

Ancestors' Tomb

Mar Jang-nyug

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Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain or halt in the leafy shade, what is that you express in your eyes? It seems to me more than all the print I have read in my life.

~ Walt Whitman

Introduction

One of the most notable corollaries of the 2008 protests in Tibet is the unprecedented surge in artistic expression and intellectual activism among young, educated and bilingual Tibetans. Born after the 1949 occupation and the dark years of Cultural Revolution, they are equipped with the means to understand the politico-socio dynamics of one-party system in Chinese-ruled Tibet. Outraged by the violent repression of peaceful protests, Tibetan intellectuals, writers, bloggers, and singers, took to publicly expressing their opposition against the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

A concurrent result is the on-going repression of such legitimate opposition and criminalization of voices critical of the government's failure to protect its citizens from human rights abuses. In the aftermath of the 2008 protests, more than 70 Tibetan intellectuals, writers, artists, and cultural figures have been detained,

disappeared, tortured and imprisoned for exercising their fundamental right to freedom of expression and opinion. Blogs, websites, magazines critical of government policy have been shut down. Online postings are censored and international media are banned from entering Tibet without special permits. The information blackout in Tibet would be complete if not for the courage of individual Tibetans, who continue to share information on the ground realities knowing they risk being subjected to the brutal and inhumane punishment meted out to prisoners of conscience in Chinese prisons.

Many Tibetan writers and artists who have dared to discuss or criticize China's repressive response to self-immolation protests have been tortured, disappeared and sentenced without due process of law and judicial impartiality. Vague and overbroad legal provisions are invoked to punish the 'troublemakers' and 'splittists' - pejorative terms used to denounce and silence courageous voices calling for freedom and justice. The mere sharing of information about human rights abuses outside of Tibet is deemed criminal and justification for as much as 10 to 13 years in prison, besides the frequent prospects of detention, torture and disappearance.

The right to freedom of expression and opinion is one of the most important conditions for the full realization of human freedom and justice. The right to freely and fearlessly express opinions contributes toward the robust development of human creativity, the sense of critical consciousness, and native instrumentality. These rights assume added importance in oppressive societies where governments and vested powers endeavour to strictly control information about human rights abuses.

Under international law, no exception is allowed in derogating the right to hold opinions. In its General Comment No. 10 on the right to Freedom of expression as provided in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Human Rights Committee states: "Paragraph 1 requires protection of the 'right to hold opinions without interference'. This is a right to which the Covenant permits no exception or restriction."

Despite the obvious risks involved in exercising the right to freedom of expression, Tibetan writers and artists continue to take up their cudgels on behalf of their countrymen by publishing their thoughts and criticisms

in books, magazines, blogs and other online platforms. Many like Mar Jang-nyug use pseudonyms to protect their identities. The overwhelming use of pseudonyms is induced not by choice but for fear of official retribution, thus underscoring the oppressive conditions that weigh heavily on the lives of so many in Tibet.

Mar Jang-nyug is a Tibetan writer who was born and brought up in Marong village of Ngaba in the Tibetan province of Amdo. He is, in many ways, representative of a generation of young University-educated Tibetans schooled in the Chinese system, a system that Mar Jang-nyug rips apart in this stinging collection of journal entries and personal notes titled "Ancestors' Tomb". This book reveals the oppressive nature of Chinese rule in Tibet. With his writings, Mar Jang-nyug bears witness to the suffering and pain endured by Tibetans and exposes the authoritarian workings of the Chinese government.

Through an array of prose and poetry, the book describes the dictatorial nature of the Chinese government, its relentless marginalization of Tibetan language and culture, destruction of environment through unrestricted deforestation and mining and its ever-increasing violations of human rights.

His interviews with elderly Tibetans who survived the early years of Chinese invasion are heart-rending accounts of the starvation, imprisonment, torture, death and destruction unleashed on Ngaba and by extension, the rest of the Tibetan plateau during the late 1950s. All of these witnesses are common folks such as nomads and farmers whose stories lay bare the sophistry of China's claim of liberating ordinary Tibetans from "feudal serfdom and slavery". Their recollections also vary significantly from the history touted by the Chinese government, which contains no mention of the events that led to the consolidation of Chinese rule in Tibet.

The eye witness accounts of the Tibetans are replete with unaddressed grievances and unfulfilled aspirations, at once personal and yet political, as is demonstrated by the tortured body of the author's mother and her legacy to her son of a wounded heart, both bearing witness to brutalities bygone and present.

The invoking of memories about Ngaba during the nascent stages of Chinese rule is telling in that it gives a historical context -resonant with the underlying Buddhist theme of cause and effect - to the spate of self-immolation protests in Tibet in recent years. The

recollections of Ngaba inhabitants shed light on deep-rooted grievances against past and current injustices that, in many ways, explains why Ngaba became the first Tibetan area to witness self-immolation protests.

In particular, the book exposes the lie behind China's claim that self-immolation protests and other demonstrations of unrest in Tibet are incited and encouraged by a so-called "Dalai Clique". In addition to calling the claim baseless, the author goes on to honour the courage demonstrated by Tibetans from all walks of life in burning their bodies to protest China's unjust and oppressive rule.

For someone who has spent his whole life in a closed society, Mar Jang-nyug possesses a keen political consciousness that recognizes and understands the true nature of colonialism, that is, to control and render dependent through violence and repression. He asks fellow Tibetans to learn from India's struggle for freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Jewish struggle to maintain a cultural identity. Among the peaceful ways he advocates to bring in change, he explicitly makes a strong case in favour of human rights especially freedom of expression and artistic expression,

citing article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He writes, "I have exposed the oppressive policies of the Chinese Communist Party that go against the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By putting my life at risk, I have demonstrated to the people of the world the fate of my homeland."

Arguing strongly in favour of individual rights, the author says, "The individual citizens are the ends for which the state is established. The individuals do not exist for the state. The state has a duty to protect the inalienable rights of its citizens."

In short, Mar Jang-nyug reminds us in a very powerful way that freedom is a basic human right, one that cannot be realised by begging, but only by challenging the status quo.

This slim book speaks truth to power. It bears witness to truth, like a snow mountain.

Note: The Walt Whitman quote is not part of the original Tibetan manuscript of this book.

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Preface

My friends told me not to publish this small book. They said if I published it, I would not have time to concentrate on my studies. But the world needs to hear the cry of our murdered fellow Tibetans and to remember the blood of our ancestors that was spilled by the Chinese occupation. So I worked hard to complete this book without compromising the truth.

Let me say that this small book is like the coffin of a close relative and a testimony of those whose blood will be spilled in the future. It is a testimony of truth collected by an ordinary person. This work is like the paradise of a wealthy prince. This work represents the tears shed by a helpless and unprotected person who suffered for many years. This work is a testimony of murdered parents and relatives. This work is like a mirror exposing the face behind the mask of dictatorship.

My fellow suffering Tibetans, read this book once. Your agonizing heart might get some solace. To those who care for the fate of our people, this book will serve as a witness - like a mountain - to truth.

Tears of Smar Rong

The fate of my village resembles that of other Tibetan villages in the Land of Snows. We could only speculate about the past that we were not physically a part of. The following is an account of the early years of Chinese invasion - in the late 1950s - based on conversations I had with a few elderly Tibetans in my homeland.

Before 1959, Smar Rong was part of Khro Sde. Geographically, Smar Rong covers a huge area and is blessed with mountains, lakes, and forests. Its inhabitants were engaged in farming and animal husbandry. They had a decent livelihood. More than five hundred families lived there - all of them practicing the ten virtuous deeds of Dharma.

Today, Smar Rong is part of rNga ba. It comprises around two hundred families. The name Smar Rong has been changed to the Chinese name Khog Po Shang. In 1958, the Red Army arrived in lower rNga ba and began causing disturbances. A year later, in 1959, the Red Army

arrived in our area.

In the winter of 1959, as our village was going about its peaceful life, we received information about the Red Army killing everyone in rNga ba. As a result, twenty young men from our village went to resist them. They divided themselves into two groups. The first group lost their fight right from the beginning and could not prevent the Chinese from entering our area. The second group resisted the Chinese for one whole day. In the end they suffered heavy losses; most of them died fighting. The Red Army then entered our village.

Our village was plunged into chaos. People started fleeing into neighboring areas. Most of them fled to Mi Nang. Both the upper and lower Mi Nang areas were flooded with refugees, most of them hailing from Golok and rNga ba. The Red Army arrived in Mi Nang and killed every Tibetan refugee that they encountered. Probably three to four thousand of the Tibetans who fled to Mi Nang were killed.

The surviving sons, daughters, widowers, and widows were all disinherited. The Chinese nationalized their property and created communes. The children were forced to become shepherds and the able-bodied adults were forced to till the land and rear animals.

In spring, they had to plant seeds and in autumn they had to harvest the crops. They did not get a single day of rest. While harvesting crops, each person had to carry a hundred and nine sacks of barley. However, each person was allotted only twenty gyamas of tsampa a month for food. During winter, they were forced to carry cow dung weighing one hundred gyamas twice a day. They had to cover four to five miles of land. Those who were unable to carry two hundred gyamas of cow-dung a day rarely had anything to eat. There were many such people, including disabled ones. People say the monks took care of them.

A few elderly monks who remained behind did not die of hunger. But there were other people who died of hunger, like the close relatives of Bumlo who hails from the Sumpa family. For ten years, there was not a single woman who could conceive a child in her womb. Because of the hard excessive labor, many young men and women developed physical disabilities. These days, officials say the disabilities were caused by pollution of the water and the land. They say these disabled victims should be settled in other areas.

On early mornings in winter, accused counter-revolutionaries were stripped naked and forced to stand in

a line on the frozen ground. They were then subjected to verbal abuse and beaten with iron rods. The flesh of the victims turned red due to the beatings. One day, Ador stood up and rebelled. The Chinese crushed his fingers. There were many others who rebelled. They were not allowed to return to their homes. Most of them perished in prisons.

Thaye, Pukya, Chogye, Rinchen, Sang Ngag, Rangdol, the father and sons of the Netharma family, all from our village, rebelled against the Chinese. As a result, they were stripped naked, their bodies tied with ropes, and made to do rounds in lower and upper villages. The masses cursed them, forcing them to go through struggle sessions. The masses were clamoring for the spread of communism and destruction of the teachings of Lamas and local lords. Most of them later died in prisons. Such inhumane treatment sucked the blood of my ancestors. The natives of my land, the inhabitants of my locality, were mercilessly destroyed.

Monasteries were turned into storerooms and stables. Buddhist statues and scriptures were destroyed and burned. In every village, Buddhist scriptures and prayer wheels were destroyed and burned. The well-to-do families in our village had Buddhist scriptures printed

in gold letters, while the less-well-to-do had scriptures printed in silver letters. My family possessed scriptures printed in silver letters. All of them were burned. In our village alone, two to three hundred Buddhist scriptures were burned. The covers of prayer wheels were removed and burned, their smoke swirling the air for three to four days. For many years, we underwent endless cycles of suffering.

