to eat the photo. I told them that I was a man over 50 years old and I didn’t care what they did to me. I had been to India and attended the teachings of His Holiness, my root lama, and I wasn’t going to do anything to dishonour him... .

“Days later, they sent me to a prison-like place called a “Qinsong Zhan” [a repatriation station used

to hold Tibetans who are caught attempting to return from or escape to India]. I was kept in that place for six months, which was later not included in my prison term. Then I was sent to Drapchi prison in Lhasa where I served my three and a half year sentence.

“I was released on 15 October 2005. At the time of my release, the head of the prison told me all my files had been sent to the police station in my own region, and that I could no longer be a member of my monastery. He said that when I returned to my hometown I would have to report to the police station of the township once a month. He also said that if it had been during the Cultural Revolution, I would have been labelled as a counter revolutionary, but such a term is no longer used, so I would instead be called a ‘separatist’.

“Well, I went back to my hometown, but I had nowhere to go. I could not rejoin the monastery, I had no home to go to, so, having no choice, after meeting with my Lama, I tried this second time to escape to India.”⁴⁸

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Pilgrimages to holy sites in Tibet

Since 2002 pilgrims have also been required to obtain permits to go to Mount Kailash, a holy site to Tibetans, Hindus and Jains. Like other travel permits, they are difficult to obtain and often denied. Attempting to travel without one is a criminal offence.

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“Ngari is the area where Mount Kailash is located. To go there a special permit called a thongshing din is needed. To obtain a permit for a pilgrimage, first you must get a letter allowing you to go from your local authorities, then you must apply to the Ngari office in Lhasa. It is very difficult – unless you know well-connected people or can pay a bribe.

“These restrictions began in 2002, the Year of the Horse. Many, many people were denied permits. Many tried to go on a pilgrimage without a permit, but most were arrested and sent back to their homes. One of my cousins in Ngari knows an important person, so he was able to get me a permit.

“Everyone who goes to Ngari, whether they are pilgrims or businessmen, must register with the local military as soon as they arrive. They must also register when they leave. The thongshing din gives you permission to be there for three months from the time you

register with the military and this is fine for a pilgrimage. If you want to stay longer you must obtain a drultho, which is like a resident’s permit.

“The circumambulation path on Mount Kailash is at a very high elevation and there are no military camps once you get there – just pilgrims. However, there is a huge military garrison at the base of Mount Kailash. Also, there are many police and soldiers in Ngari. The authorities are determined that no pilgrims will reach Mount Kailash without a permit. There are three different checkpoints and they are all very thorough. It is impossible to get through without your permit.

“I do not know why they make it so difficult for Tibetans to make this pilgrimage. I think they fear that, if they gave a permit to everyone who wanted one, many people would flee to India. Also, if it was easy to get a permit, no one would be able to demand bribes. These must be the reasons.”⁴⁹

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Reconstruction

Any reconstruction work in monasteries, including the building of stupas [reliquaries], must be approved by the authorities. Often permission is refused, even if the monastery and the lay community are willing to pay the costs.

“In winter last year, the monastery requested permission to build a new teaching area, but permission was denied. So when there was a gathering for religious teachings, we had to sit on the ground. When it rains this is really a big problem.”⁵⁰

While monasteries and nunneries are required to seek permission for any building work, no consultation is required of Government officials seeking to destroy monastic buildings and land.

“The Machu and Drichu rivers flow from our hometown. The Drichu is very close to our monastery. Two or three years ago, the Government decided to build a power station and at the same time redirect the Drichu River into inland Chinese cities. But the land where the power station was going to be built belongs to the monastery. When the monastery tried to protest about this, the Shen [county] leaders replied, saying the sky belongs to the Communist Party and so does all the land, so this is none of the monastery’s business and the monastery has no right to say no to the construction of power station.”⁵¹

In 2005 at the Yachen monastery, 853 cells were destroyed and 1,100 monks and nuns evicted.⁵² A monk who was present when the wrecking crews arrived described the incident to Tibet Watch:

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“The Chinese began by demolishing monks’ cells on the outskirts of the monastery compound, using a steamroller. The monks were very upset and wanted to try to stop them. There was a very tense atmosphere between the monks, who were prepared to fight to protect the monastery, and the Chinese workers hired by the Government. Then the nephew of the lama who runs the monastery intervened.

“He reminded us of the teachings of non-violence of the aged Achoe Lama and said we should not do anything against his teachings. We must just let those people do what they wanted to do.

“When the Chinese saw that there was not going to be a fight, they changed their approach, saying smoothly that they were trying to help the monastery by building a road through the heart of the monastery compound, so that it would be much easier for us to bring things in and out by trucks.

“And so they started to build the road through the heart of the monastery compound, which obviously required the demolition of the monk’s cells that happened to be in its way. The officials said that the road had to be wide enough for two trucks to go parallel. With this excuse, they built the road, demolishing hundreds of cells.”⁵³

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Police presence

During the 1990s a police presence was established either in or very close to the major monasteries. Recently this trend has expanded to include smaller monasteries. The presence of police stations adds to the climate of fear and surveillance, imposing further restrictions on the ability of monks to follow their religious path.

“Previously, in all the monasteries in the Amdo region [of historical Tibet], there was no police stationed near the monastery, except in the regions like Lhasa, where in every big monastery, there is a police station. But starting from 2000, police began to be stationed in the major monasteries in the Amdo region.”⁵⁴

A Tibetan refugee, described the intimidation of this police presence to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD):

“There are 15 security personnel permanently stationed in Sera monastery to monitor the monks. Five or six security personnel are stationed at the main gate of the monastery 24 hours a day. The monks are not allowed to go outside the monastery during important religious festivals, especially during the Dalai Lama’s birthday celebration on 6 July every year. A few days prior to the birthday of the Dalai Lama in 2005, even more security officers were placed at the monastery’s main gate to monitor the monks for any political activities. On 6 July, no one was allowed outside the monastery. Even the monks who

had been previously registered to perform prayers in private homes were not allowed to leave the monastery grounds.”⁵⁵

Revenue generation

Tibetan monasteries and nunneries are required to generate income from religious tourism or other enterprises. The revenue is heavily taxed by the Chinese authorities.

“It used to be that all the income from selling entry tickets to tourists went to the monastery concerned. Starting in 2004 we had to give the County Government 25% of the 80 Yuan admission fee. By 2006 this had increased to 60% of the admission price. Very little money now comes to the monasteries for their upkeep. This makes life even more difficult.”⁵⁶

The fact that Tibet is a very popular tourist destination for Buddhists of all nationalities has not escaped the Chinese government, which has funded the reconstruction of some major monasteries that had been destroyed during Mao’s Cultural Revolution. The rebuilding of these monasteries and the active promotion of Tibet as a tourist attraction has led some to accuse the Chinese government of the ‘Disneyfication’ of Tibet.⁵⁷

Demonising the Dalai Lama

One thing which might surprise tourists in Tibet is the absence in monastic buildings of images of the spiritual leader of Tibet Buddhists. While it may not be possible for the Chinese authorities to control images of the Dalai Lama outside China, they can and do insist that his face does not appear in public in Tibet.

Since 1994, displaying images of the Dalai Lama has been prohibited (potentially punishable with imprisonment). In some cases it seems that even owning a photograph has come to be considered illegal.

The strictness with which the ban on displaying photos of the Dalai Lama is enforced varies from area to area and monastery to monastery. In some areas photos are seen discreetly displayed. In other areas, monasteries and even people’s homes are searched and the display of these photographs is practically non-existent.

“In recent years, the restriction on photos of His Holiness has been intensified. It is not allowed for anyone to keep a photo of His Holiness, let alone to keep a photo in the monasteries. The Chinese officials frequently visit each household to check, and it was announced that anyone caught with a photo of His Holiness would be fined 500 Yuan and might have to face a prison sentence, depending on the seriousness of the matter. At the beginning of 2005 my auntie and her husband were caught with a photo of His Holiness in their home. They were detained for two days, then released when they paid the 500 Yuan fine.”⁵⁸

One of the twin purposes of the 'patriotic re-education' described in the following chapter is to compel monks and nuns to denounce the Dalai Lama.

