

Tibetan Literature: In the Web of Censorship and Discrimination

**A Joint Report by Tibetan Writers
Abroad PEN Centre and Tibetan
Centre for Human Rights and
Democracy**



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Contents

Preface 4

Introduction 5

I. A Brief History of the Situation of Tibetan Literature under Restrictions 6

- I.1. Tibetan Literature before the Chinese Invasion
- I.2. The Dark of Period of Tibetan Literature
- I.3. The Birth of New Tibetan Literature
- I.4. Tibetan Literature of the Wounded
- I.5. Tibetan Nationalist Literature
- I.6. Varied Themes in Tibetan Literature
- I.7. Headed in Two Different Directions
- I.8. Criticisms Concealed in Artistic Expression
- I.9. The Second Awakening
- I.10. Tibetan Writers Stand Behind the Masses
- I.11. Increased Restrictions on Tibetan Writers and Intellectuals

II. Restrictions on Tibetan Literature and Artistic Expression 12

- II.1. The Chinese View on Culture
- II.2. Contradictions Between Outside Propaganda and the Inside Reality
- II.3. Biased Guidance for the Direction of New Writings

III. A Selection of Censored Words in Tibet 15

- III.1. History of Tsanpo Dynasty
- III.2. Dalai Lama
- III.3. Tibet, Tibet Autonomous Region

IV. The Real Situation of Poetry under Occupation 17

- IV.1. The Bedrock of the Minds of Writers in Tibet
- IV.2. How ‘Suffering’, the Main Theme of Tibetan Poetry, is Expressed

V. Special Writings in 2008 21

- V.1. Example Poetry Book ‘Blood Letter’
- V.2. Meanings and Other Aspects of Blood Letter
- V.3. Shardungri Periodical in 2008
- V.4. The Division of Heaven and Earth
- V.5. Crackdown on Tibetan Writers

VI. Shokjang, An Example of the Current Situation 27

- VI.1. Shokjang as University Student
- VI.2. Shokjang from 2010 to 2014
- VI.3. Shokjang in the Skies of WeChat
- VI.4. Shokjang’s Arrest

VII. Examples of Banned Writings in Tibet 31

- VII.1. 70000-Character Petition
- VII.2. A Brief Observation of Tearful and Bloody Weather
- VII.3. New Critique of Dialectics and Others

- VII.4. Tibetan Chronicle of Auspicious Vase
- VII.5. Tibet Notes
- VII.6. Restless Himalayas
- VII.7. Books of Jhado Rinzang
- VII.8. Jamyang Kyi's Succession of Torture
- VII.9. Dhi Lhaden's Two Books
- VII.10. Tsering Dondrub's Howling Red Wind

VIII. Comparison Between Censored and Celebrated Writings 44

- VIII.1. Model Authors and Model Literary Works
- VIII.2. Discrimination Against the Writings of an Author
- VIII.3. The Lines Tibetan Writers Cannot Cross
- VIII.4. A Brief Comparison Between Writings Banned and Writings Praised

IX. On Ban of Publications in Tibet 48

X. Arrests and Torture of Tibetan Writers 48

- X.1. Conclusions Made from Inside Tibet
- X.2. Research Conclusions from Outside Tibet

XI. Banned Websites Related to Literature 52

Preface

This report reveals the general situation of Tibetan literature under Chinese occupation and the censorship and discriminatory policies and practices imposed on wide ranging areas of literary works in Tibet.

This report is evidence of the manner in which the Chinese authorities censor and repress Tibetan literary works that represent the history of Tibetan literature and the fate of Tibet itself.

This report highlights the relentless campaign waged by Chinese government to cut the lineage of Tibetan literature, which embodies the thoughts and treasures of traditional knowledge, and to create obstacles to the new Tibetan literature that sheds light on the historical consciousness and social conditions, which reflect the deep-rooted aspirations and grievances of the Tibetan people. Additionally official censorship practices ensure the penetration of government views, thoughts and stance in Tibetan literature.

Tibetan literature is subjected to various forms of restrictions including the mandatory requirement to censor certain views and promote others. This situation underscores not just political occupation but also cultural colonization of Tibet under Chinese rule.

Introduction

Literature cannot be understood solely by how analysts of a certain time period interpret it. It can also have various meanings depending on the circumstance, time and mindset. Thus writing an analytical report on how writers and their works are forbidden in Tibet is in itself a daunting task. For instance, the authors of all the writings discussed in this report reside in Tibet. To protect their security and future, there is no option but to conceal certain details or present oblique references connected to them in this report. The current circumstances are such that it is difficult to make everything transparent.

Literature is not only the act of writing itself, but it consists of four aspects in motion: the thoughts and imagination of the writer; their artistic representation in writing; the readers' enjoyment while reading it; and its impact on the readers' minds and the wider society. The restriction on literature goes beyond the boundaries of the freedoms of just writing and reading. Literature requires a big wheel of freedoms: freedom of thought and information, freedom of expression to articulate that thought, freedom to disseminate that thought and information in society, and freedom of association for the society to be able to receive it.

When literature is viewed in the context of the larger environment for freedoms of thought and expression, the restrictions on all aspects of Tibetan literature under Chinese occupation become evidently clear. Also obvious is the extreme censorship and severe restrictions placed on the freedoms associated with the production of literary works in Tibet.

There is a general recognition in the world that the standard for a nation's literature is that it has to be written in its own language. Tibetan is one of the four oldest languages in Asia. It is as rich as Sanskrit. Tibetan is used in six or seven countries and in various places in South East Asia. It is now spreading steadily to several other countries.

The highest level of development for Tibetan literature would be that all the Tibetan-speaking regions would have freedom of association; through exchanges, people would be free to experience the beauty and poetry of the ancient Tibetan language. Tibetan literature has to become a vehicle for the sensibilities and artistic expression of those who use Tibetan language as their medium of daily communication.

Viewed from this perspective, the entire literary atmosphere stifles free expression in the regions where Tibetan is spoken. Although there are several social causes that impede freedom of expression, the main reason is that the biggest domain of Tibetan language, Tibet, is under the occupation and control of the Chinese state.

As such, prohibiting certain literary works and imprisoning some writers are obvious evidence that China restricts the growth and development of Tibetan literature. But it does not represent the reality of the seriously endangered status of Tibetan literature.

Based on all the background information, this report will introduce the real situation of Tibetan literature under Chinese occupation by providing a few examples of the general state of Tibetan literature, its historical stages of development, analysis of meanings in literature, abuse of the use of literary works for cultural imperialism and restrictions imposed on writers and their literary works.

This report includes a comparative study of the state of Tibetan literature before and after the Chinese invasion; the ten dark years when Tibetan history witnessed the severing of the lineage of Tibetan literature; the directions of literary works and writers from the 1980s to the present times; and in particular a collection of examples of literary works and authors who have faced restriction and torture. These examples provide a compelling picture of the repression and discrimination that undermines the growth and development of Tibetan literature.

I. A Brief History of the Situation of Tibetan Literature under Restrictions

I.1. Tibetan Literature before the Chinese Invasion

Since the 7th century when Tibetan came into being with its own grammatical system, to the early 20th century, Tibetan was mostly used for translation and writing. There are scholars who claim that for more than a thousand years, Tibet was the most prolific nation on earth in variety and volume of translation and writing. This conclusion is not baseless. With a mere 1300 years of history and a population of five or six million people, Tibetans produced hundreds of volumes of Buddhist canons, dialectics, medical practices, astrology and literature were translated from Sanskrit and other languages. Tibetans studied, experimented and practiced the teachings and knowledge contained in these volumes. It is said that this kind of literary production is incomparable to any other nation and people in the world.¹

A common characteristic shared by the high-ranking Tibetan scholars as well as ordinary people is the natural disposition toward religious faith and a sense of appreciation for literary expression. From the poetic tomes at the top to the folk songs at the bottom, religious faith and artistic expression are prevalent, holding important positions in the worldview of intellectual creativity, lifestyle, and morality of the Tibetans.

Not only that, there are many recorded histories that show the influence wielded by Tibetan literature on the Mongols, Manchus, Indians and the Chinese².

Since the Chinese invasion, the lineage of the previous development of Tibetan literature has been cut off and has largely lost its historical significance. At present,

¹Tibetan thinker and intellectual Samdong Rinpoche made this conclusion in a speech he delivered to a national conference of writers held in India.

² Tibetan scholar Drogon Choegyal Phakpa created scripts for the Mongols. Many Tibetan lamas became preceptors to the royal courts of the Mongols and Chinese. These are important examples of how India's ancient cultures are now being revived with the help of Tibetan scholars and canons.

Tibetan literature has become of a ground for imposing restrictions and a tool for those imposing restrictions.³

I.2. The Dark of Period of Tibetan Literature

If 1980 was the year when the new Tibetan literature was born, then it has only been about 38 years since such a great change took place in Tibetan literature and the subjects it dealt with. For 20 years, from 1959 to 1979, Tibetan literature went through a barren interlude when harsh policies in the name of Democratic Reforms and Cultural Revolution were implemented in Tibet. During that period, apart from some individual Tibetans who covertly and resourcefully carried out small cultural activities, there were no opportunities or environment conducive for people to write openly.

In 1975, a writer from Sweden came to Lhasa and requested to be introduced to contemporary Tibetan literary works and their authors, but not a single author who had done any artistic literary work in Tibetan language at the time could be found. Several years later in 1979, a Swedish journalist visiting Lhasa showed an interest in holding discussions with Tibetan writers, but the authorities in Tibet Autonomous Region could not produce a single writer⁴. This information illustrates the severing of the lineage of Tibetan literature for the first time since the beginning of Tibetan history.⁵ Not only was the lineage of written Tibetan literature severed but also the tradition of oral literature such as severe restrictions imposed on Tibetan folk culture.⁶

Although the Cultural Revolution was a nation-wide campaign spread all over China, scholars contend that its destruction and impacts on Tibetans were more severe than on Chinese. Tibetan writer Tsering Woenser wrote that the Cultural Revolution was an enormous disaster that impacted Tibet more severely than China mainly because of the discriminatory way it was implemented in Tibet. Far more monasteries and cultural heritages were destroyed and robbed in Tibet than in China. The Cultural Revolution proponents also suffered punishments in China but in Tibet, let alone punishments, they enjoyed high official positions. Woenser concluded that they included high-ranking officials such as Ragdi, the former vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the Chinese National People's Congress and the highest-ranking Tibetan official in China.

I.3. The Birth of New Tibetan Literature

³ China's occupation of Tibet is not only about removing those in power and ruling it, it is also about invading culture, religion and way of life, imposing restrictions and changing them all. For example, monasteries were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, religious activities were banned, and sleeves of Tibetan dresses were cut off, plaits of hair chopped off, even the traditional ways of naming newborns were changed. In retrospect, it is concluded that Cultural Revolution pervaded every aspect of life The Tibetans. See Pema Bum's memoir: *The Six Stars With a Crooked Neck (smin drug ske 'kyog)*

⁴ *The Waterfall and Fragrant Flowers: The Development of Tibetan Literature* by Tibetan historian Tsering Shakya.

⁵ Tibetan writer Hortsang Jigme wrote, "From 1958 to 1979, you could not hear a sound of Tibetan literature as small as the buzz of a bee, so I call it the dark period" in his book, *Modern Tibetan Literature and Its Background, The Green Sprout Growing in Puddle of Blood*.

⁶ It is common knowledge that during the Cultural Revolution you had to sing praises to the Party and Chairman Mao, and Tibetan folk songs and storytelling were banned.

The 1980s witnessed unprecedented emergence of periodicals and journals that provided a forum for thoughts and artistic expressions written in Tibetan. The arrival of Tibetan literary arts and the literary journal “Sbrang Char” (The Drizzle) was considered as an emphatic statement of the new Tibetan literature.⁷

However, at the time, apart from political propaganda, traumatized Tibetans still lacked a sense of articulating the collective interests of Tibetan society and were writing within the confines of praising Communist ideology, the Party’s policies, the Party’s achievements and the Party leaders. In short, they remained trapped in the Chinese political sphere of criticizing past history, politics, culture and thoughts - and praising the current conditions.⁸

I.4. Tibetan Literature of the Wounded

From 1980 to 1985, Tibetan literary arts had alone produced over 90 short stories.⁹ As the number of writings increased, the subjects also varied. One of the most noticeable changes was that they stopped lamenting about the miseries and backwardness of the Tibetan society before the Chinese occupation and instead wrote about the sufferings of Tibetans under Chinese occupation and the Cultural Revolution. It gave way to the literary expression of the wounds suffered by Tibetan people.

The Tibetan literature of the wounded talked about the sufferings of the current conditions and the pain of the wounds in the hearts of the Tibetans. This kind literary expression signifies that Tibetan literature became for the first time in recent history a medium to express a nation’s mental and psychological state.¹⁰

The Chinese ‘scar literature’, a literary genre that allowed victims of Cultural Revolution to experience catharsis through writing, influenced the emergence of the Tibetan literature of the wounded. It was not that the Tibetan writers received some special freedoms to express themselves; this space became available due to the prevailing Chinese public discourse against Cultural Revolution.

I.5. Tibetan Nationalist Literature

In the 1980s, there was a growing realization among the Chinese leadership that more than achieving the vision of Communist ideology, it was important to compare themselves with western countries and establish an identity as a Chinese nation. Likewise, educated Tibetans and young writers compared themselves with the prevalent developments in China. On the other hand, the Chinese looked down upon the educated Tibetans, which in turn placed intense pressure on their psyche.¹¹ For

⁷ “The Waterfall and Fragrant Flowers: The Development of Tibetan Literature” by History Scholar Tsering Shakya.

⁸ Tsering Shakya concludes in one of his writings that all four of the short stories selected for the first issue of the periodical “Literary Arts” had been written under the ‘impeccable guidance’ from the Chinese Communist Party in terms of meaning and representation.

⁹ In “The Collection of Analytical Articles of Sbrang Char”

¹⁰ Guolibin talks about the mental wounds of Tibetans in writings published between 1983 and 1986 in his “Brief Discussion about Subjects of Modern Tibetan Short Stories” published in the 3rd issue of the Sbrang Char in 1989.

¹¹ Research on Rangdrol by Tsering Shakya and Tibetan translation by Gurong Pundrol

instance, a literary piece written in Chinese language by Dondrub Gyal, the pioneer of new Tibetan literature, was rejected by Chinese language journals¹².

Due to these circumstances, they became determined to change the backward attitudes of fellow Tibetans, and the ongoing discriminatory and condescending behaviors of Chinese towards Tibetans further fanned their nationalistic fervor. Two main themes formed the backbone of the narratives of recent Tibetan literature: criticizing thoughts and behaviors that appear detrimental to the collective progress of Tibetan society and the revival of pride in Tibetan nationalist identity. That Dondrub Gyal's new writings mainly revolved around these two themes is a clear example of this situation.

I.6. Varied Themes in Tibetan Literature

One of the most significant changes in Tibetan literary history occurred when the collective destiny and nationalism of Tibetan people became major literary themes. While this change was most prominent and influential, not all Tibetan writings were about nationalism or nationalist pride.

Many writers patronized by the Chinese government have spent their whole lives writing about all the wrongs and ills suffered by inhabitants of old Tibet before the Chinese invasion and how Chinese brought prosperity and happiness to Tibet¹³.

There were still many other writers who wrote about Tibetan culture and interpreted its values. These advocates of culture often criticized the younger writers for their newfound style of writing and subject matters.

Because of different ways of thinking and different life goals, these three different groups of writers produced three very different themes in Tibetan literature. On the whole, these three different ideologies still exist in the realm of Tibetan writers and their writings. Therefore inevitable confrontations between them are at times overt and at other times subtle and this is due to their different ways of thinking.

Intellectuals and writers acting as government spokespersons base their works on official propaganda that in turn help them earn favors and benefits from the government. In contrast, the writings of intellectuals and writers who stand on the traditional and cultural side are anchored in the traditional knowledge and values. Their objective is to pass on the traditional Tibetan culture to the next generation. There is yet another group of writers whose writings focus on the lives of ordinary people. Their main theme concerns the joys and sufferings of ordinary people and the writers' personal thoughts and feelings.

These three different approaches to Tibetan literature may give the impression that Tibetans share different views and ideologies. But they are primarily necessitated by political propaganda and interests of the Chinese government, as well as the political support related to education and policy matters that are both overt and covert.

I.7. Headed in Two Different Directions

¹² Dondrub Gyal's Life by Pema Bum details the mental stress Dondrub Gyal suffered because the Chinese looked down upon him.

¹³ Tibetan writer Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok is an example of this. More details in another chapter.

Among the different groups of writers, the themes of the younger group of writers were close to ordinary people and their lives. Their writings mostly revolve around criticisms and themes of nationalism and the destiny of the Tibetan people. At some point, their writings also appeared to have two different themes.

Some pursued individual paths of creating new forms of beauty in literature, questioning the earlier belief that literature was a tool to serve the people and society, and debating whether literature itself had an obligation at all.¹⁴

The views of the society and the criticisms against culture that is seen as the foundation of the aforementioned social views along with nationalism became the second theme of literature or they appeared in different forms of writing including prose. A number of critical writings were born during the waves of literature in the 1980s and 1990s.

I.8. Criticisms Concealed in Artistic Expression

For many years, critical writings hid under the cover of artistic literary works. This changed when the works of criticism became a body of literature independent from the artistic literary works. Such changes were most clear in 2000 when Shokdung published *“Echoes of Critiquing Wisdom”*. Since then the views of people like Shokdung became the main topics of discussions among intellectuals in Tibet. The discussions had huge impacts not only on the intellectuals but also loomed large among the ordinary public. Shokdung’s *Echoes of Critiquing Wisdom* and subsequently the *I Books Collection* are major examples of his influence.¹⁵

Although the subjects of critical writings during this period had different characteristics, they had many things in common. They questioned and debated everything. They carried a deep sense of responsibility towards life, wisdom in recognizing right from wrong, and discussed the necessity of fairness and wisdom in dealing with the natural phenomena in a straightforward manner, and about advanced and backward nations. They believed that the root cause of advancement and backwardness was culture. Thus, criticizing cultures was a big aspect of thought at that time. Regardless of whether the Chinese government interfered or not in the ongoing discussions about traditional cultures and values among Tibetans, many expressed the view that Chinese Communist education played a part in undermining the influence of Tibetan Buddhism and cultural values as it primarily served the purposes of the Chinese state.¹⁶

I.9. The Second Awakening

¹⁴ This view is a current topic of discussion among new writers and literary researchers. To avoid trouble for the writers in Tibet, no specific examples can be provided here.

¹⁵ The “I Books Collection” conveys the message that the personal “I” is more important than the traditional Tibetan belief in collective interests that one should always live and pray for the benefit of all the sentient beings in the universe.

¹⁶ Tibetan literature spread to the lay society from the monastics. Literary themes shifted away from Tibetan Buddhist culture. Western Tibetologists and Tibetan scholars, in their authenticating Tibet writings and writings rebuking views held by people like Shokdung, believed that this phenomenon was born out of Chinese Communist policies.

During that period, an obvious turning point took place in the views of young and educated Tibetans. They came to the realization that the educated people were only all about a war of words but when it came to the ground reality, they could not match the courage, sacrifices and determination of the ordinary people.

This realization came in 2006 when the campaign of burning ornamental fur and skins of wild animals took place throughout Tibet. In 2005, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a speech about the Tibetan traditions of wearing wild animal skins as ornaments and this resulted in a public campaign that led to Tibetans inside Tibet burning all animal skin and fur-trimmed clothing¹⁷. This campaign started from the masses nationwide and it deeply moved all the Tibetans and the Tibetan intellectuals in particular.