The greed of higher-ups has not been satiated. They have started destroying the natural resources of my homeland. They are cutting down our forests. Each forest in our village covers roughly seventy mu of land. Even the less dense forest covers ten mu of land. In total, they have cut down more than a thousand forests and the deforestation continues. Today, forests covering between twenty to forty thousand meters have been cut down and the wood taken to China. Only the worthless ashes remain. My homeland is beautiful. It is blessed with mountains, rivers and forests. The rain falls at appropriate seasons. But now, due to the destruction of its natural resources, my homeland has become emaciated - like an old worn out man, terrified and bereft of life.

They Killed Everyone - Conversation with an Old Woman

Author:

Aunt, what are you doing?

Aunt:

I'm down with a cold. Please sit down. Have some tea.

Author:

I don't want tea. I came here to talk to you about something important. People say when the Red Army arrived in our village in 1958-59 they killed many members of your family. Is this true? You have become so old. You are the only one who could tell the story. Would you please tell me what actually happened during that time?

Aunt:

Oh yes. I can tell the story. It is not difficult. At that time we were in Mi Nang. My mother, brother, and I moved to Ja Tsang. Four to five Tibetan families were already there. As we unloaded our packs (we had not even set up our tents yet) and made tea, the Red Army soldiers suddenly appeared among us. We were so scared, but were helpless. We raised our arms in the air and bent our knees to the Chinese. We pleaded for our lives. But they acted as if they didn't hear anything. Instead they fired off a few shots.

I was so terrified. I stood still. I couldn't talk to the Chinese and plea with them. Nor could we flee. My brother was wearing a very good slog pa. He removed it and bent his knees to the ground and raised his arms in the air. Despite such pleading, the Chinese didn't show any mercy. They broke his arms and legs. They killed all the men, except for a few elderly folks. The Chinese then confiscated all the horses and other belongings from the ones who survived. My mother pleaded with them to not confiscate our tsampa. She said, "my little son is severely injured. My daughter is very young. We don't have anything to survive on. Please spare some of our belongings." But they confiscated everything. My brother

was injured. He couldn't move at all.

My father, accompanied by a three-year-old girl and a nine-year-old boy, was on his way to Ja Tsang. My mother told my brother and I to remain at our place. In terror, she left us to see if our father and the rest had not been killed. We waited for her for some time. But she didn't return. My brother told me to search for mother. He said, "now the Chinese are not around, you can leave and see what happened to mother." I was almost fourteen years old at that time. Shivering with terror, I ran towards where mother had left. After walking for some distance, I reached Drelwe village. But I couldn't find my mother. As I walked further, I saw my father and the two kids. I ran toward them. I asked in vain if they had seen mother. Letting out a long sigh of despair, my father said, "perhaps they killed her." We all cried together for some time. Then we saw a group of Chinese soldiers running toward us. We three kids hid ourselves in a small trench. My father surrendered to the Chinese by raising his arms in the air. But the Chinese shot him. They killed him, his body rolling down. The soldiers ran toward us and fired on us. I didn't die but I lost consciousness. When I regained consciousness, I found that bullets had hit my arms and legs. As I result, I couldn't move them at all. My three-year-old sister was dead, while my nine-year-old

brother was severely injured; his entrails had come out of his chest. That's how the Chinese killed my family. I couldn't figure out where and how my mother was killed. I thought she was killed in a forest that lies on the border of Ja Tsang village. So I planted a few prayer flags there in memory of her.

After shooting and robbing us, the Chinese left. A little later, my injured nine-year-old brother died. Later, my other brother and I were taken care of by one surviving old woman, belonging to a family called Shi Kyak. The family was our neighbors in the village. Later, a family called Chokden Tsang took care of us. They buried the bodies of my beloved father and two siblings.

Author:

Did the Chinese kill any one from Chokden Tsang family?

Aunt:

No, the Chinese did not kill anyone from Chokden Tsang family. But they looted all of their property. They had two Akhus (uncles), both of whom were monks. The two Akhus made sure all of us didn't die of hunger. We two siblings became a huge burden to the family. The old man of the family set up a small, separate, tent for

us. For a year, the family cared us in that small tent.

Author:

How much property did your family own at that time?

Aunt:

We didn't have a huge property. We had around forty belongings and one horse. The Chinese confiscated all of them.

Author:

How many Chinese soldiers arrived in your area?

Aunt:

At that time I was very young. Perhaps it could be the effect of terror that I was struck with, but I saw the whole village filled with Chinese soldiers. No one from our village stood up and resisted them. Even when the Tibetans surrendered it did not help. They killed everyone that they saw and met, except the old, infirm, and the infants.

Author:

How many people were killed along with your family?

Aunt:

They killed a lot of people. There were five to six families. All of their members were killed, except a few old and infirm elderly women. They killed between thirty to forty people.

Rnga Ba – A Hell on Earth

Author:

Dear Akhu, what are you doing?

Akhu:

I'm not doing anything. I am just taking rest.

Author:

I came here to ask you about the implementation of the so-called Democratic Reforms in our village during the late 1950s. Could you share with me your experiences of that time?

Akhu:

In our village, Democratic Reforms were implemented in 1959. In rNga ba, it was implemented in 1958. It was like a hell on earth. People were killed and properties were confiscated. Chaos reigned all over. Some able-

bodied men bought rifles and fought the Chinese. At the time the Chinese soldiers were stationed in Kyarabs. Twelve men went to fight them. Only three survived - the rest of them died. Then everyone from our village fled into the mountains. Our family fled to the village of Bsu Khar. For a few days, we didn't even have tsampa to eat. So Gos Bsang, Damdon, and I went to get some tsampa at Midor. While taking some rest at Sogpo Tsang, eating some leftover meat, someone screamed, "Chinese soldiers are coming." When I looked up, I saw Chinese soldiers coming from Midor. As we fled, Damdon cried. She begged us not to leave her alone. I told her not to be scared and that I wouldn't leave her alone. As I was reassuring her with these words, a bullet hit her and she started screaming and crying. The Chinese soldiers were firing incessantly- so much that the bullets hit the trees around us. I left her and began running. As I fled upwards, I saw Gusod's horse lying down, covered in blood. I then met Gusod himself. He asked me about Damdon's whereabouts. I told him that she suffered severe bullet injuries and might be dead. Finally we were able to escape from Chukhor.

A month later, when we were hiding in Zowo, my sister came to see us. She said that there was no way we could save ourselves by fleeing, that Chinese soldiers had

surrounded every mountain, valley and plain and that the sky overhead was occupied by iron-birds (Chinese military planes). She advised that the best strategy would be to surrender and remain in jails for the time being. That's how I got arrested and was taken to Kyarabs, where I was subjected to struggle sessions for a week. The Chinese tied our hands behind our backs and poured cold water on our heads. They said that we should forget the lamas and tribal lords. That's how they tortured us.

After a week, we were taken to a stable, whereas Phurtsa Yawo and others were taken to another place for more struggle sessions. Forty-nine of us were taken to rNga ba district and confined in one of the temples of Kirti monastery that had been turned into a makeshift prison. At the time there were around three thousand people there brought from different places. People were forced to dig Gomang Gyarathang plain for farming; the area covered approximately three thousand mu. They were forced to build highways connecting lower rNga ba. We went through unbearable suffering.

We had to wake up early in the morning and begin our hard labor. People had hardly anything to eat. They would give us boiled water. But most of us had no bowls to drink from. A few had copper bowls, while a few

had mud pots. We didn't have any bowls. At that time Kirti monastery was just destroyed. So we got some zo khra (wooden buckets used for carrying water) in which we kept our water. Local people were allowed to bring food to the prisoners, but we had no one who could bring us food. Each of us was given a hundred gyamas of tsampa a day. Whether that filled our appetite or not didn't matter. We didn't receive more than that. In the afternoon, we were given an ordinary tea. For whole days we toiled digging the fields. In the evening, the Chinese registered our names twice to ensure that we attended labor everyday. If we failed to do so, we would be subjected to beatings.

In spring of 1961, three hundred and seventy of us were taken to Shen Kos. We were divided into groups of seven people each. We were forced to dig a mountain. As tools, we were given only iron rods. We also had to break rocks. Those of us who couldn't finish our work during the daytime had to work in the night. We had hardly any time to rest. The food was very poor. Early in the morning, we were given a small amount of steamed maize and soup made out of wild plants. In the afternoon, we were again given a little steamed maize. And for dinner also, we were given a bowl of maize soup. We were not given any other food. Those who drank the soup made

of wild plants succumbed to serious intestinal diseases. I resisted and didn't drink that soup.

Shen Kos lies on the south of Mong Aan and is filled with rocks and mountains. It didn't have any grassland and was surrounded by barbed wire. We destroyed a rock-mountain there. Four years later, in 1965, we were allowed to leave the area. From my group, four people died of hunger. Of the total three hundred and seventy people taken there, in the end only one hundred and fifty survived. The rest all perished in Shen Kos.

Author:

How was the living standard of [your family] during those times?

Akhu:

When I was released from Shen Kos, I learned that both my parents had survived. My infant son had grown up so much that he was able to rear animals. The food we ate was very poor. Some families didn't have anything to eat for a week. So they survived on ram bu (a wild bean grown in Tibet). They had no other choice, because their property and domestic animals were confiscated and looted in the name of socialism. The lords and aristocrats' properties were confiscated and looted

too, although they were allowed to keep a few of their domestic animals like mdzo. A few were allowed to keep their houses. In our village, during summer, it was impossible to die of hunger. That's because many plants are grown there that can be eaten by human beings. There were a few people who survived on the chaffs of barley.

Since I was labeled a counter-revolutionary criminal, I had to work incessantly. Even after I finished my daily portion of work, I had no time to rest in the evening because then I had to work as a postman delivering letters. Once Topden, Jamsher and I were ordered to butcher animals. Topden and Jamsher were monks. According to their Vinaya vows, they were not allowed to butcher animals. So I told them that they should recite their prayers while I butchered all the animals on their behalf. During winter, all of us had to carry cow and yak dung to the fields. We had to carry one hundred gyamas of cow-dung a day. We had to pick up pebbles from the fields, cut the weeds, and then do the farming. In autumn we had to harvest barley and carry it back. There was so much work that we were able to return to our homes only at midnight. We didn't have a single day of rest for a whole year. We suffered so much.

Author:

How much of your religious artifacts were destroyed during that time?

Akhu:

I had a collection of sutras printed in silver letters. They were all burned. I had other religious and sacred items such as drums. They were confiscated even before I returned from the [prison camp]. There was an old monk in Gonpo Letsang family who died. When the family was conducting prayers and funeral rites for him, the Chinese barged in, killing the mother and smashing the sacred objects. Most of the destruction had been carried out before my release from the prison. Richer families probably had sutras printed in gold. Between two hundred and three hundred sutras were burned down. The smoke from these burned scriptures swirled in the air for many days. So this is my life story, filled with happiness and sorrows, a cold and warm life.

Author:

Thank you so much Akhu.

Conversation with On-lo

Author:

Ashang (uncle), tell me something about our village when the Chinese army first arrived there in 1959. Please tell me what happened exactly in our village?

On-lo:

I almost forgot everything. I hardly remember anything.

Author:

Please tell me what happened during that time, anything that you witnessed and experienced.