A nun from Tsongon [Qinghai] Province told Tibet Watch the shocking but not untypical story of the treatment she received from soldiers in Shigatse in the neighbouring region of the TAR when they discovered she was wearing a Dalai Lama photo necklace hidden under her clothing:

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“They saw the photo [of the Dalai Lama on a necklace] and when I would not give it to them, the soldiers rushed over and beat me. When my companions cried out that a nun was going to be killed, they were beaten and thrown across the room.

“I was punched and kicked and blood was spouting from my mouth. Then I was tied to a pillar and kicked on the chest many times. Red colour flashed before my eyes and a gun was pointed at me, the soldier saying if I did not give them the photo I would be killed. I was scared and handed it over to them. I

was kept tied to the pillar for a long time and in the evening when I was untied, I was so stiff I fell over. The soldiers just trampled me under their feet.

“The next day I was beaten again. According to my companions, I was kept from 9:30 in the morning until 9:30 in the evening. When they beat me they said, ‘We arrested more than 500 people and there was no one as stubborn as you, your behaviour is not good.’ From that time on I could not walk and had excruciating pain. They gave me an injection and sent me to the hospital.”⁵⁹

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Not only are images banned. Any mention of the Dalai Lama (other than to denounce him), any call for his return to Tibet or even a prayer wishing him a long life, can be punished.



Case Study I: Sonam Phuntsog



Geshe Sonam Phuntsog, a respected and popular Buddhist leader in the Kartse area of Sichuan, was arrested in October 1999. Court documents accused him of a variety of “splittist” activities, mostly concerning his connections to the Dalai Lama. In 1998 he had led long-life ceremonies for the Dalai Lama.

Several hundred Tibetans gathered outside the detention centre at Kartse on 31 October 1999 to demonstrate against his detention. The official response was to bring in military reinforcements from other areas and to impose a curfew on Kartse.

Geshe Sonam Phuntsog’s official sentencing document states that police detained him “on suspicion of taking part in a bombing incident”, but the court found him guilty because he urged “crowds of people to believe in the Dalai Lama and recite long life prayers” for him.⁶⁰ The document describes as evidence against Sonam Phuntsog a trip he made to India, where he met the Dalai Lama.

Geshe Sonam Phuntsog was released in October 2004, but, according to information received by Tibet Watch, he remains under strict surveillance, making it practically impossible for him to fulfil his religious duties:

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“If Geshe Sonam Phuntsog wants to travel anywhere outside his home, he has to request permission from the township. When I went to my home after his release, I wanted to visit him, but my relatives discouraged me. They told me that it would not be good for him and also it would draw unnecessary attention to me.

“When Geshe Sonam Phuntsog was released in 2004, all the people from our area planned to receive him at the prison gate. Even people from our area who were living in Lhasa were planning to go and receive him when he was released, but the ones from Lhasa were denied permission to make the journey.

“Geshe Sonam Phuntsog is forbidden by the authorities to

meet and speak to more than three people.

“He is not allowed to rejoin the monastery and he is not allowed to perform ‘shab den’ at homes in the villages. [Shab den is a prayer ceremony requested by lay people who call monks to their homes to perform prayers and rituals.]

“He is also not allowed to go to the mountains for retreats.

“Earlier Geshe Sonam Phuntsog used to go to all the villages and many different areas to give teachings, but now he is forbidden to do this.

“The government keeps a close watch on Geshe Sonam Phuntsog. If someone visits him, then his name is reported.”⁶¹

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Chapter 3

‘Love your country, love your religion’

“Every nation on earth teaches its people to love their motherland. We are organising patriotic education everywhere, not just in the monasteries. Those who do not love their country are not qualified to be human beings. This is a matter of common sense.”

Zhang Qingli, Communist Party Secretary in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, in an interview with the German publication *Der Spiegel*, 16 August 2006

The Chinese Communist Party patriotic re-education programme, known in Tibet as ‘Love your country, love your religion’, is aimed primarily at monks and nuns.

Originally launched as a five-year programme in 1996, Patriotic Re-education was expanded in May 2006 when Zhang Qingli, head of the Communist Party Secretary in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) called for its intensification.

The two main objectives of the programme are to instil in monks and nuns the notion that they must love the Chinese “Motherland” and place it before their religion, and to compel them to denounce their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

This state-administered compulsory programme of study for all monks and nuns is carried out by *ledon rukhag* [work teams] of trusted Chinese and Tibetan officials.

Work teams can vary from three to 20 individuals, depending on the size of the monastery. The frequency and the length of their visits – from five days to four months – depend on whether the monastery or nunnery has been deemed politically active or troublesome in the past.

‘Love your country, love your religion’ sessions involve studying four handbooks (pictured on page 34): Law, ‘The History of Tibet’, ‘Crushing the Separatist’, and ‘Contemporary Policies’. Reading and discussion of these books is often followed by an examination (see Appendix 1 for a sample of the questions).

To pass these exams and establish themselves as good patriots, monks and nuns must:

- oppose separatism,
- deny Tibet was ever or should ever be independent from China,
- agree that the Dalai Lama is destroying the unity of the Motherland, and
- recognise Gyaltzen Norbu, the Chinese appointed Panchen Lama, as the true Panchen Lama (see Case study 3 for more information).

Failure to provide satisfactory answers brands monks and nuns as potential troublemakers and can lead to their expulsion.

In some circumstances the punishment can be much more harsh, as Khenpo Tsanor, the 70-year-old chief abbot of Dungkyab monastery in Gade, explained in an interview with Radio Free Asia:

“I saw the government documents... It was written that the Dalai Lama should be thoroughly criticised and his splittist behaviour should be condemned... I spoke out loudly and refused to sign. I declared that I would not sign even at the risk of imprisonment or execution. I knew very well that all who do not sign have to face trial in a Chinese court. They even threatened that the monastery would be shut down if we did not sign these documents... Some county officials came to the monastery to ask me whether I would step down from the position of chief abbot. I agreed because I did not have any other choice.”¹⁶²

Of particular interest to work teams are those newly admitted to monastic life or those recently returned from India where, it is assumed, they will have fallen under the influence of the ‘Dalai Clique’. (The Chinese government refers to the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan government-in-exile, Tibetan support groups, and individuals who champion the idea of ending the Chinese occupation of Tibet as the ‘Dalai Clique’.)



Other duties of the work teams include searching for and confiscating any photos of the Dalai Lama or Gendun Choekyi Nyima, recognised by the Dalai Lama in 1995 as the 11th Panchen Lama (see Chapter 4 for more details).

Tibetan responses to patriotic re-education

It is unsurprising to learn that many monks and nuns have voluntarily left monastic life because patriotic re-education makes it impossible for them to truly follow their vocation.

Nor is it surprising that many other monks and nuns have been expelled for failure to co-operate, especially their refusal to denounce the Dalai Lama.

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“I remember when the work teams came to teach the nuns patriotic education. The classes were all about loving the nation and the differences between the old Tibet and the new one. We were told to denounce separation and that none of us would be allowed to stay in the nunnery if we failed our patriotic re-education test. None of us listened. We all talked with each other during the class. Then they divided the nuns into groups of 10 and two officials took each group away.

“The launch of patriotic re-education at the nunnery was supposed to last three months. At first the officials stayed in the township, but because we didn’t listen to them, they moved into the nunnery, brought more officials in and stayed for a total of six months. By the end of this time, all but the oldest and youngest nuns had been expelled.

“We made the officials very angry because, when they said very bad things about His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we all threw sand in their faces. We were not prepared to tolerate this. They wanted to single someone out for punishment, but they could not, because we had all done it. We had agreed between us the day before that we would all do this if they insulted the Dalai Lama.

“So they said our nunnery was the worst and they intensified the classes and their control over us.

“During the first two months of their stay it was the right of the nuns to go into the community for Shab den [a religious prayer service done by monks and nuns at the homes of lay people].

“They took this right away from us, said they now controlled who was and wasn’t allowed to go for Shabden. The officials also restricted the amount of time nuns could spend away for Shabden and the number of families who could request Shabden. Families suddenly had to make an application to get official permission for a nun to go to their home. After permission was granted the officials would tell the head of the nunnery which nuns could be allowed to go.

“After lots of classes they questioned each of the nuns individually. We were told we had to sign a statement denouncing the Dalai Lama and separatist activity. If we refused to sign we would be dismissed immediately.