As Shokdung wrote: “This campaign is a war in the time of peace. This war is not waged on others but on ourselves and our old habitual aesthetics, old values, ruthless nature, stingy mindset and ostentatious behavior. Waging wars on those old values is the courage of warriors. Our masses have the courage to fight the dirty old values and the ability to stage a campaign against our reprehensible behaviors. This demonstrates that they have impeccable and honorable character. The fact that they possess the courage of warriors to engage in this good deed without hesitation is really astonishingly incredible. It shows perhaps that we are the descendants of our ancient ancestors, the Tsanpos. When we have this kind of courage and heroism, we can say, with confidence, that there is nothing in the world that we cannot do. This shows we have hope”.¹⁸

I.10. Tibetan Writers Stand Behind the Masses

During this period, educated Tibetans started to lead the masses in campaigns and support them in protesting illegal activities by the government officials. Instead of writing criticisms and targeting others in their own community, they directed their criticisms outwards by targeting the Chinese authorities. This change occurred before 2008. This was a significant turn in which the educated Tibetans started to be confrontational towards others (the Chinese) and spoke on behalf of the public.

This does not mean that there had never been any educated people and writings standing behind the masses but that the weakness on this issue is evident in an observation made by a Tibetan writer: “Many political events that had implications for the whole of Tibetan society, even the British and other foreign imperialists’ invasions of Tibet, the courageous defense against them and major events that had implications for the survival of the Tibetan people, did not make it to the tips of the

¹⁷ The main message of the speech by His Holiness was: “Loving ornaments and making dresses with the skins of tigers and leopards are foolish. It is a disgrace to the Tibetans and we should be ashamed of it. The ornaments you need are inner ornaments. If you have good education and knowledge in Buddhism, that is ornament. Without any knowledge and education, some walk around wearing a lot of skins of tigers, leopards and otters, and long daggers, as if they were about to perform as oracles. Then, please, perform as the oracle of Mahakala! There is absolutely no meaning in it. You should not do that. Sometimes, when some foolish local officials tell you all to wear those things [to events], some foolish Tibetans take it seriously and wear all sorts of things, it seems. You should be ashamed of these things. You go back and tell them that His Holiness is ashamed of it.”

¹⁸ Shokdung stated this in a letter to Joleb Dawa and others who led the campaign in Ngaba for burning the wild animal skins that had become ornaments on Tibetan clothing.

master poets' pens except for scanty references in folk songs. For a people that had very strong poetry traditions, this is very unusual."¹⁹ This shows that there was a big gap between the real life of the ordinary people and Tibetan literature.

Therefore, writings in strong support of the masses and the environment for it emerged as a tradition. Those who usually criticized the Tibetans began to change their stance during this time. This was a special change.

I.11. Increased Restrictions on Tibetan Writers and Intellectuals

It is well known that the 2008 uprising was the most extensive, forceful and diverse movement witnessed in recent Tibetan history. But the Tibetans and Chinese have conflicting interpretations about its causes, targets and impact.

The Tibetan view is that the uprising was caused by suffering and hardships while its approach was non-violent. Also its target was the authoritarian government and its impact was that it united the Tibetans and encouraged the freedom struggle.

The Chinese view is that the causes were instigations from the 'outside', the approach was violent, the target was the Han Chinese and the impact was social turmoil and separatism - and harm done to social stability.

Not long afterwards, publications such as Theurang's *Blood Letter* and Shokdung's *The Division of Heaven and Earth* appeared. Barring the differences, their books mainly discussed the causes of the 2008 protests that spread across Tibet, the approach of the movement, its target and impact. Their interpretations differed entirely from the Chinese government propaganda. They stood up and spoke the truth. Some examples are the 2008 issue of *Shardungri* (Eastern Conch Mountain) literary journal, *The Division of Heaven and Earth*, *Earth Mouse Year Written in Blood*, *A Succession of Torture*, *Words Uttered With Life at Risk*, etc., that continued to appear. Soon the authors of these publications were detained and imprisoned one by one.

In particular, *Shardungri*, an important forum for thoughts for the educated youth, used its full edition for stories of the ordeals in 2008 and reflections on the events that had unfolded and the fate of Tibet. It was a significant indication that a pool of young educated Tibetans stood up for the masses to voice their grievances. It was also an important symbol of how the movement of critical thinking by the educated youth continued even though the waves of physical protests had stopped.

The crackdown on Tibetan intellectuals and writers for bearing witness and articulating the grievances of the people continues to this day.

In particular, most Tibetans imprisoned since 2008 had been charged of activities related to the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, which clearly illustrates the poor state of freedom of expression in Tibet. I will talk, in detail, about how Tibetan literature and artistic expression are restricted in the following chapters.

II. Restrictions on Tibetan Literature and Artistic Expression

¹⁹ In Ju Kalsang's "*Critique of Poetry*"

II.1. The Chinese View on Culture

The large array of discriminatory restrictions imposed on Tibetan culture and Tibetan literature, in particular those by the Chinese government, are not only about politics. According to conclusions made by scholars on China, in terms of whether or not the Chinese government sees Tibetan history and culture as valuable, it is important to know that for the Chinese, there is only one Chinese culture.²⁰ In their view, Chinese culture is the main and most important pillar and all the other cultures are alien and peripheral. In short, they see all the other cultures as the cultures of savages and just objects of curiosity. Both Chinese tourists and local Tibetans view each other the same way.²¹ Because of this, it is concluded that the Chinese cannot respect other cultures as equals.

Not just westerners but also some Chinese such as the writer Wang Lixiong subscribe to this view. Wang concluded, “These days imperialism is not only about the military power and politics. Nor is it only about the behaviors of imperialistic rulers. It has elements of cultural imperialism: the population involved in political colonization spreads cultural imperialism.”²²

This is not some inference that resembles a statement of truth by some scholars but you can see it in many aspects of real life. Tibetan writer Shokjang’s *Are Chinese Not Like This* is an example. Shokjang writes, “In day-to-day life, from what the Chinese say, their attitude, etc., they are oppressing us in all aspects of life from the highs of political powers to the lows of views, from big groups to small individuals and from big issues of the usage of a language to the small issues of how one wears clothes. They are oppressing us as much as they can.”²³

II.2. Contradictions Between Outside Propaganda and the Inside Reality

What China emphasizes in its propaganda efforts is that ‘an important element of China’s traditional culture’ is Tibetan literature and arts. To show their importance, they give the three following examples.

- a) They collected, compiled and published stories of Gesar, the longest epic in the world. The Gesar Epic is an important record of history after the collapse of the Tibetan empire period that unleashed three centuries of conflicts and wars. In the epic, you can find many stories about Tibetan religious rituals, social norms, marriage traditions, customs and habits. The epic is one of the most important research projects from the government. Gesar research centers have been established all over the country and they record Gesar bards. They have collected written records of Gesar and published them.
- b) They promoted the development of Tibetan Opera art. “Because of the project to spread it everywhere, not only in the Tibet Autonomous Regions but also

²⁰ There are many writings in Chinese history that show that they look at other races with contempt, and have a deep cultural sense of superiority.

²¹ Authenticating Tibet

²² “Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet” by Wang Lixiong

²³ “Are Chinese Not Something Like This”, Shokjang posted on his WeChat account

in other places and in many rural villages, professional and amateur opera groups have been established.” In Meldro Gongkar county near Lhasa, there are more than 20 amateur opera groups. “The Shoton Festival that takes place in July or August used to be only a religious occasion, but now opera has become the main aspect of the festival, so the festival has been renamed Tibetan Opera Festival.”

- c) Religious Thangka Art has Made New Development. Thangka paintings hang on the walls of temples, monasteries and Tibetan family homes. Tibetan Thangka exhibitions in 1986 in Beijing, and in 1987 in Paris, France, received many compliments.

On top of that, preparations are being made to publish many books on Tibetan opera, folk songs, folklore, proverbs, folk dances, etc. It is claimed that, since 1982, more than twelve Tibetan arts groups and cultural groups have embarked on cultural tours in many countries of Asia and the west²⁴.

The main characteristic of the things mentioned above is that they are primarily mere repetitions of traditions in the sphere of artistic literature but they do not directly represent the current Tibetan lives and feelings. They make convenient propaganda tools for the Chinese state. Therefore, researchers have made these conclusions:

- a) Traditional literature with religious meaning has either stopped or the main features of it have been made invisible.
- b) With the new development of secular literature free from monastic influences, deliberate policies have been made to change the way Tibetans think.
- c) Among the new Tibetan writings, writings that condemn old Tibetan society and praise the Chinese People’s Liberation Army were awarded as the best stories from minority nationalities.²⁵
- d) Among the over 40 million Tibetan books that the Chinese government claimed to have published until 1987, there are books translated from Chinese, agricultural and professional guidebooks, school textbooks and propaganda materials. Particularly, after the third Tibet Work Forum in 1994 when the political situation changed, the 1996 budget for Tibetan education and literature was slashed. The number of publications of periodicals was almost halved. These days if an author wants to publish a book, he or she has to bear all the cost of publication and distribution.

When the claims made by the Chinese are compared with the research conclusions drawn by western scholars, it becomes clear that the Chinese got some results for digging up and promoting the Gesar Epic, Tibetan opera and the art of Tibetan thangka paintings, but the common characteristic they share is that they are mere displays of a declining traditional culture and are not intertwined with the living brave hearts of today. On the contrary, the lineage of traditional literature that can nurture the pride of a nation has been cut. Plots have been deployed to covertly promote the government’s views through modern literature. Discriminatory and biased views are made to influence

²⁴ *Authenticating Tibet.*

²⁵ *Kasang Flower* published in *Tibetan Literature and Arts* in 1982 was awarded the best story from minority nationalities in China.

literary themes. Funding for publications, the lifeline for development of Tibetan literature, was cut. Under such circumstances, there is no foundation for the future development of Tibetan literature.

II.3. Biased Guidance for the Direction of New Writings

Generally, the Chinese communists are the most repressive on artistic activities or they abuse arts vehemently. The causes of the Cultural Revolution and its occurrence bear testimony to this fact.

Legislations and advisory directives on Tibetan arts are always biased. For example, the statement from the Standing Committee of Tibetan Literature and Arts of the Tibet Autonomous Region and a report from the official *Tibet Daily* said, “All the activities of arts and literature have to protect the unity of the motherland, protest separatism, with the confidence of truth, expose the Dalai clique who plots to separate cultures in the hopes of getting political separation. Work hard for the impeccable directions, improving the qualities and creating enough quantities of artistic literature that interest the masses.”²⁶

III. A Selection of Censored Words in Tibet

It is not easy to explain exactly what information is censored in Tibet. For example, a Chinese leader of the Tibet Autonomous Region had once banned a song called ‘katamen’ that was sung in praise of Mongolian warriors in Inner Mongolia, which was resented by the people. With his ignorant and feudal mindset reminiscent of the Qing Dynasty, he had also denigrated Desi Sangye Gyatso for being ‘a separatist ancestor of Tibet Autonomous Region’. Desi Sangye Gyatso is a famous figure in Tibetan history who is known as an excellent astronomer, a master of astrology, a physician, an engineering expert, an intelligent and prolific historian, a literary figure and the master planner of the world famous Potala Palace. It exemplifies the ways in which Chinese leadership misrepresent Tibetan historical figures and distort the history of Tibet.

III.1. History of Tsanpo Dynasty

The leader of the Tibet Autonomous Region responsible for disparaging Desi Sangye Gyatso had also called on the Tibetan officials ‘to break the barriers of four views’ which were ‘causing a great deal of mental pain’ for the people. The four views were: view of the motherland, view of the nationalities, view of religion and view of culture. This was contrary to the historical realities of Tibet and so repressive in nature that it deeply hurt the sentiments of Tibetans. It was abusive in nature and also went against Chinese Constitution and laws of regional autonomy.

One particularly obvious example was the repressive order related to the views of the motherland and nationalities. He fiercely argued that Tibet Autonomous Region was a part of China and ordered news outlets and publishing houses in the Tibet Autonomous Region to replace historical terms like ‘Tsanpo Dynasty’ and ‘Tsanpo’ with ‘Tibetan local government’ or ‘local government’ in the future. This is evidence

²⁶ “First issue of Tibetan Literature and Arts” in 2001.

of the central Chinese government and local government forcing Tibetans to change historical facts, even old records and banning terms inscribed on historical pillars.

III.2. Dalai Lama

The Chinese government censors the important ‘Lama’ part in the title of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who commands immense reverence among Tibetans. Instead they refer to him with one word: Dalai. The ‘Lama’ part in the Dalai Lama’s title was banned from all the written materials and verbal references. This is another example of a censored word. The Tibetans revere the 14th Dalai Lama by addressing him respectfully as *Gyalwa Rinpoche* (Precious Jewel) and *Yishin Norbu* (Wish-fulfilling Gem).

III.3. Tibet, Tibet Autonomous Region

The word ‘*bod*’ or Tibet is used by Tibetans to refer to all the Tibetan regions that share the same culture and geography but the Chinese government has removed the real term Tibet and replaced it with ‘Tibet Autonomous Region’. Even the Chinese have admitted that the Chinese government persuades people that ‘Tibet’ only means the ‘Tibet Autonomous Region’²⁷.

Because of this view, the Qinghai Tibetan Radio Station’s name changed to ‘Qinghai Amdo Dialect Radio Station’²⁸. A new Tibetan radio station in Sichuan is now called ‘Sichuan Khampa Radio’ or ‘Khampa Dialect Radio’, eliminating the term Tibetan.

Something similar happened when the tenth Panchen Rinpoche was alive. Panchen Rinpoche was an important Tibetan figure that China accused of committing crimes on the one hand and used for its own purposes on the other. The subject of Panchen Rinpoche’s “70000-Character Petition” and the accusations and verdict related to it are clear examples of the Chinese suppressing freedom of expression and freedom of writing.

Determined to serve Tibet economically and educationally, Panchen Rinpoche established business enterprises and schools. The business enterprises were established in the name of ‘Helping Tibet Foundation’. When the memorandum of the foundation was being drafted, the word ‘Tibet’ referred to all the regions where Tibetans lived. But the Chinese authorities rejected the term claiming that it was similar to the term ‘Greater Tibet’ mentioned by the Tibetans in exile. In the end, the foundation had to be named ‘Foundation for Development of Tibet Autonomous Region’²⁹.

In terms of history and politics, there are aspects to this case that have to be studied. To prevent Tibetans from uniting and developing with their own might, the meanings of the foundation memorandum were suppressed and changed. This clearly proves how documents related to the works of Tibetans both small and big are monitored, sanitized or censored.

²⁷ Chinese writer Wang Lixiong in his book, *Tibet, the Soft Rib Cage of 21st Century China*.

²⁸ Many intellectuals from both in and outside posted opinions about this.

²⁹ Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal’s Review, p. 120.

China has invented terms for some recent historical events and widely uses them by force. For example, they describe and label the 1959 March 10th peaceful uprising of the Tibetans as ‘riots’, Tibetan exiles as ‘overseas Tibetans’, the invasion of Tibet as ‘Peaceful Liberation’, etc.

IV. The Real Situation of Poetry under Occupation

IV.1. The Bedrock of the Minds of Writers in Tibet

In general, modern Tibetan literature is highly controversial. Some Tibetans from both inside and outside Tibet had expressed the view that modern Tibetan literature came into being under the influence of Chinese education and ideologies of Marx and Lenin, thus problematizing the nature of Tibetan cultural identity.³⁰

Pema Bum who had grown up with modern literature, written extensively about it and been a literature teacher in Tibet, made the following observations about Tibetan literature in general and the mindset that gave birth to the modern poetry in particular:

“Poetry is a subsection of literature. Everything that becomes literature comes from the efforts of mind. So when you ask where the mind comes from, there is the danger that the philosophers might come with their dry terminology and explain it with pride; but they are wrong. The dry terminology can only explain some secret nature of the mind that all the humans of the past, present and future share. The mindset in literature is particular to the place, time and person. It is a mindset that cannot be replaced with another. An ancient mindset in happiness and sadness cannot represent a modern mindset in happiness and sadness. The mind of modern man is full of happy and sad situations of modern times. It has its own meanings and qualities.

“The mindset that gave birth to the modern poetry we are talking about has been determined by the current situation. The question that automatically arises before us now is: what are the qualities of this mindset? In other words, what causes of the mind gave birth to modern poetry? This question raises the issue that we are attempting to explain in a deeper and wider sense. This issue cannot be explained in a short piece of writing after some temporary research, but [I] feel compelled to present a couple of preliminary views.

“A disappointment all the Tibetans inside and outside Tibet have is that we lost our fatherland to occupation. A bigger disappointment the Tibetans inside Tibet have is that, let alone showing anger to those who seized their fatherland and murdered their fathers, they cannot even show an attitude. They have to obey them. Writers or poets experience an exceptional pain. They have to suppress the angry flames in their hearts with the pen, the symbol of their souls; and, with a fake smile on their faces, they have to sing songs of praise to the murderers of their fathers! Even if you cannot take revenge on the enemy, letting out the intense pains in your heart by cursing and insulting is a desperate relief. The poets in Tibet do not even have access to this kind of relief. This is perhaps the first time in Tibetan history that the intellectuals in Tibet have experienced a mental suffering of this kind.

³⁰ Tibetans in and outside Tibet hold many different views on this and analytical articles related to this have been written.

“Wealth and amenities can only resolve some parts of the sadness in the hearts of the intellectuals. To resolve this sadness, they need a product of the mind, a system of thought that they can trust and rely on. For the intellectuals in Tibet, there are two choices of systems. The first is the ideology of Marx and Lenin. Whether the ideology is good or bad, it came to Tibet with violent force. When a system of thought comes with an army, people naturally get startled. To begin with, oceans of blood were shed and mountains of dead bodies were piled, to promote this thought system. To consolidate its position in Tibet, with the view that without destroying the old the new could not come, the old cultures of Tibet were destroyed and intellectuals were tortured. This vividly remains the memory of contemporary writers in Tibet. In short, that system of thought is associated with destruction, torture, impoverishment and famine in the hearts of all Tibetans. That kind of thought system brings fear and people would never use it as a solution to the suffering in their hearts³¹.”

So, how can someone express such sufferings in literature?

IV.2. How ‘Suffering’, the Main Theme of Tibetan Poetry, is Expressed

‘Suffering’ is a major theme that permeates the whole landscape of new poetry in Tibet. Generally, poetry is a pure expression of love and emotions. The transformation of the mental sufferings of Tibetan people into poetry is an important way of representing their true mental state.

Such mental ‘suffering’ stems from the disappointment and pain of the collective occupation of the Tibetan people, brothers being separated, inability to control one’s fate and future, and the looming danger of Tibetan people, along with its environment and culture, becoming extinct.

a) Example Poem: *Poem of Mount Sun and Moon*

This poem is quite highly regarded among the trending poems in Tibet but it is a poem that is very difficult to read because the poem has layers of historical meanings supplemented with lore and particularly small elements commonly used in poetry. In short, it tries to portray the tremendous mental pain that the Tibetans suffer when they see the Tibetan race being separated by the force of history. But only elite commentators and readers can enjoy such poetry, with its layers of meanings of the mental suffering being expressed³². There are many such deep and subtle poems that express these mental sufferings covertly.

A Tibetan poet asked by a reporter why he wrote poems replied, “When you think of the current situation of the Tibetans, it is not right to ask why someone writes poems. But you should ask why someone does not write poems.”³³ This poet makes a very important point: as the whole of Tibetan people is in a difficult situation where they do not have the freedom to express their difficulties and sufferings, expressing thoughts and feelings in a covert manner is a desperate choice.

³¹ Excerpt from *The Heartbeats of a New Generation*

³² This poem is highly regarded by the poetry commentators in Tibet for its art of covertness.