On-lo:

At that time we fled to Mi Nang. Everyone assumed we would be safe there. One day, many natives from Zi Ka fled to Rong Kor. The next day, near the Rong Kor Bridge, they abandoned all their belongings and

fled again. Those who were able to flee far went to Mi Nang. Those who couldn't flee far went to places like Wei Nang and Sha Nang. Thus not a single soul remained behind, almost all fled into the mountains. Only one old man from Jangyam Tsang family remained. The Chinese didn't spare him - they killed him. We left our homes and fled to Gyatsa. From there, we fled to Boeye, which was swarming with refugees. They included members of Kyawe Tsang, Khar Tsang and Tseshe Tsang families. From there, we fled to Traye. The Chinese soldiers massacred everyone who remained in Boeye, including Kyawe Tsang family. We kept fleeing and finally reached the end of Boeye, where on a huge field we remained, along with Mibung and Namsey Tsang families.

Two yaks carrying loads started going down the valley. As Namsey and I went to fetch them up, we saw Chinese soldiers moving towards us. I told Namsey that the Chinese were coming. He hid himself in the forest. We couldn't track him down for two days. After abandoning all our belongings at Milgo, we fled into the forest. There was a lone Tibetan among the Chinese soldiers who told us not to flee. But a man (who is dead now) from Abum told us not to listen to the Chinese. He said, "all of you must not listen to the Chinese, they will kill you, so it is better to flee." After having said this, he himself went to

hide in the forest. He was carrying a rifle and ammunition.

Rangdol and I fled into the mountain, whereas my Akhu and the children of Bung Tsang family hid in a trench. As Rangdol and I started fleeing further toward the top of the mountain, we heard the sound of gunshots. The soldiers were running toward us firing their guns. Rangdol and I couldn't move an inch, so we lay down among the trees. The Chinese kept running up the mountain firing their guns. Fortunately, the bullets didn't hit us. The forest we hid ourselves in was very dense and covered with heavy snow. So the Chinese soldiers didn't dare to reach us. But they kept firing incessantly, so much that their bullets destroyed all the branches of the trees around us.

After some time, late in the night, when the Chinese soldiers were gone, we came down from our hiding place in the mountain. What we saw then was chaos left behind by the Chinese. They had destroyed all of our belongings, the ground was covered with wheat, barley and tsampa. I had a woolen slog pa; the Chinese soldiers had taken that away. There were more than twenty sacks of wheat lying on the ground. Only two of them were cut open by knives. The rest were not harmed. We were

not killed that day.

The next day we went to search for the man from Abum. We found him dead in the forest. We called Jamsod from Milgos to do the funeral rites for him. We didn't come across any Chinese on that day but the sound of gunshots continued for two days. When it finally stopped, my father appeared with his yak-loads. He was shocked that we were all alive. Tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, "I never expected to see you all alive. The roads through which I returned are all filled with corpses, both of human beings and horses. Hardly anyone survived in Mi Nang, all of them had been killed. Almost every member of Ngawo Tsang family had been killed. Only Tsele survived. He was lying with corpses. His three sisters had been killed. Yangson wasn't dead, but she was severely injured and was lying down. The Chinese looted everything, including all the food and clothes. The two parents had both disappeared. Tents were either burned down or destroyed."

When we reached the plain walking down from Tseltsa, we saw that it was covered with rubbish and corpses of human beings and horses. It was difficult to find a place to stay. I was 17 or 18 years old then. Because of the stench of corpses and the vultures hovering in the

air, I was gripped by intense fear and couldn't move an inch. Later we left the place. After walking for a whole night, accompanied by Apang Phunlo and Kyale She, we reached Nedun, where we remained across one Buddhist Stupa.

We saw many people leaving the village with loaded yaks and sheep. We saw the Bechugma Tsang family and their huge black tent on the grassland. In the afternoon, we prepared to flee further. In order to do this, we lightened our loads. A little later, we heard the sounds of gunshots. Chaos reigned as the horses and yaks all split up. We took our loads and yaks into the forest and hid there. Apang Phunlo and Kyale She, who possessed good rifles, guarded us. Later, the Chinese destroyed the black tent of Bechungma Tsang family. On that day, the sound of gunshots didn't cease even for a moment. In the evening, Apang Shabdon came to see us. He said, "You must not come to Kada, the area is swarming with Chinese soldiers." As a result, we fled downwards, towards Kyeba and Bopro. Phuno and Sheche - both of them - fled upwards. Some days later, we were arrested and put in prison. At that time, my father was accused of being the gang leader of rebels. He was taken to rNa ba and sentenced to death. In winter of that year, the Chinese started their reforms.

Conversation with Aye Lolon from Yulshul

Author:

When the world turned upside down, you suffered a lot. Many members of your family perished. Please tell us briefly what you witnessed and experienced during that time.

Aye Lolon:

We actually hailed from Bamshung. We were told that something called the Communist Party would visit us and would give us as much food and clothes as we wanted. Then the village was divided into small groups of seven families each. Many disputes occurred among people about whether the village should be divided into groups. Some supported it, while some opposed it.

The Chinese soldiers prevented Tibetans from walking between Nangchen and Lungshul monasteries for

almost one month. Then everyone from the village said we should flee. As a result, some fled through Tsangwo, while some fled downward crossing the river Tsichu. We couldn't go far, so we crossed Bumgyal and stationed ourselves, along with our horses and yaks, at Magye. After a few days, we heard the sound of Chinese soldiers shelling Lungshul monastery. Then we kept moving further from Magye, crossing Tralep pass, even as the Chinese military planes hovered in the air striking immense terror in our hearts. We stationed ourselves in between rocks. Some of the families took their loads and belongings into the mountains. Some families couldn't do so and settled there, roasting meat and boiling water. All of a sudden, however, the Chinese soldiers fired their guns. Saying prayers, we assembled our yaks and sheep and loaded our belongings onto them. The old mothers of Bolha and Ladrang Tsang family were killed there. We took our animals and moved to Magye, crossing Dechen Yaphu.

At Magye, we sought the services of Lama Rigzin Tsang to do prayers for the two old mothers killed by the Chinese. After staying at Magye for two days, we heard that the Chinese were closing in on us; so we left Magye for Mayo Langlung, where we remained for around fifteen days. Again the Chinese soldiers began arriving

there. As a result, we had to abandon all our belongings, including our yaks and sheep. The two or three people who possessed horses fled on them. Those who didn't possess horses started running. The Chinese arrested my uncle and took him from there to Kyodrak. My mother, two of my children and a few disabled men and women couldn't flee and had to be abandoned there.

I took one of my children, keeping it in the pouches of my chupa, rode a horse, and fled with other people. When the Chinese soldiers left Manyo Langlung taking my uncle and some elderly men with them, I returned to Mayo Langlung. I found that the Chinese soldiers hadn't killed my mother, my two children and the other disabled old men and women. They had survived. I took them to Tralem, where many refugees had already assembled. A few days later, those men who had been taken to Kyodrak by the Chinese returned to relay the message from the Chinese that we should surrender.

As the Chinese began arriving at our place, we fled towards Bumgyal, crossing Tralep pass. We had five or six people who had fled earlier. Many people were left behind; some of them pretended they were hit, and thus killed, by bullets while on their horses. They survived by lying on the ground as if dead. Some of us fled to Tawo

through Bumgyal. I told them that I wouldn't be able to flee with them and that it would be better for them to go on without me. With the infant in the pouches of my chupa, I walked a little further, hiding myself in a small cave. A dog belonging to one of the families from my village followed me, and since the Chinese were firing, the sounds of gunshots made the dog bark. I had to stone him and remained there for a whole day.

In the evening, my companions came to search for me, and we descended Ngona and fled to Rabu Rongak, where for two days and two nights we had nothing to eat. In the evening, carrying my child, I was the only one who could have left. We didn't have anything to eat, we survived by drinking ice cold water. Then my husband and our companions told me that I should wait and that they would go out to search food for all of us. Saying this, they left me alone and six of the men went to search for food. A little later, they butchered a calf. Although I tried to pass the night by eating the meat of that poor animal, I didn't enjoy the taste of that meat. I was totally preoccupied by and worried about the two children that I left behind. A refugee fleeing the Chinese appeared among us. He said the Chinese soldiers had massacred around two hundred Tibetans that he was fleeing with. He said only one person survived as he pretended that

he was dead by lying on the ground.

We too fled upwards. As we returned to the place where we had left behind my children and the disabled old men and women, we saw Gapoe's old mother running towards us. Crying her heart out, she told us that the Chinese soldiers killed her son and that we should accompany her to look for his corpse. We found the son lying dead in a trench, a bullet through his ribs, and his head almost chopped off by a sword. As we left the corpse behind and fled upwards, we saw the dead bodies of two Tibetans and many horses lying on the road, as told to us before by two refugees. As we reached the place where we had left my children and the disabled men and women behind, we found them huddled over a fire. I asked them how they were able to survive. They said the Chinese simply kicked them, asked if they had any other companions and then left them. The Chinese also spared a few yaks and sheep. Assembling them, we went to Domchen, where we remained for a few days.

One day as we were going towards Magye, we suddenly met the Chinese at Ngona. They arrested and took us to Kukhyam. We were forced to stay at Kukhyam, and some of our yaks and sheep were confiscated. Of us, eight young men, along with their horses, were taken to

Kyegu for re-education purposes. From Lungshul monastery, the Chinese returned the horses. We were forced to do farming at Kukhyam for two seasons, from winter to spring.

Of the eight men taken by the Chinese for re-education purposes, one was able to escape. The rest of them never returned. Later, the Chinese took away all the yaks, sheep, and tents - in short, all the property of the village. Every day, those who were able to work had to collect firewood and dig land for cultivation. In the name of doing farming, they were forced to destroy all the grassland. Unfortunately, crops were not able to grow and the grasslands were all turned into deserts. Each day, a person was fed a bowl of tsampa. Since we had to go far to collect firewood, we were often unable to return on time to receive our share of tsampa. The Chinese, instead of considering our genuine circumstances, would refuse to give us tsampa saying, "you people were eating fruits in the jungles rather than collecting firewood, which is why it took so long for you to return."

In that year, many people from our village died of hunger. It was a terrible year. People from five villages had been staying in Kukhyam. Every day, people had to be appointed to collect the corpses of victims who died

of hunger.

Author:

Who were the people that collected the corpses?

Aye Lolon:

People from our village had to collect the corpses. Early in the morning when we woke up, they collected the corpses and threw them away at a distant location. Even at dusk, we saw them collecting and throwing away the corpses. For their services, they were given a spoonful of tsampa to eat each day.

Despite suffering from sickness and old age, my mother and others had been ordered to pick medicinal plants on Joda Pass. I begged in vain for the Chinese to spare them. Two or three days later, I asked a woman named Gage if she heard any news about my mother. Gage said that my mother had returned to our home a long time back. On that afternoon, even as I was feeding my children dinner with a spoonful of tsampa, my mother didn't return. I was so worried, as I thought my mother couldn't return due to hunger. I waited for her till darkness fell. Then leaving my children behind, I went to search for my mother in Nyoga by crossing Golung Pass. Then crossing Kela I reached Marsha, screaming for my

mother. It was already late at night, and the stars were clearly visible up in the sky. I walked for so long that my feet started aching; I couldn't walk further and had to take some rest. Despite my cries for my mother, I didn't get any response. Tears streaming down my cheeks, I had no choice but to retreat. When I finally returned to Nyoga, it was early morning. In Nyoga, many radishes had been cultivated. Terror struck in the depth of my heart, for I thought if the Chinese soldiers saw me, they would kill me instantly. I plucked a few radishes and put them in the pouches of my chupa. As I returned through Surug, a man saw me and inquired about my identity. I lied to him, saying that I went to pick up firewood I had left behind yesterday and that now I was returning to see if my children had died from hunger.