“They told me to denounce the Dalai Lama and I said no. They told me to denounce the separatists and I said no. Then I was forced to leave the nunnery that day.

“Of the 80 or so nuns living at the nunnery when they arrived, only 13 were allowed to stay. The officials decided that they would not force the very youngest nuns to pass the patriotic re-education test because they had already expelled so many nuns there would not have been enough left to run the nunnery.

“Six of the nuns who were allowed to stay were old women. They were taken to Changka and kept in the township office for five days. They were blamed for teaching younger nuns the old ways and told to stop. I think this arrest was meant as a warning to the remaining nuns.”⁶³

.....

When advance notice is given of the arrival of work teams, monks and nuns will often choose to leave their monastery or nunnery until the visit ends.

For some monks and nuns pragmatism is at times the only option if they want to speed the departure of the work teams or, in more serious situations, ensure monasteries and nunneries stay open. Public acquiescence (ignored in private) allows them to continue their devotions. The Dalai Lama has said repeatedly that people should feel free to denounce him if forced to do so rather than put themselves at risk.



Case Study 2: Drepung Monastery

In 2005, a 28-year-old monk from Drepung monastery named Ngawang Janchup refused during patriotic re-education to denounce the Dalai Lama. The next day he was found dead in his room. There was no clear indication of the cause of death.

Drepung monastery in Lhasa is one of the most important monasteries of the Dalai Lama's Gelugpa lineage. As such it attracts regular visits from Patriotic Re-education work teams.

Several weeks after the unexplained death of Ngawang Janchup, in November 2005, a work team returned to Drepung monastery. As always, the topics under discussion were: denunciation of the Dalai Lama, opposition to separatist groups, acceptance of Tibet as part of China, and swearing allegiance to the People's Republic of China. In addition, this time monks were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the patriotic re-education experience.⁶⁴

On 23 November, when the monks were told to sign papers denouncing the Dalai Lama and accepting Tibet as part of China, five of them refused, including the senior abbot, Ngawang Phelgye. They were immediately taken away by the Public Security Bureau (PSB).⁶⁵

The abbot said it was impossible for Tibetans to denounce the Dalai Lama "who is the guidance of the Tibetan people".⁶⁶

Four hundred Drepung monks reacted to the arrests with a peaceful protest, sitting in silence in the monastery court yard.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Chinese army responded by surrounding the monastery for three days, not allowing anyone in or out. In a telephone interview, the army told RFA it was “conducting a fire drill and completing the annual inspection of cultural items in Drepung”.⁶⁷

The incident took place while Dr Manfred Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur On Torture was in Lhasa inspecting the prevalence of torture in China and Tibet. He was not informed.

According to one of the monks who took part in the peaceful protest:

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“When we heard about the dismissal of the Khenpo and four other monks, hundreds of us gathered in the courtyard. We asked the officials to explain to us why the five monks were dismissed. We said, ‘If you respect the law, you should show us the proof of misdoing.’ If the five monks were dismissed for refusing to sign the paper, well, we said, then you should dismiss all of us, because we didn’t sign the paper either. The officials said they would let the five monks come back to the monastery in a few days, but we said, no, we want them to come back right away, today.

“Our religious teachers and the Zhuren [head of the Democratic Management Committee] came outside and begged us to go back to our rooms, but no one listened to them. From 11:30 in the morning till around 5 o’clock in the evening we sat in silent protest. I think officials came from different units. Also, there were two busloads of soldiers. The army stayed in the buses. Fire

trucks [with water cannons] also arrived.

“Our teachers tried again, saying that, like us, they hadn’t eaten all day. They told us to go home, promising they would handle the matter with the officials. We agreed to leave, but decided to come back the next day.

“The following morning, around 10 o’clock, we returned to the courtyard of the monastery. All the heads of the monastery were there, such as our religious teachers and the Zhurens [leaders]. They again persuaded us to leave, which we did, although we were unhappy that we had not received satisfaction from the officials.

“A few days later, our religious teachers told us the officials would not agree to let the five monks back into the monastery. Furthermore, we were told that there was a possibility that those the officials call ‘outside-coming’ monks [those without valid papers] would also be expelled.”⁶⁸

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While denouncing the Dalai Lama and renouncing Tibetan independence are recurring themes in patriotic re-education at Drepung and other monasteries, other subjects do arise:

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“About 20 officials from different departments of the Tibetan Autonomous Region came to Drepung monastery to give talks and distribute pamphlets and other documents. We were in the courtyard having a discussion when they arrived without warning. One of the officials immediately began lecturing us. The other officials were listening or taking pictures or shooting videos.

“The man who was lecturing said that the monks had to denounce Taiwan’s independence. He talked a lot about why and how Taiwan

was part of the People’s Republic of China and that Taiwan has to be a part of China. The talks were all about this. We didn’t understand why they were telling us this and didn’t listen carefully.

“When the lecture was over, they let the monks leave the courtyard one by one. As we left we were given pamphlets about the history of Taiwan being part of China. As soon as the officials left we threw all the pamphlets in the air. That is what we do after they come for patriotic education.”⁶⁹

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A sample of the test for patriotic re-education was smuggled out of Tibet by a monk from Tsamkhung monastery and given to Tibet Watch. It is reproduced in Appendix I.





Chapter 4

Reincarnation: over our dead body

The Buddhist belief in reincarnation has been adapted by Tibetan Buddhism into a unique recognition of chains of successive rebirths of particular highly-revered lamas. Thus, when one of these lamas dies it is believed that his reincarnation can be identified and his teaching lineage transmitted to the next generation. Belief in the unbroken lineage of these reincarnated lamas has been central to Tibetan Buddhism since the 12th century. The Tibetan term for a reincarnated lama is a 'tulku'. (The Chinese use the term 'living Buddha', but no such notion exists in Tibetan Buddhism and the term is found inappropriate or even offensive by some Tibetans).⁷⁰

According to Tsering Phuntsok, Kalon [Minister] for Religion and Culture in the Tibetan government-in-exile in India:

“During the many centuries since the recognition of tulkus came into being, the principal disciples of the tulkus and the high-ranking officials of the monastery which is their spiritual seat have been given the freedom to recognise the reincarnations of the tulkus, based on the latter’s faith in and spiritual bond with the former. Never was there an occasion when they had to seek approval from the state or its functionaries.”⁷¹

For centuries there has been an established traditional process to identify tulkus:

- Interpretation of any predictions left by the previous incarnation as to the whereabouts and nature of his rebirth.
- Tests in which the child, or candidate for reincarnation of the lineage, is asked to pick out articles that belonged to the previous incarnation and which have been set out with similar articles and objects.
- Consultation with oracles and other forms of divination.

China has claimed since 1792 the right to arbitrate in the choice of the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas, but Tibetans only occasionally acceded to this. Under Chinese occupation this has not been negotiable. Since 1990, for example, the Chinese authorities have insisted on having the final say in confirming the reincarnation of two of the most important lineages in Tibetan Buddhism: the Karmapas and the Panchen Lamas. Recently this has been extended to the recognition of any tulku, however minor.

Failed attempts

Since its invasion of Tibet, China has endeavoured to curry favour with Tibetan Buddhists by incorporating tulkus and other religious leaders into the state's leadership structure.

For example, following the 1959 escape of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese authorities attempted to turn the Panchen Lama, the second highest figure in the main school of Tibetan Buddhism, into a major political leader. The authorities appointed Choekyi Gyaltzen, the 10th Panchen Lama, as, in effect, governor of Tibet and Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Despite this appointment, the 10th Panchen Lama remained critical of the Chinese presence in Tibet. This led to him being confined to his house for years and being imprisoned for nine years. After he was released from prison in 1978 he gradually renewed his criticisms of Chinese policies in Tibet. His sudden death in 1989 followed a speech he had made which called indirectly for the Dalai Lama to be allowed to co-operate with him on Tibet policy.

Ignoring his criticisms of the Communist regime and their imprisonment of him, the Chinese authorities, seeking to promote the role of the Panchen Lama over that of the Dalai Lama, lauded Choekyi Gyaltzen in death as a "patriot".

By the time Ugyen Trinley Dorje was identified as the 17th Karmapa in 1992, regulations were in place which meant the Chinese authorities had to be approached to give their approval before he could be enthroned. To the embarrassment of the Chinese authorities and despite their seal of approval, the Karmapa fled Tibet in December 1999 and is now living in exile in Dharamsala.