³³ Famous Tibetan poet Jangbu in an interview with Voice Of America Tibetan service.

b) Example Poem: *No Way One Can Stay Silent*

Summer
Shaded by a withered flower petal
Path
Covered in a sheet of soiled snow
Wherever I go
No sounds of beautiful songs to be heard
Wherever I stay
No feelings of happiness
Staring at oneself in silence
Dreams of beauty imagined
People stay in silence and don't feel the heartbeats
Those who listen to the outside are criminals
Fingers accustomed to scolding point at me
Threatening and menacing
Those who stand behind me
Are humble beings like me
Those influential with connections
Often tell me to shut my barking mouth
Silent environment is painful to the heart
It is a pathetic life of betraying oneself
Those who count small notes of paper money
With smiles on their faces
Deceptively come however close to me
How can I accept the deed that stains the soul?
I can only stay silent
Snow-covered mountains crumbled in upland
Lakes swelled in lowland
*Can I only stay silent?*³⁴

The subject of this poem is very clear: it is a conclusive statement on how the situation in Tibet is. The heart of this poet is full of sadness. The causes of such sadness are these: as all the beauties of Tibet, symbolized by 'summer', are in decline and the livelihood of the Tibetans, symbolized by the 'path', is in danger; you are not allowed to show the pain in your heart and have to remain silent; there are not only big barriers preventing the expression of grievances but those who extend their ears to the outside are also seen as criminals; and with 'small notes of paper money', all sorts of deceptive preventive measures that can 'stain one's soul' are deployed, so the snow-covered mountains in the upland or the culture that is the foundation of Tibetan thoughts, and lakes in the lowland or the traditions that are the foundations of life are destroyed – but still you can do nothing and have to remain silent.

c) Example poem: *I Want to Cry My Heart Out Very Much*

One

Blood vessels on the shoulders of brothers are pressed down by burdens

³⁴*Snow-covered Mountains and Grasslands Shrouded in Fog*, a magazine.

*The sounds of children's cries are hidden in the voice box
 Mothers and sisters' pools of tears are held in their hearts
 Years of hardship of forefathers are kept secret by history
 In these unlucky years I want to cry my heart out very much
 Making all the sadness in mind as sounds of cries
 Making all the pains in heart as teardrops
 If I cry enough then I will manage to calm down
 Some high lamas painting their beds do not speak
 Some high officials caressing their bowls don't utter any words
 Some brothers remain silent to save their own lives
 When I see hopeful humans who remain silent
 I want to cry my heart out
 Placing my disappointed painful head in their laps
 Holding their hands in my hands
 If I cry like a baby abandoned by his mother until I am exhausted
 My mind will be able to calm down*

Two

*Laughter is a pain in hard times
 Screams are a heart disease in peaceful times
 So teardrops are a relief in difficult times
 So screams under repression are a glory
 If it is an era of hardships without tears
 It is an era of hardships with no visible evidence
 If it is a repression and an invasion without screams
 It is a pain you suffer that nobody else knows
 So we must have cries and tears
 This small book is my cries and tears for once
 It is tears for once
 That my countrymen and forefathers have not shed
 Do you the reader want to look at my tears for once
 And listen to the cries of my brothers and me
 It is inside and outside of my story³⁵*

The very first book Dhi Lhaden, the author of this poem, was written for the freedom of the Tibetans. For the Tibetans living under Chinese rule, speaking up for freedom is a huge life-threatening risk and as evidence he wrote about it in the foreword of the book titled “*Words Uttered With Life at Risk...For Freedom.*”

This poem is self-explanatory that the Tibetans in Tibet, under brutal repression, are facing tremendous hardships: merely speaking about the hardships can cause loss of one's [social] benefits, future prospects and even life.

This writer wrote a poem titled ‘Reason’ at the beginning of the same book.

Example poem: *Reason*

³⁵ Poems as foreword to Dhi Lhaden's “*Words Uttered with Life at Risk*”

*When [they] violently pulled the hair
Who told you not to move?
When [they] killed brothers in front of your eyes
Who told you not to speak?
When you speak the true father tongue in my hometown
Who laughs at you calling you animal?*³⁶

In this poem, he expresses how torturous, repressive and discriminatory it is in Tibet. It shows that those who are subjected to torture, repression and discrimination are not only disadvantaged in economic benefits and work opportunities but are also deprived of rights to life and freedom of expression, which are fundamental to the livelihood of the race. And they live in a situation where their language is looked down.

Poets who write poems like the ones above are usually restricted and some have to live their lives as fugitives. Dhi Lhaden is a good example of this.

V. Special Writings in 2008

V.1. Example Poetry Book '*Blood Letter*'

Blood Letter is a special book illustrating the hardships of the Tibetans under Chinese repression. The author wrote in the book, "My tongue cannot be tamed by swords and shackles and it belongs to all mankind." Explaining the book's contents, he wrote, "Cries impregnated with truth... Movement that turns life-force inside out and upside down... Expression written in blood... Drops of blood soaked into letters." In short, these are the current, true, dire situation in Tibet expressed in words³⁷.

In particular, *Blood Letter* contains historical and social values and the values of the transitional period. The author also wrote *Blood Letter* with these values in mind. In the epilogue of *Blood Letter*, the author writes, "When I tell some of my trusted friends that I am about to publish a small book, they ask if it is not too early. This is a true statement from their hearts and down to earth. Before getting well versed in the subjects that are in front me, getting carried away with the urge to publish a book may be a cause for others to ridicule or, as my friends say, it is a work that is too early.

"But, at any time when I introspect, I feel strongly that it is wrong not to speak up right now or if I do not speak up right now, when should I speak at all? This strong feeling makes my mind and body completely restless. This pain urged me that putting my thoughts into written words, if not too early, is not late. So, I have hurriedly embarked on this journey.

"Particularly, this year every human, in the Land of Snows, may have a special message and if the special messages are not spoken timely at the particular time, we do not know if the special messages will still be of special values. So, would it not be so valuable to speak it and get your tongue cut by somebody else instead of cutting it yourself!³⁸" The values in the author's mind are clear in this.

³⁶ Dhi Lhaden's book titled *Words Uttered with Life at Risk*.

³⁷ These words are on the cover of *Blood Letter*.

³⁸ Epilogue to *Blood Letter* published in exile, p. 246.

The epilogue to *Blood Letter* was written on 29 December 2008, the last day of 2008.

There are a few books and writings about events that took place in 2008. Among them, *The Roars of Snow Lions*³⁹, by Tsering Woeser, chronicles as a diary the daily events of five days in Tibet. According to this book, that year was an unusual year of killings, arrests, imprisonments and torture.

The *Blood Letter* makes this conclusion about the 2008 uprising: “Like a dark dust storm, this year swept away many, many of our loved ones to a place of no return. So, how happy it would be if we could sing the songs of our souls in the form of a small book in the folds of this dark stormy year! How soothing it would be to our hearts if we could convey some words of truth to the souls of the departed warriors in the distance! Because of these aspirations, from my broken writings, I have put together some poetry and prose that point the outsiders to a small book titled *Blood Letter* and sent it into the human world.”⁴⁰

Blood Letter is a slim book with five sections and thirty-one pieces of writing – Section one: Diary from Hell. Section two: Songs of the Soul. Section three: My Tibet. Section four: Sacrifice from the Heart. Section five: Appeal for Truth.

In the poem titled *Prisoner in Hell* in section one, the poet says:

*In the decree declared in hell
Every one of those people is considered as a criminal and imprisoned with both hands
and legs shackled
The name of their crime is the love for freedom*⁴¹

And in another:

*Hell is a real hell
Freedom, equality, democracy and livelihood
Will there be a time when everything is freed from the iron walls of hell?*

Likewise, in *My Tibet*, the poet asks:

*Are you the place where there is no freedom?
Are you the one in shackles?
Are you the one who wrote history in blood?
Are you a hero?
Where are your weapons of war?
Are you a prisoner?
What crime have you committed?
Are your skies sunless?
Not being allowed to speak your vow?
Are the rows of rifles your border guards?
Is freedom not like your binding rope?*

³⁹*The Roars of Snow Lions* was written in Chinese, and this is based on the later Tibetan translation.

⁴⁰*Blood Letter*, published in exile, p. 147.

⁴¹ This excerpt from the poem titled *Prisoner in Hell* is on page 5 of *Blood Letter* published in exile.

*For it you struggle
Is it not that because of it someone has bound you?*⁴²

This summarizes the nature of dark times in Tibet where there is no freedom and, in particular, shows the situation of Tibetans in a time when they struggle for freedom. He illustrates the situation not because he and people like him are just talkative but because only he and a few like him speak the truth. The disgusting propaganda of news outlets, mouthpieces of the government, hiding the truth and spreading falsehood compel them to speak the truth.

In the poem titled *Secretive Statement Addressed to the Government from a Computer*:

*One dead body, ten dead bodies, a hundred dead bodies, a thousand dead bodies
One piece of news, ten pieces of news, a hundred pieces of news, a thousand pieces of news
True 0, false 9, true 20, false 900
The red hands that dig your inner organs out
Punish you for not joining in
The black feet that tramples your brains from above
Imprison you for not joining in
Freedom, harmony, equality and democracy
Open the door, open the door of the constitution and look inside
Freedom? Harmony? Equality? Democracy?
My dear government, if you suspect that sunrays will burn your face
Hand me all the punishments even though you committed all the wrongs
Because I am your citizen
Because I am a citizen who says 'yes' to everything you say
Like a mountain that echoes*⁴³

This illustrates not only that there are sufferings of killing and torture in Tibet, where the writers live, but also the additional pain and suffering caused by false news and statements that hide the real situation.

What happened to Theurang, the author, after these writings illustrates the situation of freedom of expression for the writers in Tibet.

V.2. Meanings and Other Aspects of *Blood Letter*

Theurang's *Blood Letter* is not only a small book of poems but it also has a section on prose. Among the works of prose, there are ten sections under the title of *The Bloody Incidents and the Secret Behind Them*. The first section talks about the fact that the peaceful demonstrations in 2008 demanded freedom and democracy. The second section talks about the nature of the demonstrations and, in particular, deals with how the Chinese government presented falsehoods in the news as the cause of the events. In the third section, he exposes the falsehoods that the Chinese presented as the cause and nature of the demonstrations, with evidence he could find from international

⁴² This poem is in the *My Tibet* section of *Blood Letter* published in exile, p. 50.

⁴³ Exile edition of *Blood Letter*, p. 71.

organizations. The fifth section shows how abusive and repressive the policies are. While Jampa Phuntsok, a leader from Lhasa, claimed, in front of reporters, that not a single shot was fired [to suppress the Tibetan protestors], gunshots could still be heard from outside. In the sixth section, he talks about the Chinese government's false accusations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama for instigating the incidents in Tibet and how this trampled upon Tibetan beliefs and hurt their feelings. The imprisoned Tibetans were not only tortured physically but also their [deepest] beliefs were trampled upon, he concludes.

The seventh section reveals how the international media group brought in by the Chinese government was confronted by crying monks speaking the truth. The eighth section deals with the killings of Tibetans by the Chinese government, both in plain sight and in secret. A statement from Labrang Jigme, [an active voice during this period who was later imprisoned], is quoted as proof of how the Chinese ridiculed and looked down upon the Tibetans.

The ninth section exposes how the students from colleges and primary schools in Tibetan regions were suppressed and beaten when they stood up in solidarity with the protestors. The tenth section concludes that what the Tibetans are fighting for is what the whole of humankind deserves: freedom, democracy and equality; and that the nationality/ethnic issues are caused by the nationality/ethnic policies.

In short, *The Bloody Incidents and the Secret Behind Them* is straightforward documentation on how and why the Chinese government distorted the nature and causes of the 2008 demonstrations. It concisely encapsulated the difficulties faced by the Chinese government in hiding the truth.⁴⁴

V.3. *Shardungri* Periodical in 2008

Shardungri periodical in 2008 was an example of restrictions imposed on freedom of expression and writing by the Tibetans under repression. *Shardungri* is a famous periodical where the young Tibetan writers show off their courage and intellect. Particularly, in 2008, this periodical was something special. In the epilogue, it says, "Generally, should *Shardungri* come out or not and if it should come out, how should it come out? [We have] discussed this at length... Please do not misunderstand that *Shardungri* and its circle of people have determined, showing this kind of foolishness, to go forward to hit the egg against the rock and jump off the cliff. This is not an act of impulse, and also not to impress, but has happened because of the pain from many tens of thousands of Tibetans having to permanently leave us through unjust torture and, for far too long, we have endured the thirst for freedom, democracy and equality that every one of us should and must have."⁴⁵

The 2008 edition of *Shardungri* has seven sections with seventeen titles and about ninety percent of the writings are about the hardships people are facing in Tibet. In particular, four writings in the sections of *Life*, *Review*, and *Truth* are about the general situation in Tibet and particular events in 2008. Later the authors of all these writings became recipients of prison sentences and torture.

⁴⁴*Blood Letter*, pp. 85-103.

⁴⁵Epilogue of *Shardungri*, exile reprint, pp. 159-160.

The first writing of this section titled *Review and Thoughts* explains with many examples that the way the Chinese government managed the incidents in 2008 was with a violent crackdown and torture. It was evidently racial profiling. They looked down upon the whole race and its culture and behaved as if they were invading [the country].⁴⁶

In the piece entitled *How Human Rights Exist on Our Bodies* in the second section, it reads, “Have you heard that human rights do not do anything in our place? The reason is that human rights are dead on our bodies... Without protectors, leaders, forces and assistance, despite not having any thoughts as tiny as a hair tip of overthrowing the red government, Tibetans desperately fought for human rights in their own places.” This is an explanation of the nature of the movement in 2008. So why did such an incident take place? In a society where you can never hear true words about freedom, democracy and equality, confronting the military weapons in front of us was a desperate choice. The most painful thing for the Tibetans is not that they do not have people to tell their pains to, but that they are not allowed to tell the pains.⁴⁷ This illustrates the situation of freedom of expression in Tibet. Based on truth, it talks about how the government distorted the stories about the Tibetans peacefully demonstrating to demand human rights and freedom, with ensuing violent crackdowns and broadcasts of falsehoods.

The third piece of writing in this section titled *Appeal with Blood and Lives* talks about events, starting from March 16, 2008, in the hometown of the author, Ngaba county, where Lhundrub, a sixteen-year old girl, was murdered, two monks had to commit suicide, the general public suffered severe punishments, a young boy named Tashi and many others were shot dead on the same day, and how the Chinese government broadcaster CCTV reported completely different stories about the nature of the events, which pained the author and compelled him to write about them⁴⁸.

The fourth writing in this section, “*A Person’s Mind Eye of Karma*”, raises an important question about the situation in Tibet, with the backdrop that the world is quietly listening and watching. In a side note in this writing, the author says he wishes to write about the peaceful Tibetan uprisings but circumstances do not permit him to do this. Nonetheless he presents seven points that he would write about⁴⁹.

V.4. *The Division of Heaven and Earth*

The Division of Heaven and Earth is a book written by Shokdung about the Tibetan uprisings in 2008. Shokdung wrote, “I have three major feelings: happiness, sadness and fear. After talking about these three feelings, I will talk about the advice of nonviolence, which is related to the topic⁵⁰.” So, this book is not purely about the

⁴⁶ The Chinese considered the symbols in the hands of religious figures in the Tibetan temples as weapons, and justified this with the fact that the Chinese god Guanyin had a sword.

⁴⁷ Exile print of Shardungri, pp. 106-107.

⁴⁸ Exile reprint of Shardungri, pp. 117-122.

⁴⁹ A commentary about the Tibetan uprising in 2008 titled *Earth and Rock on Fire* with its subsections is on page 133 of Shardungri (reprinted in exile).

⁵⁰ *The Division of Heaven and Earth*.

events of the peaceful Tibetan uprisings, it is also a commentary on the events from the perspective of the author.

Shokdung or Tragyal is a well-known social commentator in Tibet who used to be an editor at Qinghai People's Publishing House. After he wrote *The Division of Heaven and Earth* and published it, he was arrested and the security officials handed his case to the department of state prosecutors. The night before Shokdung was arrested, the bookshop run by his wife was shut down.

The arrest of Shokdung caused a major public discussion in and outside Tibet, raising speculations about the kind of sentence he would receive. After remaining in custody for about half a year, he was released on bail.

Before his arrest, Shokdung was often seen among Tibetan intellectuals and on discussion forums. He often gave lectures at Tibetan universities. Some like-minded people, led by Shokdung, had published a series of books under the collective title 'I'.⁵¹ These days nothing can be seen or heard about Shokdung. As he remains silent, it is clear that there are restrictions imposed upon him.

Since then, many books and writings including Dhi Lhaden's *Words Uttered with Lives at Risk* and Woesser's *The Roars of Snow Lions* have appeared. The common characteristic these writings have is that they all talk about the realities of Tibet in 2008, the Chinese approach to the uprising events, and the propaganda and misinformation. Because of these writings, the authors have received punishments of different degrees.

V.5. Crackdown on Tibetan Writers

Chinese police arrested Theurang or Tashi Rabten, editor of *Shardungri* and author of *Blood Letter*, on 26 July 2009. He was interrogated for a month in detention. Then on 4 April 2010, he was again arrested on the campus of Northwestern University of Nationalities. After investigating him for over a year in detention, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

Writer Nyan or Jangtse Donkho is from Zangkar Tod, Kakhok county of Ngaba prefecture. He was the writer of the title *Are There Human Rights on Our Bodies*⁵² in 2008. He was arrested on 21 June 2010 from his home. After interrogation in detention, on 30 December of the same year, he was sentenced to four years in prison on the charges of 'instigating separatism'.

Before he was arrested, Buddha worked in a clinic of traditional Tibetan medicine in Barma township in Ngaba county. While working in the clinic, he produced many writings and was the editor of the periodical *I of the Century*. He published a writing titled *Review and Thoughts in Shardungri* that talks about the realities in Tibet. He was arrested and imprisoned.

⁵¹One of books in the 'I' series was written by Shokdung and the collective foreword of the series was also written by Shokdung.

⁵²This title is also translated as *How Human Rights Exist on Our Bodies* in other publications.

Writer Kalsang Jinpa or Garmi Shuba, an editor of the periodical *I of the Century* in Tibet was arrested on 19 July 2010 on suspicion of instigating separatism. On 30 December 2010 he was sentenced to three years in prison on the charges of ‘instigating separatism’.

Writer and political commentator Meje was arrested from his home by the officials of the intelligence arm of the security department on 19 October 2011. His conditions were not clear and no reasons for his arrest were given. When the security officials came to his house in Lanzhou and arrested him, his wife asked to know the charges against him but the officials did not answer simply saying that he knew it. His office was searched and copies of *Shardungri* and his computer were taken. After forcefully being taken from his home in Lanzhou city, he remained in detention for two weeks. He was released later and ordered not to meet other people and not to talk about his detention with any other people. He remains under surveillance.

VI. Shokjang, An Example of the Current Situation

VI.1. Shokjang as university student

If you talk about Shokjang’s ideological changes, you have to start with his early days at the Northwestern University of Nationalities. Since he arrived and started college in 2006, he started to produce critical writings. During that year, he started an online blog in Tibetan. Because of the online writings, he came into contact with many writers he had only heard of. With this he gained a new momentum. It is hard now to get access to his writings from that time because of several obstacles, but the general theme was about the situation of Tiletan culture and the realities of commentating on social issues as related in his second book, *A Different Way of Talking Religious Faith with the Power of the Pen*⁵³, published in 2012.