When I returned to my home, the iron-helmet wearing Chinese soldiers were summoning the men and women of our village by beating upon a flat piece of iron. The people were forced to stand in a line as the Chinese soldiers read out their names and took twenty of them inside a tent. In the afternoon, shirts removed, their hands tied behind their backs, beaten with sticks, they were then taken away. Every day, groups of able-bodied people were taken away like that. Those who were not strong enough to work were left behind. They

died of hunger - including the disabled. Their corpses were lying all around the ground.

The Chinese established what they called a child care house where they kept the orphans. At nighttime, six to seven orphans slept together under one sheepskin. The next morning we found that only three of them survived - the rest had perished. In such a way, most of them died after a few months, except a few orphans and my two children.. One day, five men wearing yellow hats appeared. They divided the corpses of all those who had died of hunger into three groups and assembled them on the ground. Those who had survived attempted to live by eating the seeds found in horse shit. Those who were able to walk kept their children on their backs and tried to flee. I was barely able to walk. Although Palzin was six or seven years old, he couldn't walk because he had become so weak due to lack of food. I took my two children and left Kukhyam for Nedo Monastery. The journey took me three days. We remained for three days at Nedo Monastery. Everyday I went out to dig groma (a seed usually eaten by Tibetans in Tibet) to feed my children. I collected the leather skins that I found among the remains of the destroyed monastery. Boiling them with water, I fed them to my children. As a result, they gained a little bit of energy and, although weak, were

able to walk.

Author:

How many people died during that time?

Aye Lolon:

Needless to say the whole of Kukhyam was filled with human corpses, to such an extent that people could hardly find enough space to walk. There were so many corpses that even the dogs and vultures refused to eat them. The place where the iron-helmet-wearing Chinese abandoned the corpses today is called the corpse valley. Except for a few old aged and disabled people, everyone from the villages of Kukhyam, Bama, Zado, Surug and Thoma had been killed, put in prison, or died of hunger. Although I didn't count all the dead people, I would say that many more people died during those years than what we saw in this year's earthquake.

Author:

How many from your family died during that time?

Aye Lolon:

Eight members of my family died, including those

who perished in prison and from hunger.

Author:

How old were you then?

Aye Lolon:

I was probably thirty-three or thirty-four years old at the time. I have turned eighty-five this year.

Author:

The mountain of your village had been fenced. Why did they do this?

Aye Lolon:

They fenced it much later – probably in the 1980s after dismantling the communes and dividing us into small groups. I heard that people were unnecessarily made to suffer for many years. They were made to fence the mountains. It is said the fences extend up to a hundred miles.

Author:

What happened to those who were taken to prison?

Aye Lolon:

One prisoner from Bema who survived told me that he and his fellow prisoners were taken on trucks towards Siling. On the road to Siling, one Chinese soldier asked if there were any prisoners who were sick and unwell and said if there were any, they must raise their arms in the air. Some of them thought it was a chance of respite. As a result, many prisoners - both those who were sick and not sick - raised their arms in the air. The Chinese soldiers buried them alive, probably sixty to seventy people from his village. He said that prisoners in other trucks suffered a similar fate.

The Unbearable Suffering of 2008

On 16 March 2008, protests erupted in our county. On that night, the Red Flag hanging in front of the government building was taken down and burned. The windowpanes of houses inhabited by government cadres were stoned and broken. The Red Flag on the roof of the community hall disappeared.

On 18 March, in the afternoon, a group of soldiers and four or five vehicles belonging to the Public Security Bureau (PSB) appeared. They surrounded the Zamkha and Ser Ri villages. They broke into every house in the two villages. Most of the younger villagers had already fled into the mountains, only the elderly ones remained behind. Still the Chinese didn't spare them. They interrogated all of them. Led by PSB officials wearing military uniforms, more than twenty armed soldiers broke into each house. They pointed their guns at the victims. They screamed at them, ordering them not to move an

inch. They handcuffed the Tibetans and confiscated the photos of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with the mobile phones, cash, and bikes found in the houses. More than seventy motorbikes were confiscated from our village alone. The soldiers themselves used the better-conditioned motorbikes. Three months later, when they returned our motorbikes, not a single one of them was functioning. As to the mobile phones and the cash, they never returned them.

One innocent monk and a Tibetan man called Pendor who was performing prayers for his dead father - both of them belonged to Ser Ri village - were arrested and beaten. The Chinese soldiers punched them in their eyes, which were already swollen from beating. For the next couple of days, the officials of the monastery and the villages were assembled and given education. They were told to report to the higher-ups. Some of the officials who failed to report to the higher-ups were dismissed from their positions.

The Chinese soldiers then put up their military tents in our villages. They began breaking into people's houses and making arrests. Young people were especially targeted as they arrested people who were above sixteen years of age and interrogated them. More than twenty

people from our village were arrested. These included people such as Kunsang Lhundup (26), Tsamsang (23), Gelek (23), Nangze (28), Nyima (22). Handcuffed, they were forced to keep heavy stones in their hands and stand without rest for two days. The prisoners hands were tied behind their backs with beer bottles inserted between them;; their chests and ribs were pierced with keys. They were tortured in such gruesome ways for nearly twenty days, and when they finally returned to their homes, their whole bodies were so swollen they couldn't put on or remove their clothes. They were accused of belonging to the "Dalai clique," burning the Red Flag, and breaking the windows. (Some people said the officials themselves broke the windows).

Those who fled into the mountains had still not returned to their homes when this report was filed in 2010. Every day, the Chinese soldiers went on a hunting spree, killing wild deer and pigs found in the villages. All the monks studying in the monasteries were ordered to assemble and then interrogated. The Chinese asked the monks what they thought of the Dalai clique. Monks were told not to become members of the Dalai clique, and that the Dalai Lama had never been as kind as the Communist Party. Such patriotic education was given to the monks. Some of the monks were accused of not

showing a positive attitude to the education sessions or speaking the right language, and forced to stand up for a whole day. People were told that if they didn't attend the education sessions, they would be branded as criminals of the country. Monks were divided and then confined in a community hall surrounded by armed Chinese guards. As a result, they couldn't move outside and keep contact with other Tibetans.

These Are My Words

My beloved ancestors, I remember your legacy. I have grown up surrounded by poverty, hunger and destruction. I have been turned into a person who could either destroy or nurture this world created by your blood and bones. No one can tell if I would be your companion, laughing and crying with you.

If I stand in front of the coffins of my ancestors and express my lonely laments, I will say that once upon a time I had a family and many siblings. This is not a mythical story, nor is this a fiction created by imagination. This is a real story. Since 1958, this generation has been swallowing tears, enduring pain and agony in a storm of suffering unleashed by the policies of a foreign occupying force. The policies are becoming ever more repressive with hardly any signs of respite.

On this earth, Tibetans are a humble nationality, having given up war and the feelings of vengeance that call for blood for blood and flesh for flesh. Instead we

chose the pursuits of a Bodhisattva donning monastic robes. We as a nationality - our life, our world, our people, everything that we possess - are being crushed by a more powerful nationality. From U-tsang to Amdo, we have been deprived of an environment that can sustain our language and culture.

Not satisfied with their own country, the Chinese militarily occupied and settled in our territories, becoming a butcher of our people and our environment. Toxic waste and poisonous food that carry many diseases are being transported into Tibet. Precious minerals that are very rare on this planet are being mined, Tibetan grasslands are being turned into deserts. The mountains, rocks, and grasslands are being torn from their roots. My once-upon-a-time beautiful world is being turned into a heap of trash.

Chinese soldiers guard the Tibetan mountains. Their eyes and mouths gaping, they look greedily upon the Tibetans inhabiting the valleys and nomadic grasslands, hoping that they will churn out butter and cheese. Swarms of Chinese permanently settle in Tibetan areas, squeezing money from the hands of nomads and farmers who have never gone to school. The Chinese stubbornly use Chinese while speaking with Tibetan nomads and

farmers, despite knowing that the Tibetans do not speak Chinese. As a result, Tibetan nomads and farmers suffer from inferiority complexes, as if their native language is not good enough to communicate with other people. Such colonial machinations make me wonder: if the Chinese are not our adversary, then who is?

I assert all this not because I want to create discord among people. I am expressing the facts on the ground. Some of the Chinese who have settled in Tibet for business purposes hold condescending attitudes towards native Tibetans. For instance, if a Tibetan buyer who doesn't speak Chinese asks the price of a commodity, the Chinese merchant will respond condescendingly by saying "I don't understand what you are saying, I don't understand, get lost." Faced with such a humiliating situation, the Tibetan nomads and farmers often take a deep breath and lament, "not being able to speak Chinese is really humiliating." Indeed, anger is often felt against such people who make you feel ashamed of yourself.

Look at the status of the Tibetan language and literature - the essence of the Tibetan world. How long will our culture survive? The present condition explains clearly how long we can protect our culture. The twenty-first century is a century of urbanization. Therefore,

Tibetan nomads and farmers are forced to resettle in urban areas, to give up nomadic and farming pursuits,. I heard some of them have died of hunger. Some of them haven't received adequate compensation. Some superficial use of Tibetan language and names does exist in our villages and cities. However, in reality, Tibetan language and literature are on the verge of death and destruction. This is one of the most critical responsibilities lying on the shoulders of educated folks. Even in areas like Tso Ngon and Sichuan where Tibetan intellectuals live, the Tibetan language, especially in various levels of offices, has become redundant.

How long can we deal with such a situation? Not for one decade or two decades. Not for one generation or two generations. Three generations have passed. Yet, the sound of gunfire and the flow of blood haven't stopped. Nor have the cries of occupation and dictatorship. Surrounded by the sounds of gunfire and the flow of blood, hardly any Tibetan-inhabited towns exist where ears and eyes can hear and see the Tibetan language spoken and written.

In 1959, the Red Army shot down and murdered my innocent grandmother. My innocent great-grandfather died of torture, leaving behind his beloved grandchildren.

At the time, my oldest aunt, Sopo, was 15; my youngest uncle, Peshar, 4; my mother, 9; and Gyankyi, another aunt, 6. All of them became orphans and were forced to live a life of misery and suffering, often at the mercy of other people. The roots of some families were fully destroyed, while some families' properties were looted, reducing them to naked poverty. In the past five decades, the Land of Snows has been turned into a vast, empty, and desolate place splattered with blood. Brave men and women who emerged were imprisoned and corrupted respectively, uprooting the nation called Tibet. However, a few exceptionally courageous people, whose Tibetan consciousness was as profound as an ocean and lofty as a mountain, preserved and nurtured the Tibetan culture as if it was their precious soul and eyes. Their hard work and sacrifice ensured that a nation called Tibet continues to exist on the roof of this planet, raising the banner of peace and tranquility.