Case study 3: The tale of the two Panchen Lamas

The institution of the Panchen Lama was created in the 17th century by the 5th Dalai Lama in recognition of his esteemed teacher, Lobsang Choekyi Gyaltsen, who became the first Panchen Lama and was installed at Tashilhunpo monastery in Shigatse.

A close relationship between Panchen and Dalai Lamas, the two most important lamas in the Gelugpa lineage, has existed ever since. This closeness has been institutionalised with each Panchen and Dalai Lama performing a critical role in the recognition of the reincarnation of the other: The elder of the two at any one time plays a crucial role in the education of the other; passing on specialist teachings and Tibet's spiritual heritage to the younger.

Following their failure to co-opt the 10th Panchen Lama, the Chinese authorities made plans to ensure they would have no trouble with his tulku.

At Tashilhunpo monastery a reincarnation identification team, headed by the abbot Chadrel Rinpoche, was assembled to undertake the search for the 11th Panchen Lama. They followed the centuries-old procedure precisely. Once a series of candidates had been identified through prophecies and visions, they were tested to identify the belongings of the previous Panchen Lama. In order to identify the true reincarnation, oracles were then consulted and a series of divinations performed. These final steps have traditionally been performed by the Dalai Lama, whose role in the identification process is considered critical.

On 14 May 1995, the Dalai Lama, speaking in India, confirmed that a child in Tibet, the six-year old Gendun Choekyi Nyima (pictured on page 43, aged 5) was the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

Three days later the boy and his family disappeared. They have not been seen since. A year later the Chinese authorities admitted they were holding Gendun Choekyi Nyima in “protective custody”. Since then China has consistently refused requests for access to the boy by international agencies, governments and intergovernmental organisations, claiming that he is studying and wishes to be left alone. The whereabouts and welfare of Gendun Choekyi Nyima and his family remain unknown.

Having refused to accept the Dalai Lama’s confirmation of the 11th Panchen Lama, in December 1995 the Chinese authorities installed their own candidate, six-year-old Gyaltzen Norbu. The boy was immediately moved to Beijing to be educated, although he does return to Tibet for important religious ceremonies which are widely reported in the state media. In Tibet he is known as the ‘Panchen Zuma’ [‘false’ Panchen].

On the same day that Gendun Choekyi Nyima was abducted, the authorities detained Chadrel Rinpoche, head of the search team. After being held for two years incommunicado and following a closed trial, in May 1997 he was sentenced to six years in prison ‘for the crime of splitting the country’.⁷² According to Human Rights in China,⁷³ Chadrel Rinpoche was transferred after sentencing to Chuandong No 3 Prison, Dazu County in Sichuan. This notorious prison incarcerates China’s most secret prisoners. Chadrel Rinpoche is believed to have been in the most isolated and secure cell, referred to as ‘the prison within the prison’. Only three other people are allowed inside this inner compound. It was reported in 2002 that he had been released from prison and immediately placed under house arrest near Lhasa.

Chinese authorities miss few opportunities to promote their choice, Gyaltzen Norbu, as the legitimate Panchen Lama. In April 2006 he was the keynote speaker at the World Buddhist Forum in Hangzhou – the first religious conference held in China since 1949. While Gyaltzen Norbu’s participation in the conference was heavily promoted, the Dalai Lama was not invited. Explaining why the world’s best known Buddhist teacher had not been invited, Qi Xiaofei, vice president of the China Religious Culture Communication Association, said: “In my opinion, if he appears at the forum, he will surely impose a disharmonious note to the general harmonious tone of the forum.”⁷⁴

Having to pretend to accept the legitimacy of the Chinese-chosen Panchen Lama is a source of great distress to Tibetan monks and nuns.

“When the Panchen Zuma makes a visit Tibetans are commanded to go for his blessings. If there is religious freedom in Tibet then why do they have to force people to get blessings from a Lama? In the schools, the Chinese officials

distribute scarves and badges, and tell everyone to formally receive the Panchen Zuma. If anyone disregards this, they are punished. In some monasteries, monks are given gifts and money and told in flattering speeches to receive the Panchen Zuma graciously, so this is like doing a business deal.”⁷⁵

Like images of the Dalai Lama, it is illegal to have and display a photograph of Gendun Choekyi Nyima. Even mentioning his name is frowned upon.

.....

“In 2003, the Panchen Zuma visited our monastery. Four days before he arrived, all the monks were issued cards with their names on it, and were told to wear these during the Panchen Zuma’s visit. Two days before his visit, a lot of soldiers came to the monastery and surrounded it. They brought a sniffer dog to search all the corners of the monastery. Everyone who came to visit him was given 100 Yuan and a Khata [offering scarf]. Pictures were taken of him giving head-touching blessings to the local people.

“The Panchen Zuma visited for three days, but he never stayed in

the monastery. He came in the morning and went back to Xining in the evening, escorted by soldiers. During his stay in the monastery, many ceremonies were held – all arranged by the Government with tight security. There were a lot of local leaders with him, all exchanging Khata with each other. It was like a show.

“Honestly speaking, no one was happy with that, because we have no faith in him. But it was ordered by the Government and we had to do what we were told. I cannot say exactly what I felt, but I felt very tired being ordered to do something that I did not like.”

.....

Dictating reincarnation

The Chinese government introduced new legal measures on the reincarnation of tulkus, which came into force on 1 September 2007.

Order No. 5 of China’s State Administration of Religious Affairs on Management Measures for the Reincarnation of ‘Living Buddhas’ in Tibetan Buddhism (see Appendix 2 for full wording) gives Chinese government bodies the final say in:

- whether a tulku who dies can be reincarnated again.
- whether a monastery is entitled to have a tulku in residence.
- conducting the search for a tulku.
- recognising the tulku.
- arranging the installation ceremony for the tulku in his monastery, and
- providing education and training for the tulku.

This order formalises and expands the control of the Chinese authorities over the entire process of reincarnation. It also extends their control over **all** tulkus.



Case study 4: Enthronement at Labrang Monastery

Historically the enthronement of a tulku has been the cause of great celebration and joy in local communities. However, since the Chinese occupation enthronements have sometimes led to calls for Tibetan independence. This is the main reason these ceremonies are now very tightly controlled.

The following testimony, given to Tibet Watch by a monk formerly of Labrang monastery in Amdo, illustrates the Chinese approach to enthronements.

.....

“Gungthang Rinpoche is one of the four throne-holders of Labrang Tashikyil monastery, one of the most famous monasteries. His reincarnation was the most knowledgeable and his fame spread in ten directions. He is something like the second highest lama of Labrang.

“The reincarnation of Gungthang Rinpoche was brought to Labrang

and enthroned on the 22nd day of the ninth lunar month [November 2006]. The day before his arrival there was a wondrous sign – a rainbow appeared behind the monastery. This was a final unmistakable symbol of the reincarnation. People were very happy.

“Gungthang Rinpoche is a very holy lama and many people came to see

him from many different places. There were about 20,000 people gathered there. He was welcomed in the traditional way by riding horses. It was really amazing to see how much the monks and the people respected and had faith in him.

“But there were so many soldiers and policemen – some brought in from other areas. There is no danger when a tulku is being welcomed into his own monastery, yet very strict security was imposed. For three days from the 21st day of the ninth lunar month no non-military vehicles were allowed to cross the bridge on the way to Labrang. I heard this was because the authorities were afraid people would put up free Tibet posters.

“On the day of the enthronement, there were one or two soldiers on every five steps. There was a leader for about every ten soldiers. There were soldiers in the monastery’s park and stupa and guest house. Rows of ten soldiers ran up and down in front of the public from morning until night.

“When Gungthang Tulku came, no one was allowed into the monastery. People were made to line up on the hill in front of the

monastery. The monks were made to line up towards the bridge and many, many soldiers stood guard where the monks were. I could not understand why the soldiers were interfering when the tulku was coming to his monastery.

“The soldiers had electric batons. Since people dare not say out loud what they are thinking, I do not know what the soldiers feared.

“When a tulku is enthroned in his monastery it is traditional that the first audience he gives is to the monks. This did not happen. The Chinese officials demanded and were given the first audience. The monks, especially the elder monks, were very angry and also unhappy about this.