After participating in the peaceful march with his college friends from Northwestern University of Nationalities in 2008, they saw the importance of an awakening in thoughts and talked about the cultural views of the younger generation. They even published a magazine called *New Generation*. When they were about to publish the magazine, he went on a discussion tour, with a group of students, to several other Tibetan university campuses to talk about the views of the youth on culture. During the winter school holiday in 2009, the students of Northwestern University of Nationalities started a movement of tuition workshops across Tibet. Shokjang also returned to his hometown and led a tuition workshop himself⁵⁴.

In his writing titled *Views on Culture* published in *Shardungri* in 2009, he briefly mentioned the tuition workshops. He also paid close attention to the views of the Tibetans in exile during these several years and wrote about them as well⁵⁵ and this was one of Shokjang’s qualities while he was in college.

⁵³ In this literary work, he mainly talks about the need for change in the way Shokdung and others called for in their social and cultural commentaries.

⁵⁴ In that year, he was preparing his thesis to become an official student of the university. During that winter holiday, it is said that he wrote *Copying Homework Is a Kind of a Crime* that talks about poor quality of primary education in Tibetan regions.

⁵⁵ This writing mainly criticizes how the Tibetan leaders in exile use the name of His Holiness.

VI.2. Shokjang from 2010 to 2014

I think one can say that 2010 was a major turning point for Shokjang's thoughts. He was arrested on 6 June that year. After a month of interrogation, he was released but his memory was extremely weakened. Not long after his release, he had a chance to read the Chinese translation of Nelson Mandela's biography *Long Walk to Freedom*, which inspired 'courage nine-fold' in his heart that had been tamed through intensive interrogations over a month.⁵⁶

With some friends, he ran a printing business in Xining while reading books and posting his writings on the popular website, *Sengdor*. Most of his writings were commentaries on issues and short stories. Within a year, he posted over a hundred writings and became an online writer who garnered one of the greatest numbers of followers.

Among his writings at the time, *Crazy Girl* was a short story. The main character in *Crazy Girl* was a social commentator and a writer. Because he wrote about the hardships of the Tibetans and their realities, he was imprisoned. After his wife hears about his arrest, she comes to the city to search for her husband. As she appeared to be clumsy and untidy, people calls her '*the crazy girl*'.⁵⁷

In 2010 when Shokjang came to Xining, he saw that Tibetan language and culture were very weak [in the city]. He posted a writing titled *We Will Be the Guardians*. In the same year, the Tibetan students of junior middle schools staged a major campaign for the freedom of language, followed by self-immolations of martyrs in Tibet. In Xining, he wrote and delivered talks to rally support for language movements. Consequently, the Chinese government banned their printing business in Xining and banished them to different places.

At that time, Shokjang was continuously posting a story under the title of *Meat Eater Chinese* on the *Sengdor* website in a series of posts but as self-immolations took place one after another, in a blog post he said, "I now do not have peace of mind to write stories". In the same year, Tibetan intellectuals in Xining held a meeting on human rights and he said, in a blog, that spies came to the meeting.

In a letter to his friend Theurang, he wrote that he actually wanted to publish a book fierce in nature but, after giving it many thoughts, he published a book that was peaceful. So he published a book titled *Courage on the Path*, but before it came out, the government confiscated it.

He then learnt about freestyle writing and posted about it on his blog. In an introduction, poet Lhamkog said that Shokjang had been reading important works on freedom and democracy since his release.⁵⁸ Lhamkog was said to be a very close friend of Shokjang.

⁵⁶ In his writing titled *My Thoughts and Views After the Passing of Nelson Mandela*.

⁵⁷ A review of the story noted that the sequence of events in the story must have been very familiar to the author.

⁵⁸ Although he paid close attention to writing styles at the time, you can see from his first book *A Different Way of Talking Religious Faith with the Power of the Pen* that he was very passionate about freedom and human rights.

In his short story *Knocker on the Door and Kindler of Fire*, Shokjang illustrates the annoying circumstances of the life of the author himself. With incredible courage, he often wrote about self-immolations and as he increasingly talked about the fate of the Tibetans, he had to leave the *Sengdor* website. He later posted quality articles, on the *Rangdrol Nyugsar* website, about Tibetan education, society and freedom of the Internet, but soon the *Rangdrol Nyugsar* website was also banned and he lost another home.

Wherever he went the government sent people to monitor him and he often faced interrogations. As it became impossible for him to live in Xining, he moved to Trika (Chinese: Gui de) where he worked as a clerk in an office. But his overly heavy workload deprived him of any time to read books and the police from Labrang, to his irritation, also often asked him to come back home, so he returned home after a few months in Trika.⁵⁹

After returning to his hometown, the police often disturbed him at odd hours. At one time, he was bullied into making a migrant registration card in his own hometown. At around this time, he tried to get an opportunity to study law at Central University of Nationalities (now known as Minzu University of China) in Beijing but the government intervened so his dream did not come true. He later tried to get an opportunity to study law in Japan but a few obstacles were thrown in his way. He still wishes to study law.

VI.3. Shokjang in the Skies of WeChat

Since the start of WeChat, Shokjang started to post writings in the Moment (similar to the Wall of Facebook). He had earlier started a new personal blog but the government banned it not long after it started. After a long winding road, he posted new writings on WeChat. All the writings he posted on WeChat that are still accessible have four major themes:

- Freedom of religious faith
- The education of students in middle schools
- Freedom and equality of the nationality
- Freedoms and rights of the public

He posted a few writings about [freedom of] religious faith on WeChat. One of the more popular among them is about [freedom of] religious faith in Kumbum Monastery. In terms of education of the students in middle schools, his writing about the Tibetans in Sangchu county created quite a stir in the online community and it is said to have made quite an impact on the locals as well. There are several posts on freedom and equality of the nationality but the most viral is a response to Chinese democracy advocate, Liu Junning, titled *Conflict and Common Ground Between Tibetans and Chinese*. He posted many writings on the freedoms and rights of the public and the best received among them are two: *Public Obligation Is Not about Waiting for Legal Verdict*, which is a writing related to a teacher named Yangmo Kyi

⁵⁹ After returning home, he did not stop reading. His reading list at the time consisted of books on freedom, democracy and Buddhism.

from a village called Sekhyung Nyin; and *A Chinese Artist Writing about Tibetan Monasteries as Bloody Grounds of Killings Should Not Be Seen as a Piece of Art*⁶⁰.

And his writings of feelings and thoughts on the Kunming (stabbing) incident, Panchen Lama, Nelson Mandela, Nyagong Lhabhe, his own mother and Theurang have had a big impact on the readers. He has written about freedom, equality and the rule of law in relation to many parts of society.

In particular, in his 2013 book *For Freedom I Have No Regrets*, he published his translations of writings on democracy and his thoughts after reading books on democracy. Below is the table of contents of *For Freedom, I Have No Regrets*:

- For democracy I have no regrets
- Why democratic rule of law can prevent corruption
- Chinese hotel and Australian hospital
- Liu Junning's speech on democracy
- Authoritarianism may collapse suddenly but democracy cannot end suddenly
- Democracy
- Government of the people
- Nation is always second
- Liberalism should be the guiding light of freedom
- Notes on freedom
- Brainwashing in education
- A brief thought on the students in middle schools
- Fate and path of the Tibetan youth
- Tibetans can own it
- Pains in flesh and bones
- Choeyang Kyi and Asian record
- Sound of clapping and smack on the face

This book consists of seventeen titles, both original and translations. In his statement on the publication of the book, he says, "For me, it is very difficult to name a book. Half of the book this time is translations, which made it a bit more difficult for me to name it. However, I have filled a gap in 2013 and for me, there is no happier thing to do than this."

In response to a reader of the book, he says, "For readers like you, I know that my small book is not satisfactory. To be honest, it is not that I do not know or have not thought about the Tibetan self-immolations but I am basically a coward and did not dare to write [about them]. So, I apologize to the readers many times. In a way, what they desired were freedom and equality, so introducing them in Tibet as much as possible is a good thing, I think. But I know I have not done a great job on this and because of that, I apologize to readers like you many times. One last point I want to make is that I do not want to live a life in brutality and anguish."

VI.4. Shokjang's Arrest

⁶⁰ Information collected from people close to him.

But Shokjang had to live his life in brutality and anguish. On 19 March 2015, Shokjang was arrested for the second time and in the second court appearance on 2 February 2016 he was sentenced to three years in prison and deprived of political rights for two years.⁶¹ On this sentence, Shokjang himself wrote a petition.⁶²

The gist of the petition is that the prosecutors accused him of instigating separatism in his writings and presented six of his writings and the writings of others that he shared as evidence of crime. Shokjang pleaded not guilty arguing about each issue with the support of Chinese laws and he appealed, in the end, for a quick correction according to the Chinese Constitution and for constitutional protection for the freedoms of speech and expression.

Shokjang's thoughts, the history of his work and his petition to the higher authorities, all portray the kind of a person Shokjang is. Shokjang is someone who fights for basic human rights for all, or someone who speaks for those rights. He condemns any work that harms those rights whether it takes place in Tibet, China or beyond; speaking against such transgressions or injustices is a major theme of his writings and this is the reason he writes in the first place. Things that are harmful to human rights can happen in many forms but he writes about what the Chinese in the general public do to the Tibetans and Tibetan culture and the fact that the Chinese government bans freedoms of religious faith and the traditions of the Tibetans, instead of protecting them. These circumstances compelled him to write. Under the current climate, the platforms where Shokjang posted his writings were banned first, and then his writings were banned. Ultimately, the writer himself was arrested. This chain of events is a summary of the circumstances Shokjang has been under. This is a clear example of the restrictions placed on freedom of speech and expression in Tibet in present times.

VII. Examples of Banned Writings in Tibet

Introducing banned writings in Tibet is an uphill task. Since China occupied Tibet with force, many old documents had been confiscated. During campaigns like the Cultural Revolution, whole volumes related to Tibetan culture were banned, torn up and burnt. Likewise, people who were caught smuggling and secretly keeping books like *Tibet: A Political History* and the Dalai Lama's autobiography *My Land and My People*, written and published outside Tibet, faced unimaginable punishments.⁶³

The followings are a few examples of books written in Tibet that are banned.

VII.1. 70000-Character Petition

In the opening statement of the *70000-Character Petition*, the Panchen Lama wrote, "Without any selfish thoughts, [I want to] report some important issues of Tibet with the objective of [protecting] the Party's reputation and the people's benefit. During

⁶¹ Based on Shokjang's petition to higher authorities.

⁶² See appendix for full text of the petition.

⁶³ Zaru Dawa, a monk from Kirti Monastery in exile holding a bachelor's degree in Tibetan literature, was caught smuggling the books mentioned above and imprisoned at the border between Nepal and Tibet. He died in prison from torture.

my visits to the provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and others, through direct and indirect contacts, I learnt about the conditions of wellbeing in Tibetan areas in those regions that need to be reported to the central government and based on the issues, thoughts on what needs to be done to move forward. Likewise I give up personal benefit here for the Party and the people and proudly submit this genuine petition, which is a good thing with historical significance. I will work hard for the Party and people in the future and I have vowed that I will not leave a tiny trace of anything that may harm the reputation of the hardworking and brave descendants of the Tibetan people in my history.” This petition was a request, on behalf of the Tibetans, that he submitted to the Chinese government.

The Chinese government not only did not implement this petition but also banned the petition itself. The previous Panchen Lama had addressed this petition to Chinese premier Zhou Enlai on 18 May 1962. The previous Panchen Lama wrote this petition in Tibetan and had it translated into Chinese and submitted it to Zhou Enlai. The *Petition* was kept secret and it did not see the light of day outside the Communist Party. The Chinese version of the petition had 123 pages with eight topics that detailed what the Panchen Lama saw and heard during his visits to the Tibetan regions of Amdo in 1961 and Kham in 1962. The *Petition* was one of the first publications the Chinese government banned⁶⁴.

VII.2. *A Brief Observation of Tearful and Bloody Weather*

A Brief Introduction to Real Tibetan History and A Brief Observation of Tearful and Bloody Weather is a report-like book completed in Lhasa in 1991 with six chapters spread over 247 pages. It was secretly sent to India and the security department of the Tibetan government in exile published it in the same year⁶⁵.

Three chapters of this book are about Tibetan history and the rest is about the current realities of Tibet. In the fifth chapter, in eight parts, the author explains in detail how the Chinese invaded Tibet and tortured Tibetans and provides evidence about the gap between the Chinese policies and their implementation in Tibet.

This book not only documents the hardships and sufferings in Tibet but also provides evidence that Tibetans in Tibet do not have the freedom to talk and write about their hardships and publish it because this book had to be written in great secrecy in Tibet and was sent to the outside world for publication. It has been about twenty-five years since this was written but still the identity of the author of this valuable book remains secret.

VII.3. *New Critique of Dialectics and Others*

⁶⁴ The original manuscript of *70000-Character Petition* was in Tibetan. When the tenth Panchen Lama went on an inspection tour in Tibet in 1962, he wrote the horrific stories as they were, and translations of them were submitted to the Chinese government in the form of a petition. The Chinese government made it a classified document and it has not been allowed to be published as a book to this day. Source: khabdha.org

⁶⁵ *A Brief Introduction to Real Tibetan History and A Brief Observation of Tearful and Bloody Weather* is the title of the book. The author's name is written as Donkun Drubpa Mishugpa but the actual author is not known to this day.

New Critique of Dialectics and Others is a book compiled from conclusions of cultural studies by Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal. The plan was for it to be published in Hong Kong because he had been told that it could not be published in Tibet. When the author was about to publish it in Hong Kong, the publication was also prevented. This example illustrates that China sometimes prevents works simply because the authors are Tibetan without considering whether or not the contents have anything to do with Tibet⁶⁶.

VII.4. *Tibetan Chronicle of Auspicious Vase*

Derong Tsering Dondrub is a Tibetan writer from Kardze, in eastern Tibet, who writes in Chinese. He had earlier written an essay called *My Wish* related to the Tibet issue.

Working tirelessly for five years, he wrote the *Tibetan Chronicle of Auspicious Vase* and People's Publishing House of Tibet Autonomous Region published it in 2002.

This history book is a Tibetan chronicle written in Chinese by a Tibetan. Scholars recognize this book, extensively researched with cultural studies and a broad perspective, as a comprehensive introduction to Tibetan evolution that has many stages and volumes.

Not long after, the bureau of news publication of the Tibet Autonomous Region issued a verbal order saying that this book was no longer allowed to be circulated and attempts had to be made to retrieve the copies that had been sold. Soon, the book was banned.

One of the main reasons Chinese authorities gave for banning the book is that it refers to all the Tibetan areas as a whole, which was not right, and the title should have been *Chronicle of Tibetan Autonomous Region*. It was banned saying that it did not portray the real historical past of Tibet. Some government officials even suggested spending millions of yuan on a new collection of history books that challenged the history written by Tsering Dondrub.

This proves that the Tibetans cannot write about their own history and their books hit an extreme tidal wave of bans. And Tibetans do not have the opportunity to even argue, according to the law, against the banning of their works.

VII.5. *Tibet Notes*

Tibet Notes was written by Tibetan writer Tsering Woese, who was born in Lhasa during the Cultural Revolution. She graduated from the Southwestern University of Nationalities in 1988 with a degree in Chinese literature. In 1990, the Bureau of Arts of the Tibet Autonomous Region recruited her to the editorial board of *Tibetan Literature*. She wrote poems, prose, travel diaries, analytical appeals and short stories.

⁶⁶ This issue mentioned Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal's own writing *Why New Critique of Dialectics and Others Should Not Be Published?*

In 2001, she wrote *Tibet Notes*, which consisted of three sections: travels in Tibet; Tibetan environment; and Tibetan sentiments. This book was published, in 2003, by Huacheng Publishing House in Guangzhou. It was put in a series of books under the collective title of *China's Traditions* and distributed nationwide. Some 6,000 copies were printed and sold out shortly afterwards, and another 5,000 were printed. The writings in it are both artistic expressions and storytelling. Feedback from scholars and readers was highly positive.

One example is that Guojing, a Chinese anthropologist, said, “Tibet is very close to us but it gives us the impression that we do not know it because others’ interpretations shape our views, so many people like me wait for the words of the Tibetans themselves. Woenser’s voice is humble but when we listen to it closely with our hearts and souls, it gives us a Tibet worthy of discussions.”⁶⁷

The main characteristic of modern imperialism is not only about territorial expansion and wealth seizure but “it is about culture.”⁶⁸ The initial difficulties and restrictions Tsering Woenser faced are about how this works and Wang Lixiong draws a conclusion about it:

“In the current debate about the Tibet issue, culture is a focal point. Aimed at criticisms from outside, the Chinese government gives many examples of rebuilding monasteries, protecting cultural relics, developing education in Tibetan language, establishing laws requiring bilingual usage and rescuing arts that are on the brink of extinction. They relentlessly propagate how they protect Tibetan culture but the conclusions drawn by both sides are completely different⁶⁹ .

“In my view, arguing about culture based on this is very one-sided because the culture of a nationality is nothing but a description of the nationality by the nationality itself. What needs to be clear is that the description is not only about repeating the history of the group and showing of traditions, but most importantly, should also be about the sentiments of the nationality about its realities, thoughts and aspirations.”⁷⁰

“For example, if the language of the nationality is only allowed to repeat the imperialist songs but not talk about the genuine feelings of the nationality, does such a culture have any cultural significance? Therefore, whether the culture of a nationality is protected is not measured by how much the traditions of the nationality are preserved. It is definitely not about how much money is spent on it. From this perspective, it is very clear that the Chinese government is destroying and suppressing Tibetan culture. Whatever the government does, the Tibetans are not allowed to describe themselves. Whatever descriptions the Tibetans give, it has to be done under the control of the government. If the description steps out of line even a tiny bit, they receive severe punishments. In this case, Tibetan woman writer Woenser is a good example⁷¹ .

⁶⁷Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁶⁸Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁶⁹Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁷⁰Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁷¹Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

“Chinese government’s view and conclusion of Woese’s *Tibet Notes* written in [the introduction of] the same book by the Bureau of Literary Arts of the Tibetan Autonomous Region were that ‘religious powers in the lives of people are exaggerated and beautified. Some writings seem to express faith in Dalai. Some meanings even carry narrow ideologies of nationalism harming the unity among the nationalities and the motherland. Some meanings ignore the great results of reforms and opening up of decades and express longing for the society wrongly described in the streets. This goes in the wrong direction and against the impeccable political fundamentals. A modern writer’s responsibility for society and political responsibility for establishing advanced cultures are neglected.’”⁷²

What can be concluded from this is that writings about a Tibetan’s religious faith, reverence for his or her guru and the thoughts and feelings on his or her people are viewed as ignorance of political responsibilities for establishing advanced cultures. In simpler terms, those who differ from the government views or talk about realities and feelings of the people, while ignoring preferences of the government, are accused of wrongdoings. As people are accused of such wrongdoings, writings are banned and writers are restricted in all aspects of life.

For writing *Tibet Notes*, Woese was given these punishments: 1) She was forced to resign from her work and deprived of income; 2) Her apartment that came with the job was taken back, forcing her to live with her mother; 3) Her medical and retirement benefits were also taken; and 4) She is deprived of a passport to travel abroad. Apart from making her an actual prisoner, everything that could be taken was taken away from her.⁷³

Since then Woese has been under surveillance at all times and her movements are restricted. Her blog, *Invisible Tibet*, the only platform where she could express herself has been taken down and deleted many times. She was not even allowed to leave the country to receive literary awards associated with freedom of expression.⁷⁴

Tibetan scholar Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal had to say this about what Woese’s predicament represents: “Some concerned officials of a department in Beijing sent a letter to some concerned officials in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, ordering them to analyze *Tibet Notes*, an exemplary book describing Tibet [written] by a Tibetan. The Propaganda Department of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Bureau of Literary Arts of Tibet Autonomous Region, and the news publication department of the Tibet Autonomous Region established a joint investigation task force, which ordered the ban on the sales of the book in the Tibet Autonomous Region, ordered Woese to stop her studies in Beijing, to accept re-education and ideological inspections, and prepare to be liberated from the barriers.”