Emerging From a Legacy of Bloodshed

Refusing to submit to terror, torture, hunger, and thirst, inflicted by a foreign dictatorship, Tibetans laid bare their suffering and oppression to the outside world through nationwide protests in 2008. The protests filled the eyes and hearts of the Tibetan people with tears of

hope and pride. However, many brave men and women lost their lives to bullets and the value of their sacrifice has been undermined. Needless to say, it is worthwhile to reclaim them. As a result of the heroic 2008 protests, more and more people began taking notice of Tibet and the Tibetan people's struggle for freedom. At a time when Tibet's triumph is becoming increasingly imminent, I have expressed my innermost desire in writing.

My fate is that I do not belong to the human community. Among the community of nationalities, my nationality is counted as the most ordinary. In my world, I do not have a right to make demands for my livelihood and for my homeland. When I say "livelihood," I don't mean that I am claiming simply for a right to fill my stomach. It means my future descendants should have a dignified source of livelihood, a homeland of their own, which includes Tibetan mountains, rivers and precious minerals. Moreover, their lives should be considered sacrosanct and their human dignity upheld. Tibetan people must have the right to pursue their own culture, language, commerce and other sources of livelihood. Like other people on this planet, we too must have freedom of speech, thought and assembly. Therefore, we have no choice but to demand that the Chinese cease the killing of the Tibetan people, as they killed my ancestors and

other relatives, and the exploitation of Tibet's rich mineral resources. Since the 2008 protests, my homeland Smar Rong has not seen a single day of peace and tranquility. We live under the constant fear of Chinese accusation and incrimination. Since 18 March 2008, our area has been under Chinese military clampdown. Soldiers have surrounded all the villages and break into every household to interrogate the Tibetans. Soldiers confiscated the pictures of the Dalai Lama, mobile phones, and motor-bikes they found in the houses. They didn't even spare the cooking utensils. People were taken to prison and wildlife was hunted down. Such unbearable repression reminds us of the early years of Chinese invasion, when our world was turned upside-down. to control and render dependent through violence and repression.

The Chinese Regime Will be Overthrown

Freedom and democracy, cowardice and lethargy, self-gratification and oppression, colonization and self-promotion, authority and dictatorship, terror and hope - all these experiences teach important lessons about the rights and interests of individuals, nationalities and nations. Similarly, every day, every month, every year, these experiences teach us profound and practical lessons about our rights and our nation's rights. Because

of these circumstances, even our so-called ignorant and foolish nomads and farmers have their consciousness awakened - they now have the pride and conviction to give up their lives to protect their religious and political freedoms. These profound lessons learned over thousands of years are not trivial, as if they are to be discarded without any second thoughts, but the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) keeps on regarding the Tibetan people as spineless yes men who would simply follow them like tail-wagging pets. For the past more than fifty years, under the shadow of the mask it wears, the CCP has failed to acknowledge its own true face, let alone that of other nationalities. The minority nationalities in China are like pebbles in the eyes of the CCP, who use them as instruments and raw material for its development.

The CCP dispatches hundreds of armored vehicles among the people to induce fear and terror. Moreover, in the name of doing service to the local people, and giving education to the local people, they subject us to unbearable fear and humiliation, inflicting wounds in our hearts. People are falsely accused of instigating crimes of hatred and separatism, for which they are beaten, looted and murdered. Among other nationalities and nations,

the CCP sings songs of propaganda, stating that Tibet enjoys harmony, freedom, and happiness, and that the Tibetan people are given food, clothing, and housing aid. CCP officials seem surprised at the protests of the Tibetan people. The lackeys of the CCP might be satisfied with the little bit of food aid, but if we think about Tibet's minerals that are being exploited, let alone the tears, bloodshed, and graveyards of our ancestors, how can we assume there would be no tremors?

Leave alone our daily bread, there's not a single official among the CCP who regards our lives as sacrosanct and inviolable. No one is blind enough not to see the real face of the CCP behind the mask of dry compassion they put on - that of a merciless, wild beast. Over the years, through both guile and violence, CCP has made efforts to strengthen its image of dry compassion, but its real face will be exposed nakedly one day. In one sense, I do laugh at the CCP, and the way it functions: concerned only with its short-term petty interests, bereft of any future vision. The CCP keeps on churning out baseless myths, asserting that the Tibet-China conflict is created on the spur of the moment by the Dalai Lama and a few separatists. For instance, the Chinese officials in our area advised us that the 2008 protests were instigated by the Dalai group to disrupt the Beijing Olympics. The truth

is that the protests didn't occur all of a sudden in 2008. They had a long history. For instance, my older brother had twice walked all the way to Lhasa in 1993 to seek the blessings of the Jokhang Temple. During his visit, he witnessed protests by Tibetans. He told me the following story:

Many protestors, including monks, collapsed when the Chinese threw venomous tear gas on them. They were then arrested. Some of the leading protestors were severely beaten; one Chinese soldier in fact kicked the face of a protestor, whose teeth fell out. He was thrown into a military truck and taken away. Even as he was being taken away, with blood oozing out of his mouth, he was shouting slogans about the return of the Dalai Lama and the restoration of Tibetan freedom. Since I happened to be at the site of the protest at Jokhang Temple and since the protest was related to the fate of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I too joined it. Raising my fist in the air, without giving into fear and regret that I might never see my parents again, I shouted slogans calling for the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibet. The Chinese soldiers fired tear gas into the crowd and many protestors collapsed on the ground. I was left unconscious in some trees behind the Potala Palace for three to four days.

These poetic freedom slogans were raised at the risk of one's life to protest the corrupt regime . They are far more precious than hundreds of millions of gold coins put together. The shortsighted Chinese regime clings stubbornly to the assertion that a Dalai separatist group instigated the protests that swept Tibet in 2008. Such accusations might help the regime to mask the truth, but all of us know that they are not based on fact. Didn't the 2008 protests lay bare to the world the swelling pride of the Tibetan people who, like other minorities such as the Mongols, have suffered invasion and colonization? Indeed, it was a moment of joy and pride. How could we deny that the protests represented the desire of the minority nationalities to realize truth and justice? Dear brave men and women, continue your struggle. We shall surely triumph one day. There are examples of such triumphs in history. After having been dispersed throughout the world as refugees and suffered brutally at the hands of powerful nations for thousands of years, a few million Jews finally returned to their own independent homeland in Israel. Similarly, after having been colonized for centuries by the English, the people of India secured independence through non-violent means. Therefore, we must struggle to overthrow the corrupt Chinese regime. We must struggle to defeat the colonialist polices of the

Chinese Communist Party.

I think a rational man would consider happiness more valuable than mere survival. Generally, this human society is an aggregate of individual beings. If every individual is deprived of hope, then human societies or nations cannot survive. Similarly, without the existence of a Tibetan nationality, the entity called the People's Republic of China that comprises fifty-six nationalities wouldn't exist in the great continent of Asia. Therefore, we as a people must have sovereign rights. It is the duty of any nation to respect the rights of every individual and to protect the sovereign rights of any nationality that exists within its territorial boundaries. Such a duty is inviolable and the fulfillment of this duty decides ultimately whether a nation can secure genuine stability and harmony.

Let me express it in a few words. If a nation wants to have genuine stability, it must wholeheartedly support the existence of individuals and civil society groups. However, in the past more than fifty years, the sovereign rights of fifty-six nationalities have been appropriated by one nationality or organization led by dark souls called the Chinese Communist Party. As a result of the CCP's colonialist policies, the traditional and contemporary cul-

tures of those fifty-six minority nationalities have been severely undermined. In the beginning of this twenty-first century, when every nationality hopes to tread the path of democracy and freedom, the self-delusional citizens of the People's Republic of China have been kept in a hell deprived of even their basic freedoms.

CCP leaders reprimand foreign journalists for their ignorance about the People's Republic of China. Chinese leaders lie to these journalists, proclaiming that the PRC is a nation built by fifty-six nationalities who enjoy democracy, freedom and harmony. But the truth is that the Chinese leaders themselves are ignorant about China. Although the great helmsman of lies, Mao Zedong, once was purported to have acknowledged the lack of democracy in China, the truth is that a humble Tibetan exile government has been practicing democracy.

In fact, China has instituted colonialism - a system of slavery and decadence - in Tibet for the past more than fifty years. The policies implemented by the Chinese leadership have enslaved the masses, turning them into mere instruments to advance the Party's interests. Anyone who expresses a bit of dissent is branded as worthless trash or a wild creature, and subjected to torture in prison or death. Such an attitude clearly reflects the

Chinese leadership's inability to give up its authoritarian tendency, which regards the well-being of the masses as a poisonous weed that need to be uprooted. Ever since the Chinese communists occupied Tibet, our people have literally become orphans, deprived of the legacies and histories of our ancestors. Three generations have passed since we became poor, humbled, and alienated souls, occupying a peripheral existence on the roof of this world. A party having a tongue to reprimand others, but lacking a mirror to see its own face only makes a mockery of itself.

Despite its corrupt and dictatorial ways of functioning, CCP propagandizes that it is taking care of Tibet. Since 2008, the Chinese government has stepped up its propaganda among the Tibetan people, churning out leaflets asserting that Tibet has always been a part of the "Chinese motherland," and that the peaceful protests are illegal. Moreover, they say that the Tibetans from rNa ba have become victims of Dalai separatist propaganda. The fact that the Dalai Lama institution has historically been the spiritual and temporal head of Tibet is denied. On the contrary, the Chinese assert that Tibet became part of the Chinese motherland during the reign of Tibetan Tsanpos, despite the inscription on the pillar erected in front of Lhasa's Jokhang Temple, which reads as follows:

On both sides they shall be treated with customary honour and respect in conformity with the friendly relations between Nephew and Uncle ... Tibetans shall be happy in the land of Tibet, and Chinese in the land of China ... the Three Precious Jewels of Religion, the Assembly of Saints, the Sun and Moon, Planets and Stars have been invoked as witnesses. An oath has been taken with solemn words ... and an agreement has been ratified.