“Three days later there were still many people waiting for an audience with Gungthang Rinpoche. Traditionally the monks would arrange this, but the soldiers and policemen took charge from beginning to end, working with the Democratic Management Committee. They decided who was allowed to see the lama and for how long. Policemen guarded inside the monastery, while the soldiers patrolled outside.

“We were all very sad.”⁷⁶

.....

Responding to the “ludicrous and unwarranted” Order No. 5, the exile official Tsering Phuntsog states:

“Recognition of tulkus is something that can neither be appointed from above nor be elected by the general populace. Nor can the position of tulku be bestowed upon someone as a ‘title’.”⁷⁷

Reincarnated lamas are viewed as more than religious leaders within Tibet. Many tulkus exercise social and political leadership within their communities and have led welfare and environmental projects, in addition to building local schools. As a result, it is not uncommon for such tulkus to have large followings in their local areas.

Where the popularity of a tulku is seen to rival Communist Party authority, persecution inevitably follows, as the following case studies illustrate.

Case study 5: Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche and Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche



Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, one of the most important religious leaders in Kartse County in the Kham area of Sichuan, was arrested, along with his relative, Lobsang Dhondup, in April 2002. They were charged with involvement in a bombing, but no detailed evidence was ever produced and the trial was held in secret. Both were found guilty and in December 2002 both were sentenced to death.

Lobsang Dhondup was executed on 26 January 2003.

Following a global outcry and a joint urgent appeal to the Chinese government by four UN Special Rapporteurs (those on Freedom of Religion or Belief; Independence of Judges and Lawyers; Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions; and Torture), Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's sentence was commuted from death to life in prison.

On a tape smuggled out from prison, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche said:

“I was wrongly accused. I have always been sincere in holding close to my heart the interests and well-being of all Tibetans. Things I have done and said have not pleased the Chinese. This is the only reason why they arrested me... I am totally innocent. I have always said we should not raise our hands against others because it is a sin... I neither distributed letters or flyers, nor did I secretly lay bombs. I would not even think of these things, because I would never harm or injure other people.”

In an April 2004 report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief denounced the Chinese authorities for failing to uphold the international standards of fair trials in Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche's case. The failings included "serious procedural flaws during the closed trial; violation of the right to choose his own lawyer; denial of the right to know and have opportunity to examine the evidence presented against him in court".⁷⁸

The report also expressed concern for his physical and mental state due to his being kept incommunicado and to reports of his torture.



Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche and his wife **Nyima Choedron** founded and ran the Gyatso children's home and school – a project supported by charities in the UK and the US.

Both were arrested in 1999, following an incident involving a construction worker from the school who attempted to raise a Tibetan flag in Lhasa's main square and then to blow himself up. The

authorities used this man's connection with the school to close it and implicate those who worked there with the incident. (Many of the children were left to beg on the streets with nowhere else to go.)

In 2000, Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche was sentenced to life imprisonment, and Nyima Choedron received a ten year sentence for 'attempting to split the country'.

Nyima Choedron was released in 2006 following a sentence reduction. Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche is not due for release until 2021.

There are growing concerns for his health and safety. He has been transferred from Drapchi prison to Chushul, the new prison for long-term political prisoners. This is where Dr Manfred Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, met him. In his report, Nowak called for Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche's immediate and unconditional release.

There are strong parallels between these two cases. Both men were respected figures in their local communities who avoided involvement in politics. Their work focused on protecting and maintaining Tibetan language, culture and religion. Neither had ever made a public statement calling for the return of the Dalai Lama or Tibetan independence.

What they had is moral authority and a role as unofficial community leaders or initiators. Local people turned to them for help and advice on both religious and secular matters. This was their actual 'crime'.

The dilemma

“Lama and tulku reincarnations are not the same as that of normal human beings. The Chinese have no faith and trust in the law of karma, so how can they ever be involved? I personally have never seen any Tibetans keeping a photo of the Chinese Panchen Lama on their altars. I have seen many Tibetans with a photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s chosen Panchen Lama. All Tibetan people have faith in His Holiness the Dalai Lama.”⁷⁹

Tibetan Buddhists understand all too clearly that Order No. 5 – like so many other measures taken by the Chinese authorities – has been formulated with the idea that Tibetan religion must be controlled.

It is understandable that many monasteries ignore these new rules. It is equally clear why, when monasteries ignore the rules and identify tulkus by traditional methods, they consider the protection and education of the tulku to be of paramount importance.

A monk from Nyitso monastery explains to Tibet Watch:

“Two tulkus were born in Tawo County [in Kardse prefecture, Sichuan]. As soon as they were recognised, both were escorted [secretly] to India. We know that the Chinese Government’s interference in the traditional recognition of tulkus is a political game. But, even if the Chinese authorities agreed to recognise a legitimate tulku, his movements would be restricted and he would not receive the proper education. That is why the tulkus must go to India.”⁸⁰

Despite all China’s efforts to control it, Tibetan Buddhism continues to flourish, attracting more believers around the world every year. Sadly, it thrives largely because its most learned teachers have fled Tibet in order to preserve their religion and culture.

“At present His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the supreme leader of the entire Tibetan Buddhist world and the heads of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as the traditional Bon religion, are all residing in exile.

“If a system is instituted denying them the right to offer guidance and have the ultimate say in the recognition of tulkus in their respective schools, it will completely jeopardise this unique tradition. It will also increase the number of fake tulkus, enjoying the so-called state’s recognition, disregarding those true incarnate tulkus who are born outside the country. This, in turn, will erase the great faith and respect the common people have for the tulkus, thus greatly contributing to the destruction and dilution of Tibetan Buddhism.

“It must, however, be emphasised that anyone would know that this evil design of theirs will never lead to fruition; they are simply engaging in wishful thinking.”⁸¹

While the current Dalai Lama lives in exile he can inspire Tibetans to believe one day they may be free of Chinese oppression. As the story of the 11th Panchen Lama illustrates, Tibetans have no faith in the ability of the Chinese authorities to recognise the lineages of reincarnated lamas which make their religion unique.



Chapter 5

Resistance is fertile

Despite decades of bullying and persecution of Tibetan Buddhists by the Chinese authorities, despite the imprisonment and torture of generations of religious leaders and adherents, despite violently crushed uprisings, Tibetans stubbornly refuse to give up their culture and religion to become Chinese.

On a daily basis monks, nuns and lay people find ways to rebel, hiding banned images of the Dalai Lama close to their hearts, lighting banned incense, whispering banned prayers.

To the fury of the Chinese authorities, sometimes resistance comes out into the open.

Skin burnings

The pelts of animals such as tigers, leopards and otters have traditionally been used by Tibetans as lining in Chubas, traditional robes.

Many of these animals are now endangered and at the Kalachakra teachings in southern India in January 2006, the Dalai Lama made an impassioned speech, voicing his “shame” that Tibetans continue to wear such pelts.

The Tibetans who were able to travel to the Kalachakra teachings quickly disseminated the Dalai Lama’s message when they returned to Tibet. The response, which continues, was almost immediate. A man from Tso, Amdo, told Tibet Watch the following:

.....

“Initially everybody was talking about the Dalai Lama’s message. People thought that we should burn the skins and that, if we did so, that would also be an offering for the long life of the Dalai Lama. Of course anything anyone can do for the Dalai Lama’s long life is the best opportunity to create positive karma.

“Everyone listens to what the Dalai Lama says. Even though they have saved money all their lives to buy skins for themselves and their children, they were absolutely willing to burn the skins and did so without hesitation or regret.

“People started burning skins from village to village, household to

household. Then a huge gathering was organised in Tso. They burned skins for seven days.

“At first there were monks attending to pray for the long life of the Dalai Lama and to pray for the animals, but after two days the local authorities told the monks that they

could no longer take part, that if they tried to return they would stop the skin burning.

“People listen to the Dalai Lama. They would do anything for him. Even if they had to die for him, I think Tibetans would be happy to do that.”

.....

On 9 February 2006 more than 10,000 people assembled at Kirti monastery in Ngaba county in Sichuan province for a mass burning ceremony. Remarkable images of the mass burning were smuggled out of Tibet.