Later Woese’s book was republished in Taiwan under the title of *Poetry: Singing Tibet*. This edition has some writings that the banned version did not have, or which were not allowed.⁷⁵ As is evident, Woese’s *Tibet Notes* had been carefully published in the first place but unimaginable issues take place in China. This is the reality.

⁷²Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁷³Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁷⁴This issue was widely reported in the news media outside Tibet on each occasion.

⁷⁵The Foreword to the *Poetry: Singing Tibet*.

The two troublemaking writings in *Tibet Notes* were *Nyima Tsering* and *Tenzin and His Son*. In the former, a famous religious figure named Nyima Tsering faces difficulties when he meets Dalai supporters at an international conference—in this one cannot point out the author’s real intention on separating the motherland and campaigning for an independent Tibet—and in *Tenzin and His Son*, the author was said to have misrepresented the ‘pacification’ of the 1959 ‘riots’⁷⁶.

So, in reality, what meanings and symbolisms do these two writings have? Below are brief introductions to these two stories:

Nyima Tsering

This piece of writing is about Nyima Tsering, a Tibetan representative for China, attending a human rights conference in Norway, while Tibetans in exile protest. Especially, when a Tibetan woman requests him not to return to Tibet, he asks, “If everybody goes abroad, whom are we going to give our country to?” The story ends with this question. The question says a lot about his mentality and character. This strongly represents a Tibetan’s sentiment, forbearance and understanding about the situation of Tibet. In particular, this writing represents the aspirations and sentiments that Tibetans both in and outside Tibet share.

Tenzin and His Son

In this story, the character named Tenzin tries to survive during all the turmoil and upheavals such as the Cultural Revolution by hiding his true identity. Later he goes on a pilgrimage to a foreign country and his son becomes a *tulku*. The hardships and disasters in Tibet’s recent history are told through the story of one individual.

As Wang Lixiong says, in these two stories, a Tibetan tells her situation, history and fate through emotions and artistic expression. In particular, as the difficult realities are expressed in an artistic way, the true artistic expressions have the power to move people. The value of these writings is that they reflect real life and have firm foundations in truth. Secondly, with the powers of artistic exaggerations and imagination, life and truth are vividly represented.⁷⁷

As these stories are closer to the truth on the one hand and, on the other, they have artistic powers that can represent the truth, the government directly accused them of political wrongdoings, to suppress them and the author.

Tellingly, in *Tenzin and His Son*, the travel police search people with the name ‘Tenzin’. In recent history, many Tibetan children have been named ‘Tenzin’, a part of the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama’s name and it has become a political

⁷⁶Two Imperialisms in Front of Tibet.

⁷⁷In an online review note sent to Woesser after reading *Nyima Tsering* in *Tibet Notes*, a Uyghur girl from Xinjiang says, “I am reading your book. When Nyima Tsering goes to Norway and talks to this young girl, I feel so sad that I cannot hold back my tears. Something hard to put in words is that when Nyima Tsering gives the answer to the girl, I could no longer hold it and I cried aloud. I have read this story many times and my heart unbearably pains as if it was hit with rocks.”

problem. Tibetans desire a name given by His Holiness and he had given many newborns across Tibet names that start with ‘Tenzin’.

Because of these writings, Woesser is still banned from travelling overseas or even to attend any international award ceremonies.⁷⁸

VII.6. *Restless Himalayas*⁷⁹

Restless Himalayas, written by Dolma Kyab is a book that presents the situation of freedoms of speech, expression and publication in particular in Tibet. The common essence of the several objectives expressed by the author for writing such a book and is ‘freedom’. The foreword to this book also ends with the word ‘freedom’.

This book has fifty-seven sections, in which the author, with his perspective and hopes, talks about realities of Tibet under Chinese rule, why Tibetans should have freedom and how it can be achieved. This book consists of both historical facts and his views and feelings. This book contains a wealth of knowledge that can open someone’s eyes and emotional value that can strike a chord in the human heart. The book’s manuscript was later banned and its author imprisoned. Writing from prison, Kyab wrote a petition to the international community calling his sentence unfair and unjust. (The full petition can be found in the appendix.)

Challenging the view of the Chinese government on the book, Kyab noted in the petition: “I have been sentenced to ten years in prison. The main reason is my unpublished work *Restless Himalayas* that I wrote a long time ago. In that book, I mainly wrote about democracy, freedom, the Tibet issue, etc. It was the main argument for my prison sentence but according to Chinese laws, one cannot establish guilt of instigation to separate the motherland in this book. Therefore, they charged me with espionage by abusing the law without any evidence and real information. The mighty charged me with espionage and declared a guilty verdict.”⁸⁰

VII.7. *Books of Jhado Rinzang*

An interview conducted by Arik Gethong⁸¹ with Jhado Rinzang renders a good understanding of the situation the author was in. In the interview, Jhado Rinzang had said: “[I have written books titled] *The Unavoidable Path, My Hometown and Peaceful Liberation, My Hometown and Careful Listening, Questions about Madhyamaka and Paramita, Notes on Alak Maniba’s Biography, Questions about Clearing Path to Liberation* and *Notes on History*, which I want to publish, plus two manuscripts I have accidentally lost. *Warrior’s Determination*, which could not be published in Tibet, has a chapter titled *Path*, my biography, by Sonam Gyatso. Right now, I study at the monastery. *My Hometown and Peaceful Liberation* and *My Hometown and Careful Listening* have been published, as you know. Actually, I have collected writings to publish five such books but faced some obstacles. Two books are

⁷⁸ For example, author Tsering Woesser was awarded the Prince Claus Award and the Courage in Journalism Award by International Women’s Media Foundation but she was not given permission to participate in these events.

⁷⁹ *Restless Himalayas* was written in Chinese but this is based on the Tibetan translation.

⁸⁰ See appendix for the full text of the petition.

⁸¹ Arik Gethong was the former executive member of the Tibetan Writers Abroad PEN Centre

about 1958—my main objective is to add documents to the history of the critical period of about twenty years starting from 1958—and two books are about the current situation. The Chinese confiscated manuscripts of two books [I wrote] about the new towns (urbanization) that were full of interviews with a few elders. Looking back, I think these must have been most critically important. When I was at Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, I wrote a thirty-something page diary titled *Warm Teardrops Flowing into Blood*, detailing the situation in Lhasa. The Chinese confiscated it. When I want to rewrite the lost manuscripts, I no longer have the acute feelings [I had] at the time of writing them, and it becomes sort of fake, so I do not try. My collection of notes in Tibet titled *Warrior's Determination* has some prose. I have been arrested three times. The first time I was arrested on the train in Nagchu on the way home and it seemed to have something to do with writing *Warm Teardrops Flowing into Blood*. That saga I wrote about in *I Disappeared in a Train*. The second time I was arrested in Golok prefectural town. I do not know how this chain of events unfolded. For a night, I was left hanging from the ceiling with a rope. They asked me what my goal was and accused me of being a member of the Tibetan Youth Congress. The third time I was arrested in Serta for publishing my books *My Hometown and Peaceful Literation* and *My Hometown and Careful Listening*. This time I was detained for over a month. When they tortured me, I endured, without giving up or falling into despair, thinking that His Holiness was doing great and a whole Tibetan community was going forward in the international community. They said I was a murderer without shooting guns and that I had slandered the Communist Party in all sorts of ways in all of my writings. They subjected me to unbearable beatings, asking, “Did the Party kill your mother or father?” Now, I have an unusual illness. Sometimes I can think clearly and other times I feel like I am in the dark. I do not know why.” Media outlets based outside Tibet later reported that even his picture had been banned in his own hometown.

VII.8. Jamyang Kyi's Succession of Torture

Jamyang Kyi, a female Tibetan journalist, a writer and a feminist in Tibet, writes in detail about her interrogations and tortures in detention for over three weeks by the Chinese security forces. She writes about the behaviors of the Chinese police, the conditions in the prison and the psychology of the prisoners. This is the first prison story by a Tibetan female writer and journalist.

Jamyang Kyi wrote it in the four subsequent months of her release from prison. On the suspicion that she might tell the stories of the 2008 demonstrations in Tibet to others, police officers from the west police station of Xining city took her from her office and interrogated her in the police station. Later she was transferred to Tsongkha women's prison, where she was continuously interrogated and investigated but no wrongdoing was found. After over twenty days in detention, she was released, but she says she has been mentally wounded. Sources say that Jamyang Kyi is no longer allowed to do journalism in her office but she is tasked with compiling documents about Chinese history under surveillance. Her book was not widely distributed in Tibet but it was published and distributed in exile by the Tibetan Women's Association.

VII.9. Dhi Lhaden's Two Books

Dhi Lhaden explains the causes and nature of the peaceful protests of the Tibetans in 2008 and the behaviors and wrongdoings of the Chinese government and the people and institutions under its influence and orders in his book *Words Uttered with Lives at Risk*. In his second book *Defending Rights Through Law*, he talks about the nature of the Tibetan struggle, resolving the issues between Tibet and the Chinese, and solutions to make it a reality. He wrote these two books taking huge risks.⁸²

But the two books centered on the situation and aspirations of the Tibetans could not be published in Tibet. They had to be smuggled out of Tibet and published by Tibetan Centre for Democracy and Human Rights. This is a clear example that there is no freedom of expression and publication in Tibet.

VII.10. Tsering Dondrub's Howling Red Wind

Tsering Dondrub is an important Tibetan storytelling torchbearer. His objective in his new writings is to portray the real life of the Tibetans, so Tibetan lives are the backbones of his stories and his skill of depicting them is of superior quality. His stories are greatly admired by not just the Tibetans but also the Chinese and the Mongols.

When you look at his writings, they are mostly short stories criticizing the deeds of religious persons who betray society and corrupt officials in high positions. His stories later changed as he began to write novellas and novels depicting events of historical values. He tells the story of a small aspect of society that could project an image of the whole society.⁸³

The novels that depict historical events are based on historical facts and they portray the writer's sense of attachment to history in both obvious and hidden ways. These stories have values in both art and history.

In the novel *Howling Red Wind*, Tsering Dondrub not only puts the history of the Cultural Revolution in Tibet in the 1960s and 1970s in the background of the story but he also writes details about it in several aspects. In short, *Howling Red Wind* represents the horrors of such history in the form of artistic literary work. This story not only tells the stories of the Cultural Revolution but also the Tibetan way of life and the harsh realities of Tibet at the time. So, it naturally gives a liberal space for the reader to contemplate. These days the stories about events and campaigns in Cultural Revolution are rarely told from personal experiences of Tibetans.

In this novel, some subjects of the writer's love are presented from the contrary perspective. When you look at it in this light, *Howling Red Wind* is not just a dry description of the Cultural Revolution: it is sophisticated and unique.

When you look at the general picture of China's restrictions on literary works, false stories run less risk of being banned than truthful ones. Fictional and artistic literary works face less risk of being banned than prose, and writings that tell how it really is.

⁸² In the foreword to the second book, he admitted that he wrote these two books at a huge personal risk.

⁸³ You can see the change if you put his stories *Ancestors*, *Dust Storm*, and *Fog* beside his stories like *Howling Red Wind* that set the standard for novels depicting historical events.

In *Howling Red Wind*, Tsering Dondrub portrays Tibetan life and resilience in a period of time. This literary work is an important historical document about that period, so the Chinese Communist Party has banned the work, saying that it contravenes China's publication laws.

In terms of the story itself, it tells stories of historical events in contrast to Tsering Dondrub's other stories and presents events that took place during that time. Through the experiences of the characters in the story, the reader feels as if he is reading a history book, which transports the reader back in time. This tells us that the author must have thoroughly studied some historical events. Being able to project the pictures in the reader's mind so well through the characters in the novel, both those with big and small roles, is the quality and power of art.

This novel has part one and part two. Alak Drong is the main character in part one, which mainly portrays the situation of political prisoners and their resilience. Lobsang Gyatso is the main character in part two, which deals with life in society. But the author sometimes jumbles the subjects. In the following, I will explore the images in this novel and briefly talk about how it portrays the realities of that time.

a) Life of Chaos

Alak Drong is portrayed as a religious leader at the time and Lobsang Gyatso is portrayed as an ordinary monk. Let alone the religious and political leaders at the time, the lives of ordinary people are given to unbelievable twists and turns. Alak Drong is the religious and political leader of Tseshung region. The Communist Party first gives him the position of vice secretary and later subjects him into 'class struggles' on charges of being 'an exploiter of the people' and 'a poisoner of the people'. In the end, he is imprisoned. This was something very common at that time. The religious persons such as tulkus and geshees as well as wealthy people were the main subjects of class struggles. Some were struggled to death and some committed suicide.

b) Political Education

The Tibetans dreaded the 'political education classes' more than the struggle sessions. In the political education class, the Tibetans had to endure psychological pain. In these classes, the Chinese educators insisted, "There are no gods or demons, no spirits after death, no purgatory, no effects of religion and no karma." They were given an atheistic education, which insisted that heaps of things did not exist. They were told that the whole of Tibet led by lamas and monks had been wrong until then, and that if they stopped doing wrong, they still had a future that radiated a thousand rays of light. The Chinese tried to change the values that were set embedded in the Tibetan mindset. Their main objective was to change the views held by the Tibetans, like Lobsang Tsultrim did. Characters like Lobsang Tsultrim and Lhalha in the story accept the orders from the invaders and subject their teachers, dharma brothers and people from their own villages to class struggle, destroy religious objects and monasteries to prove that they are revolutionaries and progressive. Later when the Cultural Revolution is ended and policies are liberalized, Lobsang Tsultrim, who once forced his own urine down the throats of people like Alak Drong, becomes the

personal servant of Alak Drong and people like him get busy restoring the monasteries. This portrays the changes of character in the changes of time and history.

c) Killing the Essence

Likewise, the author directly writes, “This so-called Cultural Revolution has cost many people their lives, tortured and imprisoned people and led people to commit suicide. This must be a campaign to turn people into machines because in recent months the number of history or political prisoners has increased considerably and most of them are professionals, professors, high-ranking leaders, writers and artists, the essence of society.” The author clearly states his thoughts and feelings about the realities of history at the time.

d) Committing Suicide

Through this novel, the author compares lives of Tibetans before and after the Chinese invasion. In particular, he portrays Tibetan lives and resilience during the Cultural Revolution. On the ‘sad day’ or on the day when the people in Tseshung flee from the invading forces, the invaders catch up with them. Countless brave people from Tseshung who stand up are killed by the machine guns, turning Machu River red with blood. After surrendering to the invaders, most of the people in Tseshung are tortured and imprisoned under the accusation of ‘instigating violence’. The life in prison is grim in general but the conditions for the Tibetan prisoners became worse each day at the time. The prison guards of the invaders, with cracking whips, hit the prisoners’ faces, heads, ears, throats and shoulders as if they were a herd of animals. In the prisons, the prisoners are used for heavy physical labor. For the prisoners, the “education class or interrogation sessions have more power than heavy labor to destroy their mental and physical strength, because they have to report on and criticize fellow Tibetans from the same hometowns, villages, nomadic camps, family lineages, even their brothers and sisters, teachers and gurus. On top of the worries and fears of not knowing when you will be thrown into heavily guarded confinements, criminal quarters, another prison or the execution ground, you only get two meals a day. The size and quality of the meals also gets worse and worse, day by day.” The nomad prisoners see the prison food as grass and refuse to consume it in the beginning, but not long after, in the long months and years, “the food seen as grass by the nomad prisoners becomes as precious as gold and they say they will not regret if they die after having a stomach full of the vegetable gruel.” Many prisoners continuously die at this time. The ones who are still alive do not have any strength to do any labor and burying the dead becomes their main task but slowly, they do not even have the strength to dig holes in the ground, so they throw the dead bodies into the river. Later a famine hits the whole nation and the lives of ordinary people becomes even worse. The resilience of the prisoners is grimmer and the number of suicides increases daily.

e) Longing for Death

At some point, the prisoners’ “gums rot, and all the teeth fall out one by one. Patches of flesh all over the body rot and fall off. The limbs swell and faces become black. All four limbs cannot even lift the weight of the body. They look and smell dead before they have actually stopped breathing. The prisoners of Tseshung used to pray that the

lord of death would not come to them but “in these conditions, they are praying for the lord of the death to come quickly.” Among the prisoners, many are not documented with prison sentences or a pending legal cases. The prisoners “give up hope of ever getting their freedom and meeting their families. They do not even look forward to a filling meal.” In reality, the prison was no different from an execution chamber at this time. In the prison, “no matter how many people die, more new prisoners are brought in, offsetting the deficit for the prison.” This also portrays the lives of the people in society. The worrying fate of the people is not if but when they would get thrown into prison.

f) Society Full of Suspicion

In the novel, we learn that society at large was also like a prison yard with some limited freedoms. When the heat wave of the so-called ‘Cultural Revolution’ came, Tibetan society became a prison yard full of enemies. Everybody suspected everybody else. One even had to be careful with one’s husband, brothers, sisters, fathers and sons. This saga is told through the characters in the novel. One character is first imprisoned with false accusations. He manages to get out of the prison. When he goes back home, his wife reports him to the invaders. Again he is imprisoned. Like an annihilated army on the battlefield, with no leaders and reinforcement, the Tibetans have little choice but to surrender to the invaders. The struggle called ‘political education’ destroys the courage in people. The invaders destroy the traditions, customs and views that had never left them for over thousands of years. The more dangerous thing is that one can lose one’s life. Without being able to resist the fear and threats, in desperation people become the puppets of the invaders. Like the people in Germany under the dictatorship of Hitler during the World War II, people do not trust each other and look for dirt on other people. By the end of reporting on each other, it is as if “there was nobody innocent to be seen.”

Through the fate of the ordinary characters and the thoughts and behaviors of the main character Alak Drong, the author displays the real history. As leader Wang Aiguo instructs, Alak Drong decides to report on the crimes of others to get his sentence reduced (or ‘get achievements’, as they say). The author writes the thoughts of Alak Drong in detail: “[He] decides to accept their request and tries to get achievements to minimize his crime and gets released early. Getting achievements is mainly about reporting on the other prisoners.”

g) Everyone is a Criminal

Throwing innocent people into jail is not an ordinary act. The character named Namgyal in the novel says, “I have not killed anybody or stolen horses. I have not even wrongly taken a lamb. The honest person on his white path was arrested without any reason, sentenced and imprisoned.” This was the fate of the majority of the Tibetan people. When the new prisoners tell the old prisoners about the situation back home, a new prisoner says, “People spend their days in fear and worries about if or when they would get arrested. Particularly, now, the arrests are increasing day by day. Only an excuse is enough reason for arrest and having no excuse at all will also do it.” And then Chakthar Bum says, “A ‘progressive’ leader arbitrarily arrested many people with trumped up charges to fill the quotas given by the higher authorities. At some point, charges were no longer needed. They randomly arrested people and

transported them to the county town.” In the end, “only children, women and the sick are left behind.” When Namgyal comes to the prison, in a conversation with Alak Drong, he says, “The families who are together cannot be better off than the prison. But what is the point of being together with family? The father reports on the son and the daughter ‘struggles’ her mother. The wife betrays her husband. Seriously, this world is upside down. Plus, the scarcity of food and heavy workloads cannot be put into words. What can be worse in prison? Plus, there cannot be reporting on each other and struggling each other.” This portrays the whole Tibetan society at that time.