Any person with a limited amount of intelligence can comprehend that such baseless accusations are designed to manipulate people. Moreover, the rise of information technology and the relative flow of free information have transformed the mindsets of the younger generation. No longer are they afraid to speak their minds and lose their lives to Chinese guns. Instead they have gained a new pride in speaking out against injustice, as we saw with the protests in 2008 that demonstrated to the world the depth of suffering Tibetans have been plunged in for so long. If I give the example of my own region, although the red Chinese have been oppressing and dictating us since the 1950s, our young men and women have bravely fought against them with swords, bows and spears. By putting their bodies on the line, they have demonstrated to the world their tremendous courage in seeking freedom from Chinese oppression. As I expressed before,

this year the Chinese government has left no stone unturned to manipulate and corrupt the Tibetans of rNga ba through various means such as offering them cash and lucrative jobs. For instance, when the protests swept rNga ba on 16 March 2008, the Chinese posted pictures of young Tibetan protestors on the walls and promised to give cash rewards to those who could give information leading to their arrests. Similarly, this year, government proclamations in both Tibetan and Chinese, have been issued among the masses. One example follows:

Proclamation of the rNga ba Public Security of Bureau (PSB) to provide Rewards to those who provide information on the sources of Self-Immolations

Cadres, farmers, nomads and masses,

In recent years some extremist individuals have been self-immolating themselves. These acts have had severe impacts on the regular productivity and livelihood of farmers, nomads and masses of our region. The overall economic development, welfare activities, public works, as well as the image and psyche of the masses of rNgaba have also been harmed severely. Based on our investigations, we have found that the primary reason of the self-immolations is the machination of a very few people,

who are driven by their own isolated goals. The cadres, farmers, nomads and masses should contact the PSB if they have any information on the sources of self-immolations, so that we could prevent masses and the orphans from getting harmed, as they had been harmed in the past, strike hard on the criminals, protect the dignity of the constitution, ensure social stability and harmony, and awaken people from deep slumber of ignorance. If the given information on the sources of self-immolations are true, a reward of Chinese Yuan twenty thousand would be provided. The informer can decide how to receive the reward. Not only the informer's security would be guaranteed, his identity would be kept strictly confidential. Informers should contact the following police numbers: 08372482833, 13568783371 and 13056463066.

Dated: 10 February 2012

The above proclamation clearly shows the efforts of the Chinese government to manipulate people. Similarly, work teams and cadres often assemble for many days in the government offices and declare that the losses Tibet has suffered are all due to Dalai separatist groups. Under the cover of forced confessions of prisoners terrorized by guns, and the declarations of Tibetan cowards who have sold their souls to privilege, the Chinese govern-

ment turns a deaf ear to the cries of truth and justice expressed by Tibetan protestors. These are the result of the Chinese leadership's false judgments, like the proverbial helpless rabbit appealing to the sky. If the Chinese leadership had a conscience, it would realize that such an approach is untenable in this century. If the Chinese occupiers had humane feelings, they would cease their brutal repression of the Tibetan people. If I were to have an opportunity to talk to Hu Jintao, I would first of all ask him if he had a heart in his chest. For such a long time, the Chinese have indulged in a cycle of bloodshed, depriving our ancestors of their happiness. Soldiers carrying guns surround our villages and cities, yet the Chinese leadership has the audacity to proclaim slogans such as "Congratulations to the local people" and "Educate the local people." Such humiliation stokes the fire of resentment in the hearts of the masses.

My Mother was a Maidservant of the Communist Party

Spending life in emptiness with a cold and melancholic heart, striving hard, walking on humble and unsteady legs; like a divine offering, the dark world hovers above our heads. No activity is more valuable than placing one's hopes and aspirations in the force of compassion and unapologetic and fearless pride. No work is more precious than dedicating one's life to the survival of one's nation and culture. As someone who is supposed to be involved in such work, at times I forget that far away my gray-haired parents are yearning for their beloved son.

My beloved parents! Today, I endure a hitherto unendurable suffering. Unlike in the past, today tears stream down my cheeks. My beloved sixty-nine year old mother created and brought us seven siblings into this world. Amid the warmth of joys and happiness, she passed to us this hearth and home. My dear beloved mother, I

am aware of the deep ocean-like faith in your heart that one day we would see each other. I am aware of the burning desire in your heart that one day we would be reunited.

Sadly, I didn't see the face of my beloved mother. She abandoned me forever. My dear mother, no one can count the amount of sweat and tears you shed for us children. How can we measure the depth of the pain in your heart?

I shall never forget that each time I left my mother to search for the rainbow-like future, she saw me off with her tears. I shall always remember her caring and anxious words: "Do you have enough food to eat and enough clothes to wear?"

In her entire life, my beloved mother never saw a day of sunshine and happiness. She grew up surrounded by unendurable pain and agony. When she was an infant, she was robbed of the love and care of her beloved parents and relatives. She was an orphan, a lonely soul. When she told me of the humiliations she had been subjected to in life, they reminded me of the exploitation of the capitalist societies in the West.

My dear beloved mother, you are the savior who

helped me cross the desert of melancholy. You are the one who gave consciousness to my life. You are the one who showed me the light to the future. I shall never forget you. Every time I think about the pain you endured in life, terror and nausea strike my heart.

Thanks to the great peaceful liberation brought by the Communist Party, my mother became an orphan. As I mentioned before, my mother lost her father when she was very young. The Red Army killed him in 1959. My mother had three siblings. She was the second oldest child. When their mother died at the hands of the Chinese, their eighty-year-old grandmother took care of them. But the Chinese arrested and killed their grandmother too. The four siblings not only became orphans but were accused of being black hatters. Despite being children, they were subjected to forced labor. People belonging to lower classes abused and humiliated them. They spat on their faces.

Because of the harsh agricultural labor she was subjected to, my mother suffered physical deformities. Her fingers became so deformed that for years she was not able to tie the belt around her chupa. Her shoulders and knees suffered deformities too. Her physical deformities finally claimed her life.

I haven't fulfilled my duty to repay the kindness of my beloved mother. My only excuse is that I was fully pre-occupied with my studies. I spent my whole life dreaming about repaying her kindness. Sadly, I couldn't see the face of my beloved mother when she passed away.

When I heard the cries of my mother on the telephone, I became so anxious. I felt as if my world had been turned upside down. I thought I couldn't endure the painful desire to see her. But I had a responsibility to the future of a few thousand students. There was no way I could shirk my responsibility. For a whole week, I had countless dreams of reunion with mother. I shall never forget the advice my mother gave to me in my dreams. Like a nightingale thirsting for water, I left in haste to see my mother on the morning of 10 November 2011. Sadly, when I reached my mother's home, I found that she had left this world without waiting for me. I felt so lonely, as if I was abandoned in a desert. I felt helpless, as if I was a rabbit at the mercy of an eagle's claws. Apart from reciting the Buddhist mantras, I couldn't do anything.

When I saw my mother's corpse lying in the light of a lone butter lamp, a deep pain struck my chest. Tears that I shed from the depth of my heart were like a fortress to guard the eyes of my mother from death. Bending my

knees on the pillow, I gave a gentle touch to the forehead of my mother; it was like a frozen stone in a winter river. The image of a soulless cold body struck me. I stood still there, like a statue.

With the clanging of sacred bells, my father and siblings prayed for the soul of my deceased mother, offered food to lamas and monks and welcomed visitors who came to our house to pay their last respects. Following our age-old traditions, they sought blessings for the corpse from lamas and sacred monasteries before carrying it to the cemetery. At the cemetery, an old man took the corpse around, and cut it open in the chest. He struck the skull of the corpse with a hammer. After crushing the skull, he gave the remains of it to my father. Then a swarm of vultures hovering in the air swooped down on my mother's corpse to eat away all the flesh. The faces of my father and siblings reflected a deep satisfaction that my mother would be reborn in a heavenly realm. But I suffered from an enormous sense of loss. I felt as if I was being crushed by a huge weight of embarrassment. I had no choice but to leave the cemetery.

Of course, it would be of no use to bemoan the suffering of my mother. But she belonged to a historic generation and she was very special. She was one of

those mothers whose memory is worth keeping and commemorating.

My beloved father! You have been waging battles to overcome the changing fate of our family. Time and again, you saved mother from the jaws of the lord of death. Time and again, you helped mother rise up from her bed. To you, I express my deep gratitude and love. I pray that my heart is not dispossessed of the feelings of love and care for a father who is being crushed by the weight of old age and time.

Commemorating the Noble Souls

I am offering this poem to Tibet and the Tibetan people's pursuit of freedom. I have composed this poem to celebrate and honor the brave souls whose true faces reflect truth and justice. By burning their bodies, these brave souls have demonstrated to the world how a nation and a people are being colonized and denied their freedoms. To serve as witness to these truths, they have laid down their precious lives. The demonstration of their courage, pride, and unflinching love for Tibet perhaps cannot be expressed and explained merely in writing, but from the depth of my heart, I remember and honor their great sacrifice.

I'm offering these pure white Khatas to the brave souls who have sincerely put into practice the principles of liberty and justice. Among the folks who call themselves intellectuals and indulge in countless empty talks of our nation's fate, such demonstrations of sacrifice for the pursuit of liberty and justice are not possible. Monks,

nuns, and ordinary people who are not bedecked with the fancy titles of intellectuals have humbled the educated folks. To honor their incredible courage and sacrifice, I have composed this short poem.

Rights, privileges and ownership
Even in dreams they didn't pursue
Abandoning all self-centered attitudes
They strove for the power of truth.

Raising the banner of truth for truth's sake
Is an act demonstrating the power of karma
May their cries and laments
Become a source of inspiration for people.

Keeping the inalienable rights in their hearts
And the red-dignified values on top of their heads
Not bowing to fear and terror
They live the life of truth

The red blood of the mother White Snows
Must be protected from everyone
Carve the memories on the rocks
And never forget your own heads.

The blood soaked head of my father
Is the source of my agonizing soul
The dark anguish of sorrow
Is heard from the severed entrails of my mother

Every passing moment
Leaves behind a trail of suffering
Cease drinking from the cup of passivity
And letting enemies sit on our heads

The truth is on the summit of the mountains
On the neck of the dead Brong
The lies are in the hearts
Holding the supreme position

The picture of one's true nature is being wiped out
The guilt for this lies with me
Piercing our eyes
The place is enveloped by cries of suffering

The suffering of the world I haven't bequeathed to
people
A thousand memories make me sob
Of all the worldly desires
The long uninvited kind guest is the most supreme

Within a short span of months
The life of a people
And the thousand freedoms of the homeland
Disappeared in the sky

Amid all these
A banner of courage is being raised
In the hearts of fellow countrymen
Leaving behind a large wound

Blood dripping, and with infinite pain
They burned themselves in the fire
The brave heroes
From here I seek your blessings

For the sake of sentient beings and the Tibetan nation
They burned themselves
From the crackling sounds of the burning flesh
They cry for the fate of this world

From the crackling sounds of the burning bodies
Is heard the agonized cry for truth and justice
The flames of the burning bodies
Shed light on the mystery of freedom and justice

In my homeland

Such heroic deeds are not performed by a single soul
We have Lobsang Tashi, Lobsang Phunstog and count-
less other heroes

Blessed with sky-high patriotic arms and heavy blood
veins

Since 1958 rNga ba

Has become a graveyard

A hell

Where the Communist Party butcher lives

Hunger killed my mother and father's head was
chopped

Both of them were sent to the graveyards

The era of joyful warmth

The reds destroyed from its roots

The red fireball of pride

Is burning on this earth

Thinking of the courageous heart

The breathing of my chest penetrates my shoulders

When the dark terror hunts the great earth

Taking their lives, they strive for the truth

When the fire consumes the mouth and eyes

The burning flames of rights are visible

For the cold memories

They gave the warmth of freedom

The powers of the physical body

Cannot prevent a mind fully awakened

For the weight of individual and community rights

They fought by bearing witness to the truth

For the rights of individual and community

They sacrificed everything

Countless precious life forces

Are being slit by the dictatorship

The vociferous power of truth

Is heard amid the storm of burning flames

For me and for my head

You bear every burden on your shoulders

For brave souls like you and others

With folded hands I extend my prayers

Fulfilling the aspiration of the soul

Keeping alive the freedom of the body

You have sacrificed everything

For the snow white rays of the sunshine
For the nation and the people
You have shown a thousand paths of happiness
Of all the souls, you are the noblest
With profound faith I offer my prostrations

Thoughts in your heart are made of gold
Your courage and grandeur are incomparable
Shouldering the heavy load of responsibility
You have tirelessly guarded the graveyard

Cutting open the heart of a world
You have left behind a trail of severe pain
Amid the countless bends and curves
You are the one who showed nature's true path

Interpreting the notion of truth to the beings
The most enlightened of the enlightened souls
You have always narrated
The stories of our beheaded forefathers

As the flower of hope has not blossomed
The simmering heart was thrown into the river
Bravely combating the enemies
They struck terror in the hearts of invaders

Monks are the Enemies of the Communist Party

The following is an excerpt from a note submitted to the Chinese government by a senior Tibetan party leader. In this note, instructions given to our people by the party can be found.