“Tibetans took great risks in smuggling these images out of Tibet to the outside world. The images reached India in just ten days. Though there were many people who shot the event on camera, there was an immediate ban from the Chinese authorities on photographing the event. Cameras were confiscated and anyone who resisted was detained.”⁸²

A monk from the Meiwa monastery in Ngaba region of Amdo told Tibet Watch:

“In Rebkong we began to collect skins on February 7th. Many had already been partially burnt by people responding to the Dalai Lama’s call. A bonfire was scheduled for February 12th. Immediately before the event, the authorities banned the burning. The ban was issued at such short notice many Tibetans had already arrived in Rebkong before they knew about it. I heard that these Tibetans staged their own roadside burning before returning to their villages from Rebkong.”

Reports from inside Tibet at the time clearly indicated that the skin burnings were prompted both by concern about conservation and to uphold the compassion for all living things which is a core belief in Tibetan Buddhism.

Tibetans who were questioned in Rebkong are reported to have explained their action by saying that wearing the skins was against Buddhism and that they were participating in a religious activity.

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) staff have observed that, while two years ago they saw hundreds of Tibetans wearing clothing adorned with animal fur at the Lithang horse festival, in 2007 not one such garment was observed.

The response of the Chinese authorities is to demand that presenters on Tibetan television wear traditional furs as often as possible.

The ban and restrictions on skin burnings illustrate the Chinese policy of attempting to stamp out any form of religious observance that the authorities feel is in any way connected with the Dalai Lama and therefore 'splittist' in nature.

“After the Kalachakra of 2006, to meet the call of His Holiness not to use the skins of endangered animals, local people gathered together and burnt many pelts. There are eight dewa [households] in our village. Before the burning of the skins, the county government promised to financially support some of the poorest households. But since those households participated in the burning of animal skins, the county government said that if those households had animal skins to burn, they were rich and they did not need any support from the government.”⁸³

Mass incense burning

The determination of the Chinese authorities to prevent all Tibetans from participating in any form of religious observance associated with the Dalai Lama was clearly demonstrated in March 2007.

In a rare open display of defiance against Chinese oppression in Tibet, several hundred Tibetans gathered in Lhasa on 14 March to perform an outlawed Tibetan Buddhist ritual. Worshippers conducted incense-burning as an offering for the long-life of the Dalai Lama.

The mass long-life prayers and incense burning coincided with long-life prayers and incense burning being conducted for the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, his home in exile in India.

Several hundred troops were deployed and dispersed the crowd leading to clashes, arrests and injuries. One source reported that a 42-year-old Tibetan woman was detained by the Chinese security officials who were blocking people from participating. Another source referred to a woman in her 60s being assaulted. Tibetan shops in the central area of Lhasa were closed and later in the day additional police were deployed in various parts of Lhasa, making movement around the city difficult.⁸⁴

Similar incidents have been reported from all over Tibet.



According to Tibetan astrology, 2007 is an inauspicious year for the Dalai Lama, hence the increased fervour (and rebellion) with which Tibetans are determined to make offerings and pray for his long life during this astrological year.

Shugden

Shugden is a deity worshipped by some followers of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Followers of Shugden believe the deity (which can be used to put curses on others) is an enlightened entity which should be treated like a Buddha, that it can help devotees obtain worldly success, and that it can punish any devotees who fail to worship it. The practice is associated with an element of Tibetan Buddhism that is strongly opposed to other schools of Buddhism, particularly the Nyingma or "old" school, and the deity is sometimes invoked to attack members of those schools.

Since the 1970s, and more forcefully since 1996, the Dalai Lama has questioned the appropriateness of many Shugden religious practices. He and many other lamas have taken the position that it is one of a lesser group of local deities that is not enlightened, and which, therefore, can do damage both to followers and to the wider community if not properly controlled. He has stated unequivocally that neither he nor his followers should continue to worship Shugden as, amongst other reasons, it encourages sectarianism. Shugden followers organised international campaigns against the Dalai Lama until 1997 when, according to the Indian police, three monks in Dharamsala who had criticised the sect were stabbed to death by Shugden followers who then fled to China.

The Chinese authorities have latched on to this denouncement of Shugden as "a case of disrespect of religious freedom by the Dalai Lama". Worshipping of Shugden is encouraged by the Chinese, who have allowed statues of the deity to be erected at monasteries, including Ganden monastery, the main seat of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism.

A year before the crackdown on mass incense burning, on 14 March 2006, monks at the Ganden monastery reportedly destroyed a statue of Shugden. Although many, often contradictory, rumours have circulated about the incident, a few concrete details have emerged.

It is reasonably certain that the 17 monks arrested were released after signing a statement acknowledging their 'crime' and agreeing to pay compensation for the 'damage done'. This is likely to mean financing the reconstruction of the destroyed Shugden statue. Since most monks have no personal money, their families are said to have agreed to act as guarantors or to provide the funds themselves.

Two of the monks were later formally charged with being in league with the 'Dalai clique' and were sentenced to prison terms of two to three years.



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

The firecracker crackdown

In October 2007, the Chinese authorities shut down internet cafes and further blocked websites and blogs in an unsuccessful attempt to repress news of the presentation of a US Congressional Medal to the Dalai Lama.

The authorities in Labrang ordered all shops selling fireworks to close on October 13 to prevent sales of celebratory firecrackers. Monks who travelled from Labrang to Linsha to buy firecrackers in defiance of the ban were stopped by Chinese police, who confiscated approximately Chinese Yuan 8,000 (just over £500) worth of firecrackers.

Eyewitnesses in Tibet reported huge increases in military personnel near monasteries in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and in Tibetan provinces of China on or immediately before the 17 October ceremony. Although Chinese authorities attempted to block media coverage into and out of Tibet, news leaked out of a four-day clash between monks from the Drepung monastery in Lhasa and police who were determined to prevent monks and lay people celebrating the awarding of the US Congressional Medal to the Dalai Lama. Reports⁸⁵ indicated that 3000 military personnel surrounded the monastery, preventing the 1000 monks from leaving the building to celebrate with lay people.

Tibet Watch learned that the clashes spread far beyond Drepung monastery. There was an earlier clash between monks and armed Chinese police who broke up a special celebratory prayer service at Labrang monastery.

In Amdo, eyewitnesses described police confiscating satellite dishes local people in Chentse County had put on their rooftops to help them receive coverage of the award ceremony from Voice of America. Subsequent eyewitness reports said that power transmission was cut in Thawo county in Amdo so as to prevent TV and radio transmission of the award. Eyewitnesses also reported four truckloads of troops stationed outside Tso monastery in Amdo at the time the award was made.

Despite all efforts by the Chinese authorities to prevent any celebration, monks, nuns and lay people came out in droves to mark the occasion with prayer ceremonies, bonfires and firecrackers.





Appendix I

Sample of the test to promote patriotic re-education in Tsamkhung monastery

Q:What is the most important reason to promote patriotic re-education in our monastery?

A:The importance of promoting patriotic re-education in the monastery is to strengthen the patriotic education campaign that began in 1997. Patriotic re-education reminds the monastery that we must make the teachings of Buddhism harmonious with socialist society, we must block the harmful influence and behaviour of the Dalai clique, and we must work for the unity of the motherland by opposing the Dalai clique. Upholding 'love country, love religion' will help us become model monks.

Q:What are the Four Strengths and Four Loves?

A:The Four Strengths are to strengthen the recognition of the special characteristics of the socialist path; to promote the unity of the Peoples' Republic of China; to oppose the splittists and to fight the Dalai; and to protect the unity of the motherland.The Four Loves are: to love the Communist Party of China; to love the motherland; to love socialism; and to love people.

Q:What are the reasons for opposing the splittists and the Dalai clique?

A:Tibet is inseparable from the motherland and hence it is the number one duty of the PRC to oppose the splittists and to protect the unity of the motherland. Since the Dalai clique ran away, they have been working to disturb the harmony of the motherland and have committed sins trying to destabilise the nationalities. Opposing the splittists protects the unity of the motherland. Opposing the Dalai clique is our number one responsibility.

Q:What is number one political responsibility of TAR?

A:To oppose the splittists, to protect the unity of the motherland, to protect the relationships between the nationalities, to oppose the 14th Dalai and to have a clear political separation from the Dalai clique.

Q:What are the behaviours and actions to show love for the motherland?