After the conversation about home, a prisoner says, “Alas, pity the people at home! If so, it is better off in prison. Except for the bad food and heavy workload, there are not many struggle sessions here.” In agreement, another new prisoner says, “That is true. Plus, labor is not that light back home.” Tibet and Tibetans at the time were in an ‘upside down world’. People back home wished to be in prison. Closest family members like brothers, sisters and spouses reported on each other and humiliated each other. An even grimmer fact was that the closest people in the world to you “struggle you like an enemy until you can no longer move and smell foul.” At that time, campaigns of ‘Beating One and Rebellious Three’ and ‘Education on Direction’ were staged. Everybody had to find dirt and report on everybody else. In the end, “before long it is like a wildfire. One person finds dirt on ten other people, and then ten people find dirt on a hundred people. In the end, there is almost nobody who is not a criminal.”

h) Hunger and Starvation

In terms of the lives of Tibetans, all the nomads and farmers alike were organized into “People’s Communes” where everybody had to eat the same [food] at the same time. “Let alone giving to others, you do not get a mouthful of edible food for yourself. Everybody is dizzy with hunger and staggers around. The old and children and even people in their prime are dying of starvation, one after another. The number of deaths increases each day.” As living conditions were so poor in those years, people lost the energy to reproduce. Only a few children were born, and their survival rate was low. At that time, the sight of people dying was a daily occurrence and most people died of hunger, the author writes.

i) Destruction of Culture

The invaders not only staged the heat wave campaign called the Cultural Revolution in Tibet but in the whole of China, wiping out traditions, knowledge, cultures and values. In the novel, people destroy monasteries and statues that are rooted in the Tibetan mindset, and rob precious stones from them. The author depicts the scene through the eyes of an old monk: “The clay statues do not have any heads, necks and clothes, like slaughtered sheep in the slaughterhouse’s freezer in Tsehung established many years later. From this you can see there are one or many heroes like Lobsang Tsultrim in this place. When you take a closer look, you can see the heads and arms of the clay statues are lying on the ground but the jewelry from the heads and necks have been gouged out, like the crows do to the eyes of dead horses.”

The author does not express his critical thoughts directly but through the characters in the novel. During the Cultural Revolution, there was a wave of campaigns to destroy

the 'Four Olds'. Old habits, reading prayers and prostrating were acts of superstitious traditions of the old society and they were considered to be wrong acts. Reading the mantra of Avalokiteshvara was deeply embedded in the lives of the Tibetans but whoever read the mantra would be subjected to political struggle sessions. Instead every morning the prisoners had to recite, "Great leader, great teacher and beloved chairman Mao, we repent in front of you. We are guilty people. We accept the punishments of the law. We will dig deep to root out the causes of wrongdoings. We will be honest and act and behave correctly. We will work hard to reform." They had to express remorse like this. The main character Alak Drong says to himself, "If this is not superstition, what is it?" causing him struggle sessions later on. To express love and compassion, the author, standing on the side of the prisoners in harsh conditions, often mocks the invaders in a sense to comfort the prisoners⁸⁴.

j) Conclusion

When you read this novel written by Tsering Dondrub and particularly if you look at the realities from the perspective of studying an artistic literary work, the images of the characters and the chain of events in it represent the past, look at history in retrospect and represent historical facts or realities of life from the past. It strongly illustrates the character of the people in changing times and life is presented in artistic expression but you cannot see the covert themes of creating nationalism and animosity between nationalities in it.

The particular time in history that is the subject of this novel is a historic reality people cannot imagine. The author possesses a great ability to weave reality into new literary art. With the power of both art and reality, this literary work obviously has influence and impact for the Chinese government did not know how to criticize the novel itself, nor could they point out any wrongdoing in it. So they said that the way it had been published did not meet publishing standards and banned both the writer and his work.⁸⁵

As stated before, this is a novel based on the real historical events of Tibetan history and is mainly based on the Cultural Revolution that has been criticized across China. But it is also an example of Tibetans being banned from writing their real history and about their life.

VIII. Comparison Between Censored and Celebrated Writings

VIII.1. Model Authors and Model Literary Works

⁸⁴ *Howling Red Wind* is a novel with many themes but it zeroes in on particular things in the society where reforms and the Cultural Revolution were taking place. From the particular things, the author builds an image of the whole society.

⁸⁵ It is said that when the Chinese government punished this author, they criticized the way this novel had been published but nothing else. People who knew the case thought it was an excuse and the Chinese government did not like the theme of the novel. The Chinese suspected that if they had criticized the theme, more people would have paid attention to the novel. Source: Tibet Times. *Howling Red Wind* by Tsering Dondrub, a famous writer, was published without going through the government publishing houses and the government said it was a crime to do so. The author was said to have received punishments. His punishments included the loss of his job as the director of the history editorial board at Malho Mongol Autonomous County.

Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok is an example of a model author whose literary works are considered ideal under the Chinese rule. He has won a number of awards including the First Prize by ‘China’s Tibetology’ for his literary works and First Prize for new literary works from the minorities of the whole nation. In particular, his prose composition titled *Lhasa’s Kyichu River* was awarded ‘the national prize for model literary work from the minority in 1985.’⁸⁶

In *Lhasa’s Kyichu River*, Chabpel uses Kyichu as evidence to vehemently criticize the nature of society in old Tibet and sing praises about how happy and prosperous the ‘new Tibet’ has become under Chinese rule. The waves of the old Kyichu are portrayed as a wrathful wave in support of the people voicing their revolt against the utterly unfair system of the old society and the new Kyichu is the offspring of the people sent by Chairman Mao. It is portrayed as a wave of happy smiles and cheers as the army destroys the old system, and lays a foundation of happiness for the people.

In *Lhasa’s Kyichu River*, the anniversary of the ‘peaceful liberation of Tibet’ is not an ordinary anniversary, but a great change for the whole of Tibet. It is an enormous historical monument radiating thousands of rays of light to mark the start of the journey to change, from darkness to light, suffering to happiness, poverty to prosperity, and backwardness to advancement.⁸⁷

However, *Lhasa’s Kyichu River* fails to deliver as a work of literary art. It tries to deliver the speech of a politician and makes use of many political propaganda terms. Thus it is basically a piece of writing that lacks the principles of literary art.

In terms of thought, it entirely lacks the characteristics of Tibetan bravery. It just puts a beautiful cover over the Chinese imperial greed and behavior. In particular, it covers up the destruction of the foundations of Tibetan culture, the deaths of countless people, the catastrophic sufferings and tragedies. It is in fact a huge insult to the Tibetan people and their history.

A piece of writing like this was given the prize of ‘model literary work from the minority nationalities’. It is evidently clear that the criterion for the Chinese Communists to recognize literary works from the minority nationalities as being ‘model’ is not based on whether or not the writings represent the real thoughts and qualities of the minority nationality, but the writings have to cover up the crimes committed by the Communist Party, spread its propaganda, or abuse the people and their history.

VIII.2. Discrimination Against the Writings of an Author

Tibetan author Jampal Gyatso’s work of fiction called *Kalsang Flower* (literally flower of propitious time) was written in the 1980s.⁸⁸ The book won the award for the

⁸⁶ In the foreword to the volumes of collected works of Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok, published by China’s Publishing House for Tibetan Culture and Studies.

⁸⁷ The real wording of *Lhasa’s Kyichu River* by Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok.

⁸⁸ Author Jampal Gyatso was born in Bathang of Kardze in October 1938 and became a soldier in the People’s Liberation Army of China in 1950. In 1951, he was in the brigade that arrived in Tibet. In 1956, he was transferred to a post at the People’s Publishing House in Beijing where he remained until 1980, doing translations between Tibetan and Chinese languages and dealing with publication

best fiction in China. The theme of this fiction is how the Tibetan people struggled for the unity of the motherland and the nationalities in the difficult times when the Tibet-bound brigade of the People's Liberation Army of China marched into Tibet and, in an emotionally moving manner tells us how the Tibetan people fight and hope for the beautiful 'kalsang flower-like' future for the generations to come. The government-owned People's Publishing House for Literature published this work of fiction in October 1980 and it is among the collection of best modern stories.⁸⁹

In the view of the Tibetans, the story titled *Kalsang Flower* is red Chinese propaganda wherein Tibet before the Chinese occupation is portrayed as a hell realm, a gross exaggeration. Regardless of whether or not it is seen as disgracing Tibetan society, it was awarded the prize for 'the best work of fiction from the minority nationalities'.⁹⁰

On top of that, this work of fiction was simplified to make it accessible for more readers⁹¹. Recently, this mid-sized work of fiction, promoted as *Kalsang Flower* by scholar Jampal Gyatso, has been turned into thirty-four segments in a radio program called *Literary Playground of the Lamb* in the Kham dialect program of Broadcasting Station of Tibet Autonomous Region and the people are requested to tune in. The program is broadcast from 5:30 pm to 6 pm every day.⁹²

Mr. Jampal Gyatso used to work as the secretary of the tenth Panchen Lama and had written a book titled *Master Guru Panchen Rinpoche*, which is a very important document on the biographical works of the tenth Panchen Lama who died a sudden death. Instead of giving awards to this sort of work, it was banned. He is also one of the great scholars and a popular expert of the Gesar epic. But the government extols his work on *Kalsang Flower* and uses it for a variety of things. No doubt this is because of political necessity, but what is also clear is the discrimination from the government against some important works of one author.

VIII.3. The Lines Tibetan Writers Cannot Cross

Drongbu Dorje Rinchen is the author of stories that are close to the life of the Tibetan people. For example, his *Roadside Diary* tells the story of a local leader who suddenly becomes rich from bribes and opens a shop in the locality to make more money. The local news channel airs a report on the shop as an example of economic development in the area.

An important fact reflected in this story is that the wealthy families and individuals in the area are those who have government backing. In reality, these people exploit the local people and act like kings, instead of helping the public with economic development. In the media, they are also the instruments for economic development

processes. Since 1981, he has been doing research on the Tibetan epic Gesar and translation with the research committee of social arts department of China.

⁸⁹ Source: *the Youth Sun of Tibet*, 3 December 2010.

⁹⁰ Tsering Shakya. 2000. *The Waterfall and Fragrant Flowers: The Development of Tibetan Literature since 1950*. University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 28-40.

⁹¹ Tsering Shakya. 2000. *The Waterfall and Fragrant Flowers: The Development of Tibetan Literature since 1950*. University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 28-40.

⁹² On the website of Sichuan Khampa TV.

propaganda. It illustrates that they actually are an extra burden to the locals and tools to cover up the difficult realities of the people⁹³.

Drongbu Dorje Rinchen also wrote a famous story titled *Reunion of Tibetan Exiles and Tibetans in Tibet* about the reunion of the separated locals. The suffering of family separation that is the main subject of this story is vividly described. It shows how there is no greater suffering than separation for people like Tibetans, whose love for their relatives is tremendously deep. In the process of describing this suffering, it tells the story of a Chinese postman in the locality and a Tibetan family whose son and father had fled to a foreign country. Through regular interaction, these two families bond. In Tibet, people know the real subject of this story but do not dare to talk about it. Instead, the literary critics talk about the unity among the nationalities, leaving the real quality and the main subject of the story untouched. This shows that it is difficult to write about the fate and feelings of the nationality in Tibet and even writing a true review about such a story is also difficult⁹⁴. But this work of fiction was awarded on ‘the recognition of unity among nationalities’. This is also an act of manipulation from the government to control the direction of Tibetan literature.

Drongbu Dorje Rinchen subtly portrays that issue in his writings. He had also said this about the experience of writing stories that there are three things that you cannot dare cross when you write in Tibet⁹⁵. He writes, “If I summarize the theme of my work, I can say it is about the fate of the Tibetan people. To make it clearer, it is the culture set deep in the minds of the Tibetans. What I have to say here is that if you write about the fate of the Tibetan people, there are three things you cannot cross: you cannot cross the unity of the motherland in the political landscape; you cannot cross the opening up and reforms in terms of policies; and you cannot cross Tibetan Buddhism when it comes to religion.” This shows the strict literary environment within which Tibetan writers are forced to work.

These limitations restrict the Tibetan writers from practicing the freedom of writing. For example, Jangbu, with an acute emotional sense, was one of the main figures in Sbrang Char in the 1980s but his poems were banned. Likewise, young writers with this acute sense of emotion had been permanently banned from the magazine.⁹⁶

VIII.4. A Brief Comparison Between Writings Banned and Writings Praised

In terms of *Howling Red Wind*, introduced earlier, that is banned and *Kalsang Flower* that is promoted in various ways, we compare the two in six different ways: what themes these two works of fiction present; what situations of the society they portray; which was banned by the government; which was awarded by the government; which is promoted on government media channels; and how the Tibetans view the two. The conclusion we draw is that the true representations of Tibetan history, the real situation of society and real Tibetan feelings are banned. The works that depict the invasion of Tibet as ‘development’ and are in accordance with Chinese propaganda – but far away from Tibetan life, destiny and feelings – are given awards and opportunities of promotion.

⁹³ Based on the work of fiction *Roadside Diary*

⁹⁴ Based on the work of fiction *Reunion of Tibetan Exiles and Tibetans in Tibet*.

⁹⁵ In the *Forest of Cuckoos Gathering*.

⁹⁶ The Collection of Best Writings of Shardungri, p. 89

IX. On Ban of Publications in Tibet

In 1987, six hundred books published in Tibetan language in China were claimed to be 43 million books⁹⁷ but there are no clear indications of the subjects and objectives of the books.

In *Authenticating Tibet*, western scholars extensively analyze China's policies on Tibetan culture and arts. Their focus is on two main issues. In traditional Tibetan culture and arts, religion and religious figures have a big influence and hold a prominent position. The objectives of the Chinese government policies are to remove the power of religion and religious figures from traditional Tibetan culture and arts and promote them in the lay community. On the other hand, it is concluded that the Chinese make efforts in every direction to influence Tibetan traditions and arts with characteristics of Chinese culture and arts.⁹⁸

Not only information related to history, but also books of philosophy and research books on different ideologies have faced major restrictions in publication. This was evident from the ban imposed on Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal's research book on philosophy mentioned in an earlier section.⁹⁹

Since 2008, Tibetan publications in general and privately printed publications in particular have faced greater restrictions. One example is that there was a public announcement that books and DVDs with covers in English were not allowed to be distributed. At the teacher training school of Barkham in Ngaba prefecture, many books were confiscated from students and locked in an empty room. According to the experience of the US-based Kunphen Foundation that buy books from Tibet, the number of books privately published in Tibet has dramatically decreased since 2008.¹⁰⁰

X. Arrests and Torture of Tibetan Writers

X.1. Conclusions Made from Inside Tibet

There is a chapter in Gartse Jigme's book *Brave Hearts of Tsanpo* titled *Tibetan Literature and Government in Beijing* in which he talks about how authors in Tibetan literature have faced bans and torture since the red Chinese occupied Tibet. As the author himself lives in Tibet, he did not have much information due to restrictions imposed by the Chinese government. On the other hand, it is an account of what he had witnessed although it may still have missed few things but this is an important work by a Tibetan in Tibet on the fate and situation of Tibetan writers. The following is the conclusion he makes:

⁹⁷ Thierry Dodin. "What is the policy adopted by China regarding traditional Tibetan culture?" in *Authenticating Tibet*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2008.

⁹⁸ Public gatherings related to religious rituals are becoming mere gatherings that attract tourists and the places where the Tibetan *lhamo* opera is performed and how it is performed are being influenced by the Chinese.

⁹⁹ Phuntsok Wangyal writes about this issue in detail in his *Review*.

¹⁰⁰ Pema Bum, the director of Latse Library in an interview with Radio Free Asia.

“Whenever I talk about Tibetan literature, the government in Beijing comes to my mind. The reason is that the government in Beijing has abused and suppressed the rights and future of Tibetan literature and Tibetan writers for sixty years. There are very few works in Tibetan literature that portray true Tibetan life, true Tibetan thoughts and true Tibetan happiness and sufferings. Therefore, the tenth Panchen Lama had said, ‘Tibet has never had a novel that depicts Tibetan life, because when you write a novel, it is looked upon with suspicion that it contains poison.’ ”

What the Panchen Lama said was correct. Until now, there has been almost no writer, among the writers whose works depict the real life of Tibetans in Tibet, who has not faced punishments and detentions at the order of the government in Beijing. For example, in the previous century, the tenth Panchen Lama wrote his *70000-Character Petition* and submitted it to the government in Beijing. He was sentenced to nine years in prison as a result and he passed away at the age of only fifty.

Tibetan politician and famous scholar Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal wrote about Tibetan aspirations and wishes and pointed out the mistakes in Beijing government policies in a petition to Hu Jintao. Hu Jintao did not pay the slightest attention to it.

Senior Tibetan official Naktsang Nuelo wrote his memoir *Naktsang Boy's Joys and Sorrows*, in which he shared his personal experiences in 1958 when the government in Beijing tortured the Tibetans. His current situation remains unknown.

Famous Tibetan writers Buddha, Nyan and Garmi wrote truthful pieces on the life under the bloody crackdown by the Beijing government during the peaceful uprisings of the Tibetans in 2008. The Beijing government handed a four-year prison sentence each to Buddha and Nyan and a three-year prison sentence to Garmi.

The former administrator of Labrang Monastery, Venerable Jigme Gyatso recorded, in a video, the sequence of torture he had gone through in detention. As a result, he was subjected to more torture and subsequently sentenced to five years in prison.

Tibetan scholar and famous author Jhado Rinzing wrote *My Hometown and Peaceful Liberation* and *My Hometown and Careful Listening* which are about the Beijing government's military might invading Tibet and violently oppressing the Tibetans in 1958. His works talk about the harsh realities of Tibetan life at the time. As a result, the Beijing government detained and tortured him many times and he remains under special surveillance.

Famous Tibetan author Dolma Kyab wrote *Restless Himalayas* detailing the difficulties of Tibet in the past, present and future. As a result, he was fired from his work and sentenced to ten years in prison.

Famous Tibetan author Tsering Dondrub wrote *Howling Red Wind*, a novel that talks about the harsh realities faced by the Tibetans in 1958 and during the Cultural Revolution. The Beijing government took away his job and put him through many severe interrogations.

Famous Tibetan singer Jamyang Kyi wrote *A Succession of Torture* that details the realities of torturous interrogation in detention. As a result, she also faced detention and interrogation several times.

Popular Tibetan writer Tashi Rabten wrote *Blood Letter* that criticized the Beijing government's violent crackdown during the 2008 Tibetan uprisings. As a result, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

Tibetan writer Tsering Woenser wrote *The Roars of Snow Lions* about the Beijing government's crackdowns on the people of three provinces of Tibet in 2008. As a result, she remains under close surveillance of the Beijing government and her freedom of movement is severely restricted.

Famous Tibetan writer Gyitsang Takmig wrote *Petition about Tibet's Lack of Freedom*, which talks about the harsh realities of Tibetan history and their development. As a result of distributing the work, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

Famous Tibetan songwriter Jigme Ari wrote lyrics about the sufferings of the Tibetans and reprinted books by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and distributed them. As a result, he was sentenced to two years in prison.

Famous Tibetan author Shokdung wrote *The Division of Heaven and Earth* that talks about the historical mistakes made by the Beijing government. As a result, he was put through torturous interrogations in detention for several months.

Dhi Lhaden wrote *Words Uttered with Lives at Risk*, which talks about the harsh realities of the Tibetans. As a result, he remains underground attempting to escape the attention of the Beijing government.

Famous Tibetan writer Lho Yonten Gyatso wrote and gave speeches about the difficulties and sufferings of the Tibetans. As a result, he was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Tibetan writer Drokru Tsultrim wrote about the real difficulties and sufferings of the Tibetan people. As a result, he was sentenced to three years in prison.

Dong-gyu Dondrub Gyatso, editor of the privately owned special magazine *The Soul*, peacefully demonstrated in 2008. As a result, he was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Sungrab, the editor of *Footpath* from Machu was sentenced to three years in prison. The people from his hometown asked why he had been handed a prison sentence but no answer was given.