Monks shall not perform heroic deeds

The blood of the masses has created monks' wealth

Monks are the curse of Chinese people

Monks and nuns are the opiates of the people

It is not appropriate for monks and nuns to struggle for freedom

It is not appropriate for monks and nuns to struggle for worldly affairs

Nowadays monks do not understand the concept of happiness

Nowadays, monks cannot figure out warm clothes

Nowadays, monks do not know charity
Nowadays, monks do not know how to think
Monks do not understand suffering
Monks do not need the support of the Communist
Party

The loss of the lives of monks is just hollow
It indicates the erroneous thoughts of the monks
Monks are not able to appreciate the kindness of the
Communist Party
Monks are not able to understand the mistakes of the
Dalai Lama

Monks are primarily responsible for the suffering of so-
ciety
Monks are the destroyers of the peace and stability of
Communist Party
Monks are the vanguard soldiers of the Dalai Lama
The true color of monks is the meat-eating wolf

Monks are social commentators with no sense of respon-
sibility
Monks are the boulders blocking economic progress
The struggle of monks for freedom is nothing but de-
struction of the world

Monks doing public service is nothing but trickery to manipulate people

That Tibet has no freedom is because of the monks

That Tibet lacks economic wealth is because of the monks

Monks are guilty for the loss of Tibetan lives

Their crimes are responsible for the terror in Tibet

Monks are the destroyers of the security of China

Monks alone bear responsibility for the destruction of unity in China

Monks are the dismantlers of the stability of China

Monks are the boulders blocking China's progress

When you say patriotic education, monks cannot be seen

When you say unity of the nationalities, monks have no place

When you say stability of the society, monks have no place

When you say communism, monks have no place

Monks are not toothless - they do have liberty in their hearts

Monks are heroes when they struggle for liberty
In front of the Communist Party, monks are humble
Feel pity for monks - they are not freed from prison labor

I Know That Far Away in a Foreign Land You Remember Me

The protector of the world, the glorious one
You are the only one who dwells in my heart
For the living and the dead locked up in this world of
prison
You are the only one who remembers them

In this age of darkness, an ocean of blood boils
A storm of black dust blankets the sunshine of happi-
ness
In every moment of tears and suffering
The terror of murder abounds

The threadlike path bears father's painful yearning
Rust and hail dig out mother's tears
Siblings' faces are written over with suffering and curs-
es
Suffering envelops the majestic Himalayan ranges

Sleeping in the lap of the earth
Shedding the tears of earth
For the fate of a nation
You chose exile, bearing loads of responsibility

For the sake of mother you crossed many oceans
For the sake of father you shed countless tears
Amidst the sweat and tears you take a deep agonizing
breath
Remembering me you have crossed many paths

Counting the numbers of dead brethren
Holding the memories of destroyed homes
The murder of relatives in months and years
I think about their graveyards

The deep yearnings of my soul I shared with friends
The hopes of my families I left behind in a foreign land
Each footprint expresses sorrows
From a foreign land

Months and years I spent in sweat and tears
With heavy depression I pass my nights
The freedom to see my brethren is colonized
Tears have swept our longings

A Dry Chest

The land is colonized
The air-thin happiness is destroyed
Freedom rolls down
The dark haired folks live on the edge

Thousand of orphans cry
For their fathers' heads are being cut down
Infants die of hunger
As mothers' breasts are being chopped off

Bullets destroy the warm hearth
Cold and hunger torture mother and the son
And the families
How terrifying is the story of clotted blood and flesh?

The joyful homes of my dark-haired ancestors
Are drenched in cold blood
As they devour bones and flesh
Hatreds pile up for years and months

The beautiful green grassland
Is surrounded by an ocean of red blood
The iron bullets pierce
Through my beloved father's chest

The dry skeletal figure of mother
Is enveloped by dark sunless suffering
The waves of the ocean of blood
Storms the heart of the great earth

Tonight I write this poem

The neighing of horse
The cries of Dri
The songs of Khulo
Like the advice of my father
And the breast milk of my mother

The neighing of horse
The cries of Dri
The songs of Khulo
They boil in the depth of my soul
They are like rays of sunshine enveloping my body

If there were a melodious bird that could awaken beings
from their slumber
If there were a huge star that cleared the narrow path
of the early dawn
The long held dreams might then become a reality
Although father doesn't feel any anxiety about you
I'm like the tears simmering in the depth of your heart

Pray that I be your deity if you survive and your devil if
death strikes you

This evening of nine piled up darkness
Tonight also father is crying
The warm bed is soaked with iced water
Cries of ten thousand laments
Accompanied by the detested dark winds
Flow from the end of paradise or hell
A swarm of pigeons
is shaken with terror

Under the dark clouds
The spherical moon is like the shackled soul of dead
father
The long tailed Jiwa feeding on the sacred texts
Is nothing but a swarm of lice feasting in father's hair
If I follow my desire
I feel as if I hear the cries of birds deprived of the shade
of a tree
I see the activities of Buddhas dwelling in paradise
Although yesterday's evening may be tonight's tears
The pain and agony of this evening would be the path
of tomorrow.

Tonight the world may be covered in intense darkness
Tonight the world may be putting on heavy dresses
We see the flames from the burning souls of pigeons
Amidst the storm which is not sudden
The flames from the burning hearts and lungs
Are mirrors reflecting the journey to paradise
Tonight
Tonight everyone is terrified
Or becoming insane
The merciless black cannibal Khra
Sells out the values as it devours them amidst ashes
Even the remains born out of one's life force
Are devoured as if they are a piece of paper

However
The incomparable warmth of fire
Would conceive in the wombs of countless beauties of
this earth
Nurture the life the descendants
My first poetry is also close to my principle
Wearing pure Tibetan dresses
Speaking pure Tibetan
I have been turned into a wandering shepherd
With no values or dignity

Words of My Mother

I won't cry

But when I miss my mother I have no choice but to cry

On the day when tears are assimilated

When cries of pain are not in conflict with each other

They become the foundation of us four young siblings

When my youthful mind began blossoming

The PLA murdered my mother

We four siblings became orphans

Our suffering became unbearable

When mother and us four young siblings were blessed
with joys and happiness

The PLA

With guns blazing

Murdered my mother

Not for the first time

Not for the second time

The day since they murdered mother

The refuge of the hearts of the four siblings

The refuge of the heart of a nine-year-old girl
Us four young siblings
Became helpless orphans
Subjected to the painful suffering
Amidst the struggle sessions
Of which I can't express

Mother always talked about the graveyard of my sister
Today she found my sister's graveyard
Indeed today she found my sister's graveyard
Amid the sea of hatred
Blood flowing
Cries of pain and suffering
Reminiscing the fate of the four orphaned children
The lively eyes of the graveyard
Have indeed not closed with joys

Amidst the storm of terror and hatred
My beloved sister
Your consciousness
Did you ever contemplate the birth of a worthless cousin
like me?
Bones shiver
Heads can't be raised
When speaking out the truth

How much you curse me

The place where mother was murdered

The place where mother's life force was cut

Can you carve a few Mani stones?

Hoist a few prayer flags?

March 16

Today is March 16
The day when my homeland
Was turned into a graveyard
Today is the day
When tears flow
Not from eyes
But from depth of heart

The red blazing sun
Has devoured all the bones
Cut the thread of life force

For decades
For generations
The day would shadow
The loving smiles of beloved mother
Chop the head of father's freedom

My homeland is cold
Freezing
Enveloped in darkness
For the cause of suffering
Or happiness
March 16
Is the day when precious life was sacrificed
Was the moment
When for the sake of a world
A hero burned himself
For everything
He raised a flag in the air
For the sake of everything
A force shook the world

My land
My homeland
My fellow countrymen
My siblings
Each drop of blood
That flows from the depth of your skin
Lies in the heart of Dotoe, Domey and Utsang
You are the backbone
Of the red-blood heart
Our pillar that hasn't had its dreams

Since March 16

You have become the beloved son of the Land of
Snows

Since March 16

You have become the life force of the Tibetan people

Every time you offer your life

For Tibet's cause

Every time you raise slogans of freedom

For the Tibetan nation

You have become the principal

Source of tears that flow from my heart

You have become

The warrior treading the limitless paths

Today - March 16

The courage of my ancestors

Flew into the sky

Today - March 16

The nerve-heart of my ancestors trembled

Today - March 16

The painting of history is demonstrated to the world

My Homeland

Written by tears

Photographed by drops of blood

Created by drops of sweat

My homeland

Once upon a time

From the roof of the world

Amidst various races

You rose up

With glorious pride and courage

You have asserted your power

By declaring your heroism

At the time you were a martial race

On this planet

There was no one

Who didn't know you

At the time you marched from the gates of Potala

There was no one who did not see the Snow Lion flag

Today my homeland
Has been turned into a ball of tears
Drops of blood
Bereft of humor
Your head of freedom
Is being cut from a peripheral world
Your boots of rights are being looted
Your head has been rendered naked
For what reason

Whose Fate is This Dream?

Whose fate is this dream?
The true path of the heart
Is narrow and winding
The darkness has shadowed
The light of hope, a blurred sadness
Although the life force
Has been cut and murdered
On the tip of arrow, sword and spear
Tears streaming down your face
You cried
For the sake of father's blood
Who created the warm hearth
To recompense the warm milk of mother's breast
That fed you
Still for many other purposes

Footprints assimilated in blood
You fell down and rose up
And increased your steps

The ocean of red blood

The mountain of human corpses

In these months and years

Whose fate are they?

No matter how sharp the tip of arrow, sword, and spear
are

You must rise up

No matter how dark is the wind of hope

You must rise up

For the sake of immeasurable aspirations

In your heart

And for our fate

Dear Yulshul

(At 7 a.m. on 14 April 2010, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck Yulshul, killing nearly 3,000 people.)

Who gave you the tears? Before darkness enveloped this world, there was no need for tears to flow from my eyes.

My country was a land of happiness because since time immemorial it had known courage and never shed tears. Yulshul, my beloved Yulshul

With one single tremor of this mother-like earth, the natives of Yulshul who search for the warm hearth, are attached to happiness, our parents, children - all were drowned in a sea of blood.

All of a sudden the broken walls and the debris crushed everyone.

For countless parents and relatives the ray and warmth of happiness was lost.