A: First is to hold high the thousand-ray flag of the patriotic education. Second is to abide by and respect the socialist path and dictatorship of the proletariats. Third is to not engage in any activities that harm the unity of the motherland. Fourth is to protect the entire security and belongings of the nation. Fifth is to understand that unity is the main historical development of the CPC. Sixth is to build a thought which would precedes more than protecting the benefits of the motherland.

Q:What is the aim of the 14th Dalai Lama declaring Tibetan independence and harming the unity of the motherland?

A:The aim of the Dalai Lama doing these things is to bring back the old feudal society and to revive the now defunct politico-religious powers in his hands.

Q.What are the four views that CPC have of the Dalai?

A: First, the 14th Dalai is the main source of harm to the stability of Tibetan society. Second, he is the head of a group that wants to split Tibet from the motherland. Third, he is an unmistakable tool in the hands of foreign imperialists opposing China. Fourth, he is the biggest obstacle in setting up rules regarding Buddhist philosophy.

Q:What basic rights do people have?

A:There are seven rights for the general populace: (1) political rights and freedoms, (2) freedom to believe in religion, (3) basic human rights, (4) economic and social rights, (5) the right to education, (6) the right to protection of wife and children by the nation, and (7) protection of rights of Chinese citizens living abroad and those who return.

Q: How do you understand the meaning of religious freedom defined by CPC?

A: Everyone has the right to believe in religion and also has the right not to believe in religion. People have a right to believe in different sects of religion. Atheists have the right to believe in a religion and believers have a right to cease believing.

Appendix 2

State Religious Affairs Bureau Order No. 5

Order No. 5

These “Management measures for the reincarnation of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism” were passed at the administrative affairs conference of the State Administration of Religious Affairs on July 13, 2007, and will be implemented on September 1, 2007.

Bureau Director, Ye Xiaowen
July 18, 2007

Article 1: These measures have been formulated in accordance with the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” in order to guarantee citizens’ freedom of religious belief, to respect Tibetan Buddhism’s practice of inheriting living Buddha positions, and to regulate the management of living Buddha reincarnation affairs.

Article 2: Reincarnating living Buddhas(i) should respect and protect the principles of the unification of the state, protecting the unity of the minorities, protecting religious concord and social harmony, and protecting the normal order of Tibetan Buddhism.

Reincarnating living Buddhas should respect the religious rituals and historically established systems of Tibetan Buddhism, but may not re-establish feudal privileges which have already been abolished.

Reincarnating living Buddhas shall not be interfered with or be under the dominion of any foreign organisation or individual(ii).

Article 3: Reincarnating living Buddhas need to satisfy the following conditions:

- (1) A majority of local religious believers and the monastery management organisation must request the reincarnation;
- (2) The inheritance lineage should be real and have continued to the present day;
- (3) The monastery applying for the living Buddha reincarnation must be the monastery at which the living Buddha monk is registered, it must be registered as a Tibetan Buddhist place of religious activity, and it must have the ability to train and raise living Buddhas.

Article 4: Reincarnating living Buddhas who meet any of the following conditions may not be reincarnated:

- (1) Reincarnations which are not regulated by the religious doctrine of Tibetan Buddhism;
- (2) Applications in those districts (city-level people's governments and above) which do not permit reincarnations.

Article 5: Reincarnating living Buddhas should follow established application and approval procedures. The application and approval procedure is:

- The management organisation at the monastery applying for the living Buddha reincarnation where the monk is registered, or the local Buddhist Association, should submit applications for reincarnations to the local religious affairs departments at the level of people's government above county-level;
- Once the people's government above county-level has made suggestions, the people's government religious affairs department reports upwards, and examination and approval shall be made by the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs department.
- Living Buddha reincarnations who have a relatively large impact shall be reported to the provincial or autonomous regional people's government for approval; those with a great impact shall be reported to the State Administration for Religious Affairs for approval; those with a particularly great impact shall be reported to the State Council for approval.
- Verification and authorisation of the living Buddha application should solicit the opinions of the corresponding Buddhist Association.

Article 6: When there is debate over the size of a living Buddha's impact, the China Buddhist Association shall officiate, and report to the State Administration of Religious Affairs to be put on the record.

Article 7: Once an application for a living Buddha's reincarnation has received approval, depending on the size of the living Buddha's impact, the corresponding Buddhist Association shall establish a reincarnation guidance team; the management organisation at the monastery where the living Buddha is registered, or the corresponding Buddhist Association, shall establish a search team to look for the reincarnate soul child (iii), and search affairs shall be carried out under the leadership of the guidance team.

The reincarnate soul child shall be recognised by the provincial or autonomous regional Buddhist Association or the China Buddhist Association in accordance with religious rituals and historically established systems.

No group or individual may without authorisation carry out any activities related to searching for or recognising reincarnating living Buddha soul children.

Article 8: Living Buddhas which have historically been recognised by drawing lots from

the golden urn shall have their reincarnating soul children recognised by drawing lots from the golden urn.

Requests not to use drawing lots from the golden urn shall be reported by the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs departments to the State Administration of Religious Affairs for approval; cases with a particularly large impact shall be reported to the State Council for approval.

Article 9: Once a reincarnating living Buddha soul child has been recognised, it shall be reported the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs department for approval; those with a great impact shall be reported to the State Administration for Religious Affairs for approval; those with a particularly great impact shall be reported to the State Council for approval.

Reincarnating living Buddhas who have been approved by the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs departments or by the autonomous regional people's government shall be reported to the State Administration of Religious Affairs to be put on record.

Article 10: When the reincarnating living Buddha is installed, a representative of the approving authority shall read out the documents of approval, and the corresponding Buddhist Association shall issue a living Buddha permit.

Living Buddha permits shall uniformly be issued by the China Buddhist Association and reported to the State Administration of Religious Affairs to be put on record.

Article 11: Persons and units who are responsible for being in contravention of these measures and who without authority carry out living Buddha reincarnation affairs, shall be dealt administrative sanction by the people's government religious affairs departments in accordance with stipulations in the "Regulations on Religious Affairs"; when a crime has been constituted, criminal responsibility shall be pursued.

Article 12: When the reincarnating living Buddha has been installed the management organisation at the monastery where he is registered shall formulate a training plan, recommend a scripture teacher, and submit the plan to the local Buddhist Association, which shall report upward to the provincial or autonomous regional people's government religious affairs department for approval.

Article 13: Provinces and autonomous regions which are involved in affairs of reincarnating living Buddhas may formulate and implement detailed measures in accordance these measures, and report them to the State Administration of Religious Affairs to be put on record.

Article 14: These measures shall be implemented from 1 September 2007.⁸⁶

Notes:

- (i) "Reincarnating Living Buddha" is the Chinese term for a tulku.
- (ii) Thus, Chinese-recognised tulkus are denied any contact with their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, or any other religious leader living in exile.
- (iii) Modern Chinese sources refer to a young incarnation of a (male) tulku as a 'soul boy' (Traditional Chinese: Pinyin: língtóng). The term does not exist in Tibetan.

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Chapter I The unwritten law

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6. Article 49, ICCPR.
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15. Article 6, ICCPR
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18. Name withheld, monk, Dzoge county, Sichuan province.
19. Article 11, National Autonomy Law, 1984, 2001.
20. Article 75, 77, General Principles of Civil Law, 1986:
21. Article 3, Law on Elections to National and Local People's Congresses, 1986 and Article 9, Organisation Law on the Village Committees, 1987.