Joleb Dawa, the editor of *I of the Century*, was sentenced to three years in prison. When the people from his hometown asked for the reasons for his imprisonment, the officials had said that he had been a leader in the campaign of burning ornamental fur and skin of wild animals. This case should raise serious concerns of the environmental organizations around the world.

Tibetan writer Gedun Tsering wrote *Teardrops* about the causes and situations of the 2008 uprisings. As a result, he was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison.

Tenpa Lodro, the editor of *Moving Forward*, organized many discussions about the wellbeing and difficulties of the Tibetan people. As a result, he was arrested.

Famous Tibetan writer Hortsang Lugsang, the editor of *Daughter of Snow Mountain* and *Snow Flower*, helped to reprint a book by His Holiness. As a result, he was arrested and sentenced to six months in prison.

Famous Tibetan writer Meje was arrested and interrogated by Gansu police.

Writer Gudrub from Nagchu in Tibet Autonomous Region self-immolated to protest the Beijing government.

Writers under Surveillance:

Dong Yonten Gyatso, Gyadrol, Takbum Gyal, Derong Tsering Dondrub, Wangdu, Tankho, Samdrub Tsering, Ju Kalsang, Munjom Dronme, Menlha Kyab, Zursum Ma, Tsangwa Konbe, Tsering Dondrub, Drong and Rebgong Jamyang Kyab.

X.2. Research Conclusions from Outside Tibet

Reports from outside Tibet on the imprisoned Tibetan writers and their conditions:

Various exile Tibetan organizations including the Central Tibetan Administration, NGOs, news media and writings of individuals have analyzed the current conditions and disseminated their findings. In particular, the *Golden Pen in Shackles* by Tibetan Writers Abroad PEN Centre; the *Dissenting Voices: Targeting the Intellectuals Writers and Cultural Figures* by Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and *A 'Raging Storm': The Crackdown on Tibetan Writers and Artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests* by International Campaign for Tibet are noteworthy.

The *Golden Pen in Shackles* contains the details of forty-one writers arrested by the Chinese government including their birthplaces, times of arrest, charges against them and their prison sentences. The report highlights all the arrests and imprisonments that took place after 2000 with special focus on those that have taken place since 2008. The report came at a time when many people from outside and inside China paid close attention to Tibet and social media networks flourished. Consequently, the capability to learn more about the situation on the ground grew. But it does not mean that there had not been arrests of writers and that the policies of the Chinese government had been more lenient before this period.

Below are some examples of imprisoned writers:

Dolma Kyab was sentenced to ten years and six months in prison. Nyan was sentenced to four years in prison. Dhi Lhaden was sentenced to four years in prison. Kalsang Jinpa was sentenced to three years in prison. Sungrab Gyatso was sentenced to three years and two months in prison. Tashi Rabten aka Theurang was sentenced to four years in prison. Rinchen Zangpo was arrested. Go Sherab Gyatso was sentenced to

five years in prison. Kunga Tsangyang was sentenced to five years in prison. Female writer Norzin Wangmo was sentenced to five years in prison. Kalsang Tsultrim was sentenced to four years in prison. Tsultrim Gyatso was sentenced to four and half years in prison. Jinpa Gyatso was sentenced to three years in prison. Jigme Gyatso was sentenced to three years and one month in prison. Dorje Rinchen was sentenced to two and half years in prison. Sonam Tsephel was sentenced to two years and one month in prison. Gangkye Drupa Kyab was sentenced to seven years in prison. Gartse Jigme was sentenced to five years in prison. Joleb Dawa was sentenced to five years and one month in prison. Labrang Jigme was sentenced to five years in prison. Kirti Kyab was sentenced to four years in prison. Tsering Norbu was sentenced to two years in prison. Kunchok Tsephel was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Female writer Lhamo Kyab was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Female writer Yeshe Chodon was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Shokjang was sentenced to three years in prison. Lomik aka Jamyang was charged with leaking state secret to the outside, and sentenced to seven years in prison¹⁰¹.

The longest prison sentences for the above writers are fifteen years and the shortest sentences are two years. They were charged with all sorts of crimes, including leaking state secrets and harming the stability of the Chinese nation.

XI. Banned Websites Related to Literature

Example: *Butter Lamp Website for Tibetan Literature*

This *Butter Lamp Website for Tibetan Literature*, created in November 2005, is considered the biggest and first of its kind in Tibet. In terms of features, it has thirteen sections for news on literature, traditional style of literature, folk literature, short stories, translations, verse, freestyle verse, special online poetry sessions, bio data of the writers, literature on education, prose and analytical articles. Later, more features were added, making it one of the biggest websites, with twenty-eight features in total. In 2006, *BBS forum* and blog features were also added. It became a big world of literature, with spaces for discussions and blogging.

During the approximate six years from the creation of the website until the end of 2011, it gathered 5,840 blogs with 24,629 blog posts and 40,625 analytical articles. One person posted 447 posts, making him the most prolific on the website. From this it can be seen what impact this website had and how useful it was for the Tibetan literary people.¹⁰²

In 2008, this website was shut down and again in 2011. The editor of this website was arrested. Again on 10 August 2015, the website was suddenly shut down. The website remained offline for several days as the police required the website to be registered at the police station. On 19 August, a short notice circulated online that said that the concerned Chinese officials had ordered the website to be registered at the IT department of the nation. The website was shut down again and the short notice apologized for it. One of the many readers who expressed annoyance with the issue said, “Tibetan language faces many barriers. The website is shut and many questions

¹⁰¹ Direct source: Tibet Times newspaper, Dharamsala, India.

¹⁰² A summary of Wande Khar’s *Research on Kyabchen Dedrol* in which the author writes about *Butter Lamp* website.

are asked. Tibetans face many unfortunate incidents and are searched with hats and shoes removed.”

In 2009, the editor of website Konchok Tsephel was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Famous Tibetan poet Kyabchen Dedrol and famous Tibetan singer Dored were fired from their jobs. Not only were the websites banned but also the webmasters were arrested.

Butter Lamp for Tibetan Literature is just an example. Other websites such as *Tibetan Language*, one of the oldest websites in Tibet and *Sengdor* website have faced numerous shutdowns. *Rangdrol New Pen* website was also shut down. Many incidents like these have taken place. For writer Tsering Woesser, the Internet is a tool or platform to counter the Chinese government but it has become common knowledge that her blog is being hacked and banned.

WeChat has become popular in recent time and many writers in Tibet post their writings on *WeChat Moment* (the equivalent of Facebook wall) but they still face restrictions and censorship, as was witnessed in the case of Shokjang.

A brief report on the freedom of the Internet in Tibet by TCHRD found that on politically sensitive occasions such as the anniversary of the 2008 uprising, Serfs’ Liberation Day, the birthday of the Dalai Lama and the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, restrictions are placed on the use of mobile phones and the Internet in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Qinghai and Gansu. Many websites in the Tibetan regions are shut down on important occasions and tight restrictions are imposed on cyber cafes.¹⁰³ As the secretary of the Communist Party of China in Tibet Autonomous Region Chen Quanguo had called for mobile phones and new online channels to be strictly controlled to protect the security and stability of the nation and the benefits of the people. (Chen is now the party secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.)

The Chinese authorities routinely block websites from foreign countries that are critical of China’s policies on Tibet. Individual Tibet activists and Tibetan organizations face frequent harassment and have their websites hacked. In China, those who post Tibet-related information online have been harassed or restricted from using the Internet. Since officials from the Internet watchdog units at police stations have little knowledge of Tibetan language, sometimes they censor and shut down the whole websites for a single nonpolitical piece of writing in Tibetan. When Tibetan scholars and teachers in Tibet exchange messages in Tibetan on their phones, they receive warnings from the authorities.

¹⁰³ *Report on the freedom of the Internet in Tibet* by Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD)

Endnotes

1. *70,000-Character Petition*: Tenth Panchen Lama
2. *Review*: Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal
3. *Chronology of Tibetan Literature*: Buzhi Sampai Dondrub
4. *History of Modern Tibetan Literature*: Namsi
5. *Research on Rangdrol*: Tsering Shakya
6. *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*. University of California Press
7. *The Heartbeats of a New Generation*: Pema Bum. Lungta - special issue on Modern Tibetan Literature, Dharamsala: Amnye Machen.
8. *Collection of Analytical Articles* (rtsom dpyad gtam tshogs). Sbrang Char
9. *A Chinese Writer's View on Tibet Issue*: Wang Lixiong
10. *Professor Samdong Rinpoche's Speeches*: Samdong Rinpoche
11. *Power of the Pen*: Shokjang
12. *The Division of Heaven and Earth*: Shokdung
13. *Blood Letter*: Theurang
14. *A Succession of Torture*: Jamyang Kyi
15. *Words Uttered with Lives at Risk*: Dhi Lhaden. TCHRD.
16. *Defending Rights Through Law*: Dhi Lhaden. TCHRD.
17. *Selective Works of New Tibetan Literature and Their Commentaries*: Dulha Gyal
18. *Forest of Cuckoos Gathering*: Qinghai Legal Newspaper
19. *Howling Red Wind*: Tsering Dondrub
20. *The Waterfall and Fragrant Flowers: The Development of Tibetan Literature*: Tsering Shakya
21. 2009 Issue of *Shardungri* periodical
22. *The Volumes of Collected Works of Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok*: Chabpel Tseten Phuntsok
23. *Critique of Poetry*: Ju Kalsang
24. *The Green Sprout Growing in Puddle of Blood*: Hortsang Jigme
25. *Snow-covered Mountains and Grasslands Shrouded in Fog*: Editorial board of snow flower (gangs rgyan me tog rtsom sgrig khang)
26. *Brave Hearts of Tsanpo*: Gartse Jigme
27. *Warriors with Gold Pens*: PEN Tibet
28. Annual Reports by TCHRD
29. *Six Stars with a Crooked Neck: Tibetan Memoirs of the Cultural Revolution*. Pema Bum
30. Third issue of 1989 Sbrang Char
31. *The Waterfall of Youth*: Amnye Machen
32. *Collection of Analytical Articles of Snow Flower*
33. 2001 Tibetan Literature and Arts
34. *A Brief Introduction to Real Tibetan History and A Brief Observation of Tearful and Bloody Weather*: Donkun Drubpa Mishugpa (pseudonym)
35. *Poetry: Singing Tibet*: Tsering Wooser
36. *Restless Himalayas*: Dolma Kyab
37. Notes of interviews with concerned people. Tibetan Writers Abroad PEN Centre
38. *Research on Kyabchen Dedrol*: Wande Khar
39. Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy

Appendix I. Petition letter to Chinese authorities Shokjang wrote in prison

To the Higher People's Court of Qinghai

My name is Drukar Gyal or Druklo and my pen name is Shokjang. I am from the village of Khagya, Gangya Township, Sangchu County, Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province. I was arrested by Rebkong County police on 19 March 2015 and put in local police custody on the 20th. On 5 May 2015, I received the actual announcement of my arrest. On 21 July 2015, the Intermediate People's Court of Malho Prefecture was convened and I explained that what I had done was not a crime. After the court was adjourned for seven months, on 17 February 2016 the Intermediate People's Court of Malho convened for the second time. They announced the verdict that I was sentenced to three years in prison plus two years deprivation of political rights. I do not accept this verdict and I am writing this appeal letter to the Higher People's Court of Qinghai with a strong hope of getting a just verdict.

The Intermediate Court of Malho prefecture has accused me of 'instigating separatism' with these things I wrote [and did]:

1) An online post about freedom of religious faith; 2) a post about police and military personnel with assault weapons entering my hotel room and forcefully searching me on 16 March; 3) sharing an excerpt from [Shokdung's] *Division of Heaven and Earth* that was doing the rounds on the Internet; 4) sharing news about the Chinese government saying that they would negotiate with His Holiness apart from independence; 5) sharing a video clip, floating on the internet, showing some Chinese police men beating up Chinese people on the streets; and 6) keeping six books, including Wang Lixiong's *Act of Destruction*, in my mobile phone.

I argued my innocence in connection with the first four issues during the court hearing before, but in the verdict statement, it decided that my arguments with provisions from the constitution were baseless. If the provisions of the constitution of China cannot be the basis of an argument, it is hard for me to understand the principles of the Intermediate People's Court. With a grain of hope, I again argue in detail that the things that I have done are not crimes. Officials of Higher People's Court of Qinghai province, please, take these into consideration.

1) Freedom of religious faith, as enshrined in the constitution of China, is an important right of the people. Based on this constitutional right, I expressed my opinions, in my writing, about the tight security with heavy presence of armed police during the *Butter Flower Offering* festival at Kumbum Monastery. I simply introduced the readers to this general knowledge about freedom of religion. As a citizen, I have the constitutional right to comment on social views and a responsibility to introduce others to general knowledge about the law. I practiced my constitutional rights and responsibilities but I never talked about separatism as they claim. And also I clearly wrote that, based on the general relationship between religion and politics, I was going to express my view about the outcomes of politics abusing religion and religious powers abusing politics. The former is the writing in the court case and the latter I have not written yet. In clear terms, this is an ordinary commentary but it has nothing to do with the accusations of 'separatism'. The Intermediate

People's Court of Malho claimed, 'this is not only stamping on the freedom of religious faith for the Tibetans but also the freedom of religious faith for the people of China' from my writing and accused me of holding views of separatism. Is this not laughable to mature people? I did not write anything even close to separatism here but talked about the Tibetans and Chinese as one. I do not know what separates from what in their view. At that time, the Internet was abuzz with the situation at Kumbum Monastery's *Butter Flower Offering* festival and the devotees, one after another, were posting their views everywhere on the Internet as you saw. After seeing those conditions, I expressed my views in writing with photos only copied from the posts of other people. None of the photos I took. Any ordinary person would know that I could not turn my lenses to Kumbum while residing in Labrang. Another point I want to make is that writing about the situation at the time and expressing my candid views were my right to free expression. This right is enshrined in the constitution and its protection is guaranteed. If an ordinary view like this that belongs to the field of culture becomes a politically critical view and instigation of separatism, will the visitors and devotees of all nationalities who shared pictures and information on the Internet of the situation at Kumbum become instigators of separatism? If you look at it with this logic, there will be few members of public who are not separatists and instigators of separatism. Will this act of extreme suspicion not create an abusive tight net? Does this not go against the main socialist values of freedom, democracy, equality and rule of law laid down and practiced by leaders like President Xi Jinping? This situation looks as though the decisions made by high authorities were disregarded on purpose. Will the countries from all directions not laugh at this? Will the future generation not ridicule it? [I ask] you, the Higher People's Court, to please investigate and consider it.

- 2) On the night of 16 March, I was in a hotel room in Rebkong. In the middle of the night, one person in police uniform and one person in military uniform with guns in their hands entered my room saying that they had to search it. I asked them to show me their identity cards. They put the muzzles of their guns on my body instead and threatened me at the top of their lungs. For the first time, I experienced the fear of being pointed at with gun barrels. Because of this unimaginably terrifying experience that words cannot explain, I complained about the safety in Rebkong. Under the circumstance where you cannot distinguish police from underground militia, I wrote that letter in the hopes of getting protection from the public and the security personnel. If those people who searched me with force on that night were real policeman and military personnel, according to the law, then searching someone without showing one's identity card is illegal. I was the victim and I was the one who should have been protected by the law enforcement. If they were members of underground militia, I was the victim who should have been protected by the law enforcement. But the law enforcement officials accused me of instigating separatism and “上述内容将我军警例行检查扭曲成制造民众慌的原因，存在较强的捏造，煽动性质. (the above content about the military police style search on me is said to be a distortion on the purpose of instilling fear in public, strong fabrication and incitement in nature)”

It says that I have made it up. [To determine] whether or not it is a lie you can check the CCTV footage of that day. Incitement in nature is a secret I do not understand. If it is incitement for separatism, I have not written any words close to separatism, let alone inciting it. Writing about a situation where I was a victim becomes a baseless accusation of a crime. If I had filed a legal case on the issue at the court, would I not have directly become a separatist? When I think about this verdict, it makes me shudder and feel desperate. So, I ask you the Higher People's Court to please fight for justice for me.

- 3) The short excerpt from *Division of Heaven and Earth* I copied from others and posted online. When I shared it, I wrote, "Look at this often and think about it often." The reason is that I do not want to see the sad episode of people dying in cold blood again. I always protest against people who create their happiness at the expense of others bleeding warm blood. China is a big country with 56 ethnic groups and the Tibetans are one of the biggest groups among them. As I am a citizen of China and, particularly, a Tibetan intellectual, I have a responsibility for the great lives of my brothers and sisters. If you say this is incitement for separatism, there is nothing more laughable, but I will happily and cheerfully accept this punishment. I never want to be someone who does not care about the lives of my brothers and sisters. Even for the Chinese brothers and sisters, I would definitely have done the same.
- 4) The news that negotiations between the Chinese government and His Holiness were going to take place was shared among friends. I also shared it from the [WeChat] Moment of a friend. It is strange that sharing a piece of information circulated among friends becomes illegal. Negotiations like that took place before. A few years ago, representatives of Tibetan (exile) government came to China and held talks. This has nothing to do with state secrets and it seems that the Intermediate People's Court of Malho prefecture does not know this. Otherwise, they could not possibly deliver a verdict like this. If hundreds of deliberations were made the way Intermediate People's Court of Malho prefecture did, not only me but also the Chinese government would have committed crimes and the news outlets in the country would have to shut down. So, you the Higher People's Court, please consider it.
- 5) The short video clip was about an incident that had taken place somewhere inside the country. The number of shares was very high. I also shared it from the Weibo account of a Chinese friend in solidarity with the Chinese people who were being beaten. As I have said before, even for the Chinese brothers, I would definitely have done the same. This has nothing to do with the so-called separatism. Where can you find anything illegal in it? The Intermediate People's Court of Malho prefecture did not even look into the content of the video clip and they just put the heavy charge of incitement for separatism on my small head. I am being crushed. I hope and wait for the Higher People's Court to prove my innocence.
- 6) It is true that I have read several books including Wang Lixiong's *Act of Destruction* but I have never quoted a word from those books, let alone sharing them with other people. If *Act of Destruction* is a book that you cannot read, it is incredible that the law forgives the author. I deeply respect that kind

of law. Authors like him should be the object of admiration, regardless of his nationality and race. However, the author is forgiven but the reader is punished. I do not know what part of the law dictates this. Forgive me if I am too ignorant of the law. If this is not the case, you the Higher People's Court, please clarify these acts of 'two systems in one country'.

Another point I have to talk about: some friends claimed that they had seen the short posts mentioned above on my Weibo account and it was considered as flawless evidence of a crime. If their mere seeing the posts proves a crime, do all of my writings and even birds and insects become a crime? Who in their right mind would accept this kind of so-called evidence that people laugh at and dogs step on? Something of mystery is that they confiscated my iPhone 5S. The reason was that they wanted to dig out my notes. If my notes were somewhere in my home, would they confiscate my home with all the things in it as well? Their big mouths are used to eating and big hands are used to taking but I do not have much to offer as 'alms'. You the provincial court, please do not blow the wind of mean spirits into the *tsampa* bag of the beggar.

In conclusion, I am a citizen of the People's Republic of China, so my right to freely express my views and write my thoughts are enshrined and guaranteed in the constitution. But as I have little experience with the law, I apologize for any inappropriate words I may have written here. Especially, my mother, sisters and brothers look forward to seeing me again without the tears in their eyes getting dried. My wife and son wait for me every minute and every hour of the day, so I hope you the Higher People's Court will make a good deliberation soon.

Druklo aka Shokjang
24 February 2016.