For countless orphans and widows the beauty and light of life were stolen.

Dear father and mother, what were you guilty of?

What wrath did you arouse out of this vast land?

If these were not true, why did we suffer the fate of chopped heads and lost limbs?

Why were we subjected to such unbearable suffering at a time when we lived self sufficiently?

In a split second my mother and father were killed.

My relatives, cousins and nephews—everyone was killed.

The heavenly sky, the three jewels of refuge, our lord protectors, where did you all disappear at 7a.m.?

All of you who gained freedom from the four natural elements, steeped in the knowledge of the four changing seasons, and the nature of earth and the climate, all of you who prophesied the fate of sentient beings, the day when the life force of our parents and relatives were crushed by the earth, were you all weighed down by the paraphernalia of religion?

Were you all drunk on the blood of the people and the mineral resources of the land when our homes and property were lost in the mountain of ashes and dust?

My parents and many relatives were killed and our homes

and property were destroyed.

Dear Yulshul, you became infamous throughout the world, your tremors were heard in all the four directions and eight borders.

When our sovereign crushed your actual losses and, with smiles on his face, said: "father was alive and mother was saved alive,"

When he used tens of thousands of lives as instruments of games, with a low voice and tears streaming down, I uttered, "dear Yulshul!"

At a time when the actors scoured every street giving charity to all and sundry, both to the ones who needed and didn't need it, busy advertising themselves in the media and creating a platform for their own self interest, anger boiled in my soul.

But these are all empty and hollow.

When I witnessed your suffering and losses I couldn't offer any help but to express lament and shed a few tears.

Kirti Monastery has Become Like a Leprosy Patient

Since 2008, under the Chinese Communist Party, Kirti Monastery has become a secret cell beyond the comprehension of the people of the Land of Snows.

Kirti Monastery is like a precious jewel in the hearts of the Tibetans from all three provinces of Tibet. It represents a banner of peace that cannot be forgotten by any of us. In the history of the 21st century world, Kirti Monastery of Rnga ba, Amdo, has made an indelible mark. People of the world talk about and respect this monastery for raising voices of peace. However, over the years, the monastery has suffered severe repression at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, who detest peace and freedom. I know that the experience of repression cannot be described in a few words, but I wrote the following note after having a conversation with one of the monks of Kirti Monastery. Readers will get some

idea of the kind of repression that the monastery has been subjected to by the Chinese Communist Party:

In 2008, the Chinese police arrested many monks for disrupting the Beijing Olympic Games. Many of the arrested monks suffered physical injuries as a result of police beatings. One person, Sharo Yisha Khalo, even died after he was tortured in prison. When the martyr, Lobsang Tashi, self-immolated, the monk that I talked to was in prison serving a two-year sentence. When the martyr, Phuntsog, burned himself, he was at the Kirti monastery. The monk said, "There was huge chaos in our monastery, as everyone screamed that a monk had burned himself to death. When we went to see our teachers, they said that the self-immolated monk didn't belong to our monastery and, therefore, advised us to remain quiet. The teachers were concerned about the affairs of our monastery. But the majority of the monks said the question was not whether the self-immolated monk belonged to our monastery. Expressing their solidarity, they walked out of the monastery to the site of the protest. But the Tibetan masses stopped them. People in the crowd were terrified and trembling, as they said they might suffer a Tiananmen square-like massacre. A fellow Tibetan then said, "If we can't even offer our condolences to someone who, without any inhibition, could burn himself to death

for our cause, then we are not human beings. I don't suffer any fear of getting killed today. But today, when I reflect back, fear strikes me, as I believe the students of the Tiananmen protests had never imagined that they would be massacred."

Later, the family members of martyr Phuntsog suffered many humiliations. The monk said, "Tsering, a friend of the martyr Phuntsog, was sentenced to 13 years in prison. I heard the police tortured him and broke his limbs. Another friend of Phuntsog's, Naktan, was falsely incriminated and sentenced to prison for 10 years. Later, martyr Phuntsog's older brother, Kelsang, committed self-immolation. Although he didn't die, the Chinese took him away. His younger brother, Lobsang Dargay, was sentenced to 2 years in prison."

He also said:

"Since 16 March 2012, an education committee comprising 600 experts from all over the country visited the Kirti monastery. The visit was arranged by local officials led by the deputy party secretary and Sithar. When the experts were conducting their education, we were allowed to air only one kind of view. That view was whether we wanted the existence of Kirti monastery or not.

For six months, those 600 experts conducted an intense patriotic re-education campaign featuring 80 points, the key among which was not to fall prey to the manipulation of the splitists of the country and nationalities. Some of the party officials showed us an image of a sack of rice and cooking oil, reminding us not to forget the kindness of the communist party. They accused us of raising slogans of peace from our mouths, but destroying it in actuality. They said we were victims of American manipulation and had forgotten that we were citizens of the People's Republic of China. They said our extremist and heretical views were harming many people. Their curses made me feel as if Kirti monastery was responsible for all the crimes of this world.

When you are not allowed to express your own views in an education campaign which is nothing but curses, you feel a strange feeling, of despair, of loneliness. For a long time, outside people were not allowed inside the monastery, and the inside people were not allowed outside. As a result Kirti monastery became like an abandoned leprosy victim. However, when we later heard that Tsewang Norbu from Kham self-immolated we felt proud. It gave us a ray of light. The Chinese officials lecture a lot about the need to understand the emotions of, and the unity among, the masses; but in reality they

don't understand much about them. They brand all of our activities as splitting the motherland. They planned to imprison more than one thousand monks of the Kirti monastery, but many folks from the village marched into the monastery and tried to prevent it. As a result, the police arrested many elderly folks with walking sticks and abandoned them in a desolate area. Among these elderly folks, many succumbed to heart attacks."

With slight sarcastic humor, the monk further said:

"Every time there's an uprising, the Chinese provide what they call social service to the masses. Each family is provided a sack of rice and told that monks are exploiters and burdens of society. They say that if we participate in protests led by the monks then they would not give us the rice charity. That's how the Chinese try to drive a wedge between the lay Tibetans and the clergy, but despite all their efforts they haven't achieved much success. The police took Gyen Tsonдру away on the excuse that he needed medical attention, but in actuality he was kept in a detention centre for three months."

The monk concluded our conversation with these words:

"For years and months, the Chinese divided the

monks of the monasteries into five different categories and made attempts to destroy our spirit. But our pride and patriotism remain still unshaken. In fact it was like a lesson to the younger generation—a lesson as to the enormous sacred values of freedom and happiness. However, the Chinese officials lied to the higher authorities, saying ninety-nine percent of monks at Kirti monastery passed the tests of the patriotic education.”

Afterthought

Relying on natural phenomena and speaking out plainly, I made attempts to search for the truth. None of you should detest and curse me for doing this. I have written a historical account based on facts. This writing is like a wound inflicted by a wrongdoing. I have put down in words the conversations I had with elderly Tibetans. I have tried to generate interest in the story by adorning it with a few garlands of poetry. The sorrow of my homeland, Smar Rong, is not as brief as what I've recounted here. There are many who couldn't tell their stories, as they are either dead or couldn't speak due to traumatic experiences. We also have people who were afraid to speak up due to the barbed wire fence of censorship erected by the regime. I express my apology to my ancestors and truth seeking compatriots for failing to write a comprehensive account.

When the tears of one's homeland flow in the heart, speaking everything that comes to mind would be an act

of madness. When genuine tears are manifested through words, there is not much significance in adorning those words in polemics and hyperbole. To remember the deeds of our ancestors who founded our beautiful homeland, and to expose the manipulative and oppressive rule of the Chinese Communist Party responsible for murdering our parents and relatives, I wrote this brief journal. It is my hope that this book serves as a witness to truth.

For decades, Tibetan people have been crushed under the dictatorial boots of the Chinese Communist Party. Many of our parents and relatives were sent to their deaths. Our freedom to pursue our own way of life and culture were repressed. A cycle of bloodshed and colonialism were unleashed on the roof of the world. As a result, the resentment boiling in the souls of Tibetan people came to a tipping point in 2008. The fire of determination and the courage to resist oppression started burning in 2008. Since the great 2008 protests that rocked the whole world, Tibetan people have come to realize the significance of the word freedom - that without freedom happiness is not possible. Through this book, I too have exercised my basic human rights - namely the right to express my opinions freely. I have simply abided by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

So I haven't committed any crime. The rights of individuals and communities do not fall from the sky. Lord Buddha did not give those rights. The gods and kings didn't give those rights. Nations did not bestow those rights. The rights of people remain with the state. The individual citizens are the ends for which the state is established. The individuals do not exist for the state. The state has a duty to protect the inalienable rights of its citizens. For instance, the right to decent livelihood, the right not to be subjected to fear and terror, the right to bear a child, the right to have access to information, the right to free expression of one's aspirations, the right to free association and so on. (These are some of the information nuggets found in Shokdung's work Nam Sa Go Je). These are the goals that the state must fulfill. If governments fail to achieve these goals, people have every right, from time to time, to change and topple their governments.

Through this book, I have exposed the oppressive policies of the Chinese Communist Party that go against the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By putting my life at risk, I have demonstrated to the people of the world the fate of my homeland.

I'm not a highly educated person with a broad vision. As long as the cycle of human tragedy continues, the river of human suffering shall continue flowing. While reflecting on my past life, I couldn't help but feel anger, although I have had a life more comfortable than that of my ancestors.

Guided by common sense, I have expressed the pain and agony that exist in my mind. The writing is not a reflection of an empty hope. The book reflects the tears flowing out of the soul of an ordinary human being, an expression and cry of agony in a world of darkness and suffering.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Cadre: (Tib. le che pa, Ch. gan bu) Technically applies to staff of the Chinese Government administration; also referred to those working on official projects or in state enterprises

Geshe (Tib): Spiritual title and doctorate; monk or lama who has completed the highest course in metaphysics and other academic monastic studies in the Gelugpa school

Gyama (Tib): Unit of measurement equivalent to 500 grams

Khenpo (Tib): Literally abbot. In Nyingma and Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, Khenpo is analogous to the Geshe degree

Lama (Tib): The Tibetan term for a respected religious teacher, equivalent to the Sanskrit term guru. A lama is not necessarily a monk, although monasticism is preferred for all lamas in the Gelugpa School. Chinese politicians use the term incorrectly to refer to any monk

Mu (Tib): A measure of land equal to 67 square meters

Patriotic Education: Initiated in 1996 in Tibet's mon-

asteries and nunneries, “patriotic re-education” campaign was designed to purge the influence of the Dalai Lama, to indoctrinate the monks and nuns with political ideology and to crackdown on dissent activities.

Prefecture: (Tib. sa khul, Ch. diqu) The administrative area below the level of province or region and above the level of a county

PSB: (Tib. schi de chus, Ch. Gong An Ju) Public Security Bureau, local level police force responsible for detaining and arresting suspects and for pre-trial custody

Tsampa (Tib): Roasted barley flour

Work Team: (Tib. las don ru khag, Ch. gongzuo dui) Specially formed units of government personnel sent to conduct “patriotic re-education” in an institution or locality

Dri: Female Yak

Khulo (Tib): Cuckoo bird