22. Article 9, Education Law, 1995.
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24. The Four Cardinal Principles: uphold the socialist path, the dictatorship of the proletariat, leadership of the CCP and Mao Zedong Thought.
25. Pitman Potter, *Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China*, The China Quarterly, 2003.
26. Article 36: Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No State organ, public organisation or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The State protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order; impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.
27. 'Guanyo woguo shehuizhuyi shiqi zongjiao wenti de jiben guandian he jiben zhengee' *Basic Viewpoints and policies on religious issues during our country's socialist period*, 31 March 1982. Known as 'Document 19' and translated into English in *Freedom of religion in China* (Mickey Spiegel, Human Rights Watch, 1992). It recognises only five religions: Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism.
28. White Paper on the Freedom of Religious Belief in China, 1997.
29. For example, Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) 2005 (Ch: zongjiao shiwu tiaoli) demands local religious affairs councils to standardise religious managements. (See CECC 2005 Report, pp44-50) Administrative regulations (Ch: xingzheng fagui) are created by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and function as the tertiary source of law, after the Constitution, the Basic Laws, and other laws, while having little legal value.
30. For example, Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) 2005 (Ch: Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli) demands that local religious affairs councils standardise religious managements. (See CECC 2005 Report, pp44-50). Ordinances (Ch: tiaoli) are created by the State Council.
31. For example, Document 6 CCP Central Committee/State Council Circular on some problems concerning further improving work on religion, 5 February 1991 (Ch: Guanyu jinyibu zuohao zongjiao gongzuo ruogan wenti de tongzhi). Appendix I, *Freedom of religion in China* (Mickey Spiegel, Human Rights Watch, 1992). Circulars (Ch: tongzhi) are private documents (Ch: neibu wenjian), to be circulated internally. They are usually experimental in nature, and will be codified before being made public only once deemed successful and relevant for public use.
32. Other, subsidiary forms of legislation include opinions (Ch: yijian) replies (Ch: pifu) to requests for instructions from lower authorities (Ch: qingshi) and letters between government officials (Ch: han) and replies to such letters (Ch: fuhan).

33. See State Administration for Religious Affairs, published on www.knows.jongo.com
34. Such documents refer to the decisions of the United Front, an organisation of CCP, revealing the deference to political opinion rather than adherence to legal mechanisms. Comprehensive translations of relevant official documents can be found in ICT, *The Communist Party as Living Buddha: the crisis facing Tibetan Buddhism under Chinese Control*, 2007.
35. Forced disappearance of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama selected by the Dalai Lama. In 2006, the Spanish National Court accepted to investigate this crime, amongst others, marking the first occasion for judicial review of the forced disappearance. For further details see Dr Jose Esteve and Emilie Hunter; *Historic Lawsuit will investigate Tibetan Genocide*, *Tibetan Review*, February 2006, Christine Bakker; *Universal Jurisdiction of Spanish Courts over Genocide in Tibet: Can it Work?*, *Journal of International Criminal Justice* (2006).
36. See 'Special Rapporteur on Torture Highlights Challenges at End of Visit to China' UN Press Release, 2nd December 2005 and Dr Manfred Nowak's report from this visit.
37. Congressional-Executive Commission on China: Annual Report 2006, pp 75 ; Congressional-Executive Commission on China: Annual Report 2005, pp 43-55
38. Including European Parliament Resolution, 13 July 1995; 14 December 1995; United States Congress S. J Res. 43, 11 December 1995. For UK Early Day Motions, please refer to the Tibet Society website: www.tibetsociety.com (accessed 19 September 2007).
39. Examples include Human Rights Watch, *Freedom of religion in China*, 1992; Tibet Information Network, *A Sea of Bitterness: Patriotic Education in Qinghai Monasteries*, TIN Briefing Paper 32, 1999; Tibet Information Network, *Relative Freedom? Tibetan Buddhism and Religious Policy in Kandze, Sichuan, 1987-1999*, TIN Briefing Paper 33, 1999; Steven Marshall, *Rukhag 3: The Nuns of Drapchi Prison*, Tibet Information Network, 2000; International Campaign for Tibet, *When the Sky Fell to Earth*, 2004; International Campaign for Tibet, *The Communist Part as Living Buddha*, 2007
40. 'Tibet vs China: the human rights showdown', Open Democracy, www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-china/tibet_3826.jsp
41. Article 1, Main Functions of SARA.

Chapter 2 Death by a thousand cuts

42. Name withheld, monk, 27, Gyakya monastery, Sichuan province, Ngaba prefecture, Dzoge county.
43. 'Monitoring Compliance With Human Rights', Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2005 Annual Report: www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3d_religion.php

44. L.T., monk, 23, Tharpaling monastery, Choezing township, Tingri county, Shigatse prefecture.
45. Lobsang Tenzin and Thupten Nyima, in an interview with TCHRD about the control of and interference by government officials in their monastery.
46. Name withheld, monk from Kham.
47. Name withheld, monk, 35, Langri monastery, Kongpo Gyamda county, Nyingtri prefecture, TAR.
48. Name withheld, monk, 60.
49. Name withheld, monk, 27
50. Name withheld, monk, 22, from Kyegudo [Yushu] county, Yushu prefecture, Qinghai.
51. T.G., 22, monk from Yushu County, Yushu prefecture, Qinghai.
52. http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/hr_report2006tb.html
53. T.G., 22, monk from Kyegudo County, Yushu prefecture, Qinghai.
54. Name withheld, tantric practitioner, 61, Chabcha county, Tsohlo [Hainan] prefecture, Qinghai.
55. 'Human Rights Update', August 2005, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD): www.tchrd.org/publications/hr_updates/2005/hr200508.html
56. L.S., monk, Kumbum monastery.
57. 'Tourism drive "destroying Tibet"', Daily Telegraph, 09/04/05, et al
58. Name withheld, monk, Nyi Thargyal monastery, Nyiku township, Kartse [Ganzi] county, Sichuan.
59. Name withheld, nun, Tsongon Province, Golok prefecture.
60. 'Monitoring Compliance With Human Rights', Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2005 Annual Report:
www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3d_religion.php
61. Name withheld, monk, 27, Kham.

Chapter 3 'Love your country, love your religion'

62. 'Tibetan Abbot Forced To Step Down', Radio Free Asia, 30/05/07.
63. Name withheld, nun, 30, Nagar nunnery, Changa township.
64. *Mass silent protest in Tibet's Drepung Monastery following China's continued implementation of "patriotic education"* TCHRD, 29/11/05:
<http://www.tchrd.org/press/2005/pr20051129.html>
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. 'Tibetan Monks Arrested, Monastery Closed Amid Protests', Radio Free Asia, 29/11/05.
68. Name withheld, monk, Drepung monastery, Lhasa
69. Name withheld, monk, 25, from Kartse [Ganzi] county, Sichuan province.

Chapter 4 Reincarnation: over our dead body

70. Sometimes referred to by the title Rinpoche or 'Precious'.
71. *Joint Statement to Repudiate the So-called Order no. 5 of China's State Administration of Religious Affairs on Management Measures for the Reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' in Tibetan Buddhism*, 02/09/07. Press statement by Kalon for Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration.
72. 'Chadrel Rinpoche's fate unknown', TCHRD, 25/08/01:
www.tchrd.org/press/2001/pr20010824.html
73. 'Chadrel Rinpoche', Human Rights in China (HRIC), 08/09/97:
www.hrichina.org/public/contents/article?revision%5fid=2512&item%5fid=2511
74. Xinhua News Agency, 12/04/06
75. Name withheld, monk, Chagpori, Lhasa
76. N.G., monk, 32, Chabcha County, Amdo region
77. *Joint Statement to Repudiate the so-called Order no. 5 of China's State Administration of Religious Affairs on Management Measures for the Reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' in Tibetan Buddhism*, 02/09/07. Press statement by Kalon for Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration.
78. 'UN rights experts express alarm over situation involving Tibetan monk', UN News, 15/04/04: www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=10408&Cr=tibet&Cr1=
79. Name withheld, monk, 25, Chamdo, Jomda County
80. Name withheld, monk, 23, Nyitso monastery, Tawo County
81. *Joint Statement to Repudiate the So-called Order no. 5 of China's State Administration of Religious Affairs on Management Measures for the Reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' in Tibetan Buddhism*, 02/09/07. Press statement by Kalon for Religion and Culture, Central Tibetan Administration.

Chapter 5 Resistance is fertile

82. Nagpa, the lay person who smuggled a CD of photos out of Tibet in February 2006
83. Name withheld, monk, Meiwa monastery in Ngaba County, Amdo
84. Radio Free Asia, 21/03/07
85. 'Newspaper reports clashes in Tibet after US honor for Dalai Lama', *International Herald Tribune*, 21/10/07, et al.

Appendix 2

86. State Administration of Religious Affairs
www.sara.gov.cn/GB/zcfg/89522ff7-409d-11dc-bafe-93180af1bb1a.html (Chinese original) and Congressional Executive Commission on China
www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=98772 (English translation)

No faith in the state

Tibetans speak about religious restrictions

A Tibet Watch report

Tibet Watch was established in 2006 as a research and education charity. Tibet Watch gathers, analyses and disseminates the most up to date information available about human rights, environmental, economic, social and cultural issues in Tibet.



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