Appendix II. Dolma Kyab's petition from prison to the international organizations

To the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), International Congress of Women, International Union for Conservation of Nature and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

I have been sentenced to ten years in prison. The main reason is my unpublished work *Restless Himalayas* that I wrote a long time ago. In that book, I mainly wrote about democracy, freedom, the Tibet issue, etc. It was the main argument for my prison sentence but, according to Chinese laws, one cannot establish guilt of instigation to separate the motherland in this book. Therefore, they charged me with espionage by abusing the law, without any evidence or real information. The mighty charged me with espionage and declared a guilty verdict.

Their arguments: one, deciding that I had once given suggestions to the Tibetan government (Tibetan government in exile) about making efforts in protecting the environment and improving women's health, they arbitrarily accused me of preparing for the promotion of independence for Tibet.

Two, claiming that I was preparing to write a book about geography, they arbitrarily accused me of providing secret documents to the outside and baselessly decided that writing about geography was an act of fighting for Tibetan independence. These unfounded words remind me of the famous Italian cosmology theorist Giordano Bruno, who said that the stars orbited the sun, and as a result, in 1600, the religious leaders of Rome sentenced him to death. I feel that my case is the same.

Three, they deliver verdicts without listening to what the other party has to say and without looking into the facts. In particular, they deliver verdicts with their power alone. Therefore, on 26-27 November 2005 when UNCHR members paid a visit to Lhasa, with fear of getting the real conditions known, I was transferred to another unknown location for two days.

Therefore, I cannot explain to the people that I have been tried with the fairness of the law. Especially, they recognized my promotions of protection for Tibetan antelopes and love for freedom in the nomadic areas as campaigns for Tibetan independence. I believe that getting a prison sentence of ten years for promoting environment protection, knowledge about women's health, family planning, living healthy and better understanding of the environment is unimaginable in modern human history. They forcefully took away my freedom but they cannot take away my determination for the protection of the human environment and spreading knowledge about women's health. They can kill me but they cannot kill my love for the study of geography. Likewise, learning about humans and their environment, humans and their mothers and nature is something that is commonly valued. As I have in the past and will in the future, I am holding onto my values.

I request the relevant bodies to pay attention to these issues and provide help.

I have heard that the Chinese government uses accusations of espionage to crush [movements for] democracy and freedom. And also they can use it on their report to show achievements.

Dolma Kyab (from prison)
30 November 2005.

Appendix III. Petition to the Chinese Government by Professors, University Students and Monks in Tibet

As the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was about to convene, professors, university students and monks from monasteries in Tibet submitted a petition about the Tibet issue to the central government of China.

As the 18th National Congress of Communist Party of China was preparing to convene from 8 to 14 November 2012, a petition with signatures of teachers and students from Central University of Nationalities, Northwest University of Nationalities, Qinghai University of Nationalities, Qinghai University, Teachers' Training School of Tsolho, middle schools in Tibetan regions and monks from monasteries was submitted, on 5 October 2012, to the central United Front Work Department and Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

The petition was written outlining eight points and submitted with their signatures.

Point one: the foundations of a harmonious society are equality and mutual respect among nationalities and a free environment for governance and economy without repression. So, the central Chinese government should think about creating an environment where the nationalities are respected without repression.

Point two: In government offices of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Tibetan autonomous prefectures and Tibetan autonomous counties, Tibetan language should get equal rights to be used equally alongside Chinese language because this is the foundation of equality among the nationalities. So the government should think about this.

Point three: building houses and material development alone are not enough for the fundamental advancement of Tibetan nationality but many educated Tibetans should be raised by establishing institutes for professional training in Tibetan history, politics, law, economics, science and social sciences at universities of nationalities that have Tibetan language departments. As this is the basic path to development and foundation for bringing new sciences for the development of the nationality, [the government] should think about it.

Point four: all the textbooks of middle schools in Tibetan areas have been changed into Chinese and it is a brutal policy that belittles the nationality, so the central Chinese government should change it.

Point five: Tibetan nationality does not strive for and appreciate only material development but values both spiritual and material developments. This is a nationality that values the riches of spirituality more than material development. Based on the conditions and religious faith, Tibetan regions should be given freedom and right [to practice it].

Point six: Tibetan officials in Tibetan areas who have real political power but not just administrate the monasteries to serve the purpose and proposals of the Chinese Communist Party should be raised.

Point seven: many Han Chinese and Hui Muslims migrate to Tibetan regions, making the Tibetans, the real owners of Tibetan land, a minority. This hurts many Tibetans and it is an issue that worries them. [The Chinese government] should think about this.

Point eight: Laws on policies about autonomy for nationalities passed by the central government should be thoroughly implemented. Policies on excessive mining in the Tibetan regions and urbanizing the nomads should be changed. Tibetans are a race that has lived for thousands of years, worshiping gods and *nagas*, with Buddhist values that protect the environment. Tibetan culture and traditions are being excessively stamped upon, hurting the feelings of Tibetans unbearably. [The Chinese government] should think about this.

Appendix IV. Nyan's *Are There Human Rights on Our Bodies*

1

*Have you heard that human rights do not do anything in our place?
The reason is that human rights are dead on our bodies
From whom am I going to keep secret the fact that my brothers and sisters lost their
precious lives one by one this year again?
[People in] the Snow Land are used to keeping tears of sorrow in [their] hearts
Every brother of the three provinces lives in iron pipes with tolerance
Who can the timid teary eyes of each brother filled with fear and terror look at?
Mount Kailash thirsty for the happiness of freedom, democracy and equality was
again submerged in blood
A long chain of hands with hope firmly locked in life and happiness again fell to the
laps of mother earth one by one
Is this the 'red wind' that we still cannot forget resurrecting to howl again?
Is this the 'dark' that still does not fade in our minds shrouding [the land] again?
If you are someone with eyes, have you seen many of our brothers and fellow
countrymen leave with a dream country in their hearts?
Alas! Why can we not find someone in our land to ask to save the precious lives of our
brothers and fellow countrymen?
This darkness, terror, invasion and repression will splash the brains of all the living
things including blades of grass and drops of water in our country
Nonetheless in front of gun barrels and whips every man, woman, monk and nun
stands with the 'spirit of snow'
Please turn the eyes of the truth in the world in this direction for a moment*

2

The smoke covering the skies of Lhasa on March 14 was the smoke held back for fifty years.
It was the smoke brothers and fellow countrymen had persistently held a lid on for fifty years.
Did the smoke not come out after being in the hearts for fifty years?
[Our] fatherland carries the sorrowful burden.
All the brothers and sisters who I did not know were related to me.
All those brothers in the three provinces of Utsang, Kham and Amdo were related to me.
There are countless examples of bullying and abuse in rural county towns and townships.
There are plays of both visible and invisible 'kissing while smearing mucus'.
There is resentment of being beaten so many times in the disguise of law enforcement in the many years, when everything could be decided according to the law.
For so many years, there have been mining, destruction, exploitation, contradictions between words and action, false accusations, flattering deception, discrimination, lies upon lies, innocents charged with crimes and gentle words and threats.
Did all these fuel the Tibetans?
Without protectors, leaders, forces and assistance, Tibetans, not having any thought as tiny as a hair tip of overthrowing the red government, desperately fought for human rights in their own places.

Under a government with no thoughts and vision for justice, those who can never and should never be forgiven are 'rebels' who do not appreciate the government system. So, those who willfully targeted the lives of my brothers were the perfectly armed red guards.

The guards are the 'men sent and arrows shot' by the government.

They were terrifying.

They left after playing with human rights like a toy.

But they can never be held responsible to their wrongdoings.

When you think about it carefully, the mere riots in front of their eyes could be suppressed with weapons, but wounds and blood have been spread to the next generations.

In the eyes of the public, a government that always displays weapons does not possess a grain of civilization.

The image of a government with only weapons and threats is an immense sad story in human history.

3

[They are] fast at covering up incidents, adept at doctoring incidents, in sync with covering up lies, accustomed to accusing others of their own faults, well trained to distort [information] in front of your eyes, happy at putting odd pieces together and not confused with lies, pretense and deception.

Inside the incidents, flesh was cut and bones were crushed but they acted to the outside that there was not even a drop of blood.

In these incidents, there was a small heart beating that could not be stopped but, on the outside, they put on a stern face.

The habit of accusing the vulnerable of incidents is a special way for the colonizer to play but all the people with eyes can see that the lamb does feed on the grass in front of the wolf.

In a society where you can never hear true words about freedom, democracy and equality, confronting the military weapons in front of us was a desperate choice.

The most painful thing for the Tibetans is not that they do not have people to tell their pains to, but that they are not allowed to tell the pains.

The longer you keep silent about the pains the better in line it is with the red doctrine.

4

The disputes between the Chinese and Tibetans in all the places are directly linked with the red government.

The government has postponed the old things without settling them and the result is that they have become the main cause for instability for the whole Tibetan community.

Both sides have suffered incredible loss of life. Harmony among the ethnic groups, the daily mantra of the government, is on the brink of inducing killing each other. People of big races value and respect life.

The communist morality that stamps on the respect for all the lives and interests of others [we] will protest all the time.

Keeping the tears of sorrow inside, the brothers and countrymen of a race have been violently repressed, beaten and killed.

History will not forget this.

This society where strangling the vulnerable has become a custom is always filled with terror and fear.

But [I] hope the people alive behind those who died fighting for freedom and rights like the thirsty fighting for water will rise up without shrinking.

It is our unavoidable responsibility to make sure that our brothers and sisters who have joined in to rejoice and shoulder burdens together are shown to real hell.

5

I want to thank them for the thorough beatings and killings from Lhasa City to Kham, and Kham to the nomads in Amdo.

The brothers and countrymen in the Land of Snow have to cover their mouths and are not allowed to send a single truthful word to the world.

Gurus and reincarnated lamas of the rural populations and selected puppet leaders in Tibetan regions and the fat Tibetan scholars doing research on Tibetan studies also distinguished black from white, and testified on TV and in newspapers, by representing the people.

I thank them for adding salt to the wounds of the brothers and countrymen.

I think it is necessary now to remember it through reading an online piece on Xinhua News:

On the evening of March 21, Tibetan Buddhist leaders of Gansu province held a meeting in Sangchu county. Tulku Jamyang Shepa, a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, the vice president of the Buddhist Association of China, president of High-level Tibetan Buddhism College, Vice chair of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of the province (Gansu) and President of the Provincial Buddhist Association, said, "We can see from all the evidence that the Dalai clique plotted this campaign of destruction. In reality, race and religion are their flags for fooling people. It has been proven that destroying developments and stability in Tibetan areas and the rules of all the monasteries in Tibetan areas is their real goal." (Source: March 22, 2008 Xinhua news website)

Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, invited reporters from Xinhua News, on the 23rd, and delivered a speech on the recent incidents in Lhasa. "The concerned departments, using lawful methods, settled it appropriately on time. It was necessary." (Source: March 23, 2008 Xinhua news website)

Lhakpa Phuntsok, the general director of the China Tibetology Research Center, said, "After the incident on March 14, the government immediately used methods to control the situation and it was impeccable." (Source: March 24, 2008 Xinhua news website)

Famous Tibetan studies scholar Drongbu Tsering Dorje, a member of the People's Political Consultative Conference of the Tibet Autonomous Region and research director at the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, said, "I have recently arrived in Lhasa from Beijing. When I saw shops, cars and buses damaged and burnt by the criminals in the streets, I was extremely angry." (Source: March 26, 2008 Xinhua news website)

When you finish reviewing the short statements above, do you not understand everything? These short statements and writings are the ‘impeccable tools that protect the fundamental interests of the people’ and represent the ‘impeccable views’ of the Tibetans on television and in newspapers. ‘With anger’, they have expressed the songs in the hearts of our brothers and countrymen. When it comes to difficulties, vulnerabilities and sorrows, people who speak words of truth concerning the lives, sorrows and happiness of our brothers and countrymen are as rare as stars shining during the day but our leaders, lamas, tulkus and Tibetan scholars said ‘true words without twists’.

The more I listen to these statements, the more I miss the tenth Panchen Lama to whom the Beijing government gave the title ‘loving country and loving religion’ and I remember a short statement by Panchen of Limitless Brilliance. In the epilogue of his *Seventy Thousand Character Petition* to the Beijing government, he said, “I have vowed that I will not leave a tiny trace of anything that may harm the reputation of the hardworking and brave descendants of the Tibetan race in my history.” And when high-ranking Tibetan lamas and tulkus were summoned to Beijing to express their views before the 11th Panchen Lama was recognized...Alak Gungthang Tsang, who dared to raise his hand for his benefits and views in front of the concerned officials of the Beijing government, Bawa Phuntsok Wangyal, who suffered in prison for eighteen years, and hard-boned Yidam Tsering, who never put his proud head under the feet of other people, were the heroes in recent Tibetan history – and I miss them. What they like is the earth under their feet. They love their home, even if it is just a ditch. They love their own language. These days the big leaders and lamas who only say yes when it comes to money and power give ‘impeccable speeches and views’ that are a disgrace, are they not? It would be okay if the next generations did not forget ‘those who beat Chinese drums on top of killing the fathers’. The people who damage our image should be considered criminals in history. Those fat ‘tools’ wrongly accuse that destruction is ‘their real goal’ and said, settling it ‘appropriately on time was necessary’. What is ‘necessary’? Are they saying that it was necessary for the brothers, sisters, monks and nuns to lose their lives? Or are they saying it is necessary to violently beat and kill people? The research scholar said, “government immediately used methods to control the situation and it was impeccable.” Did you see the methods they immediately used with your own eyes? Are you talking about the military vehicles and many guns they brought? Or are you saying that gunning down many lay people and monastics was ‘impeccable’? The unbelievable thing is that the philosopher managed to get ‘angry’ this time. A few shops were burnt so he manages to get ‘extremely angry’ – but manages to ignore the fact that our brothers were threatened with military violence, as though it was just a whistle in the wind. Is he not broad-minded? How shameful it is that the businessmen who bring the ‘fight back inside’ gossiped about their mothers and beat them. How disappointing it is that the hardworking people who ‘sell their souls’ do not have anything more valuable than their seats. Is it not high time the face masks of those ‘benefiting in the middle’ were peeled off?

In short, all I want to say is one thing: the spirit of a race is firmly connected to the spirits of each person.

Anyone can keep the fact that many of our brothers and sisters lost their lives secret but history will never keep it secret. Why do the Tibetans have to endure unimaginable bullying, abuse, suffering and torture on their fatherland that they love? Families and couples are separated today and it has to be a sorrow of the race as a whole. The brothers and sisters who sacrificed their lives for the land of the forefathers should not be forgotten forever. Everybody cares about, loves and treasures their lives more than anything else but, for a reason, they had to even lose their lives. Were their actions not a desperate response to the extreme brutality of the colonizers that they could no longer bear? The murderers who stamp on the lives of people always throw the interests of the people into the dirt. So, the unfortunate event was not avoidable for us. When the beautiful lives of ordinary people are dragged into the dark abyss and when the beautiful lives that prayed for their dreams to come true are confiscated, I cannot keep them secret – no matter what I may face – and their sad fates are firmly connected to my pen. A man in his forties named Shikalo from the village called Naktsangma in Charo township of Ngaba county was wrongly accused and beaten to death this time. His precious life ended in darkness. What a pity! Behind the father, the eye of the family, there are a widow and three children who bear tears in their hearts. The suffering-inducing incident closed the happy chapter of a family. Is it not something hard to say these days that somebody has been beaten to death? When you hear that somebody has been beaten to death, you automatically shudder at the memory of the horrors during the ‘democratic reforms’. Generally, it would be better for everybody not to have ‘revenge’ to take and ‘old scores’ to settle but the offspring of the old man will never forget the murderers of their father their whole lives. This is definitely the result of their repression, torture and killings. We never like taking ‘revenge’ and settling ‘old scores’. We call on our descendants to be able to come to an era when taking ‘revenge’ and settling ‘old scores’ are no longer relevant. The descendants do not come into this world to take ‘revenge’ and settle ‘old scores’ but to enjoy the beauty of tomorrow. The descendants do not come into this world to take ‘revenge’ and settle ‘old scores’ but to take refuge in the fully blossomed beauty of freedom, equality and democracy. Thoesam and Jinpa, two monks from Kirti Monastery, committed suicide in police custody as they despaired of the current critical situation. Why does this incident have to stage such sorrowful shows? When you think carefully, you cannot blame the two of them. Who does not feel fear? Who does not fear the unimaginable pains of torture, such that human spirits cannot bear?

These two monks could not bear the pain, terror and suffering of torture, so committed suicide out of desperation. These two monks completely lost the hope to be free to live as humans, so felt they had to commit suicide with no other choice. It is very difficult for a human to get the determination to commit suicide but when you are extremely desperate, you want to commit suicide, it seems. However, who brought this kind of terror into the lives of these Tibetans? Who brought the darkness of sorrow into the hearts of people who do not have protectors and fighting forces? Pray that, in the future, intelligent boys and girls, who do not suffer bullying and defeat under the deceptions of others, will wake up, one by one. I believe these boys and girls, thinking about their past wounds and sorrowful stories, will find another ‘wide road’.

If you only watch CCTV, you have your brain washed clean. That TV station completely smears our image and, with all sorts of methods, makes the Tibetans feel that the situation is meaningless. This is exactly its power and energy. Programs with lies upon lies have the confidence to say that the distorted history is the 'real' history. They try to create an image in your mind, saying that 'these are the realities of the incident'. With the matchmaking advertisements, a huge accusation is laid upon us in the end. In such a huge public 'uprising', a few incidents involved in brutality are normal in riots of other nationalities and countries. Tibetans have a saying: 'angry at the yak but whip the horse'. It is not entirely a conflict between the Chinese and Tibetans but showing an attitude to the government has become, in the end, a conflict between the citizens of the nationalities. However, the people who observe the events on TV and in the newspapers and the people who see the things firsthand are different in many aspects. TV stations and newspapers have become tools to protect the authorities themselves. But if there are people who think they speak true words, give true reasons and make statements that identify the black from the white, then those people would have to be considered as people with damaged brains! With all sorts of ways and methods, TV stations and newspapers have had a huge impact in the efforts of making accusations in a short period of time. (Advertising good deeds also has the same impact.) With only the power and influence of the advertisements, the dignity of this race is unimaginably abused and we never agree with this. If you say that Tibetan society has to be kept stable with violent force, the 'stable' Tibetan society will remain repressed, exploited and bullied just as before and will never see the true light.

8

Human rights protect you from political, economic and social interference. The nature of human rights is about freedom and equality. Their main aims and objectives are about the way of life and development.

When there is no guarantee of equality and freedom, people cannot live and move forward and human rights are out of question. The social reality right now, in front of our eyes, is that we hide all the acute pains that shake our bodies from inside. Even though we always call for freedom, equality and happiness, it is considered 'illegal' and 'a crime'. Those who fight for freedom, equality and happiness often face losses and suffer incidents. What is the meaning for us to live? No. In the place where we live, did our ancestors not turn the wheel of sorrow and happiness?

Today, with the power of the spirits of our beloved brothers and sisters, we eagerly look forward to enjoying the sunshine in the future. It must be a sign that our wishes and dreams will come true, I think. We always have to remember that human rights are something that we have to fight for ourselves. The goals of our struggles and calls for human rights are for the future generations. If the future generations could live with human rights, freedom, equality and happiness, then our lives would be meaningful. If the future generations could live with human rights without repression, exploitation and abuse, then they would be able to escape the difficulties of life and the abuse of the colonizers and they would have human rights that were paid for with lives.

However, how do human rights exist on our bodies right now?

Comment: *Shardungri* and its editorial board and office are not responsible for this writing. The writer is responsible for the writing in its entirety. At the same time, we wish success for *Shardungri* as always. July 2008.

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