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CHINA AND TIBET
PROFILES OF TIBETAN EXILES

I. INTRODUCTION

This report profiles five Tibetans living in exile in Dharamsala, India. All are in their late twenties or thirties, and all are originally from the areas known to Tibetan nationalists as Amdo and Kham. Today almost all of this territory lies in what Tibetans call "eastern Tibet" and Chinese call the Tibetan regions of Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai, and Yunnan provinces. Their stories show a common pattern: all had unusual access to education; all became involved in political activities through discussions at state schools or academies; all were arrested and detained by Chinese security forces for possession or circulation of published materials about the Dalai Lama or Tibetan independence; and some were tortured. All were under such intensive surveillance before and after their detention that staying in China became unbearable.

A two-person team from Human Rights Watch, one of them a fluent Tibetan speaker, interviewed four of the five in 1998 as part of a larger project on human rights in Tibet. The fifth was interviewed in 1999 with the help of colleagues. The men's stories are similar to many others we heard in Dharamsala, and while we do not claim that five cases are illustrative of a broader pattern of repression, their accounts suggest that peaceful political activity in Tibetan areas outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region (T.A.R.) and its capital, Lhasa, is no more acceptable to authorities than it is in the T.A.R. It also may be no less widespread, but this is difficult to assess, as access to some parts of these areas by journalists and independent observers is restricted. There are relatively few Tibetans from "eastern Tibet" in Dharamsala, but this may be a factor of geography; most Tibetans enter India through Nepal on the southwestern border of the T.A.R., and those from Sichuan or Gansu provinces have a much longer way to go.[1]

The T.A.R. and the Tibetan areas outside it have different political histories. The latter were mostly under direct control of China's Manchu emperors by the end of the eighteenth century. By contrast, what is now known as the T.A.R. continued to be governed by incarnations of the Dalai Lama, with some Manchu oversight, until 1950.

When the Republic of China (ROC) toppled the Manchu Qing dynasty in 1911, it claimed all areas that had been under Qing jurisdiction, but the Dalai Lama continued to lead the government of Tibet. Tibetan enclaves to the east, however, fell to a succession of warlords, until 1949, when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. In October 1950, PRC troops crossed into the areas under the Dalai Lama's jurisdiction and compelled his government to begin negotiations which culminated in the May 1951 Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet—and formal incorporation of Tibet into the PRC.

During the 1950s, the Chinese government divided "eastern Tibet" into autonomous prefectures and counties.[2] It was here, in the early 1950s, that the Tibetan rebellion began, eventually forcing the Dalai Lama to flee to India in 1959 and establish his "government-in-exile."[3]

These Tibetan areas, home to more than half the ethnic Tibetans under Chinese rule and almost equal in size to the T.A.R., generally receive little attention from the international community. An exception was the furor created in May, June, and July 1999 by a World Bank project in Qinghai that would involve the transfer of some 58,000 farmers, most of them of non-Tibetan ethnicity, into the Haixi Mongol-Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture where Tibetans had already become a minority. The extraordinary publicity generated by the project and its opponents helped raise the profile of "eastern Tibet," but there is still little sustained attention to the political dynamics there, let alone the human rights

[1] We are using the term "eastern Tibet" here as a geographical description or as a phrase used by Tibetans. Human Rights Watch takes no stance on the political status of either the T.A.R. or the Tibetan autonomous regions to the east.

[2] Those areas include in Qinghai province, the Guolyo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the Haixi Mongol-Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Sichuan and Gansu each have two such regions, the Aba Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Prefecture and the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the former, and the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County in the latter. Finally, Yunnan has the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Muli Tibetan Autonomous County. See Asia Watch (now the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch), *Human Rights in Tibet*, February 1988, p.11.

[3] We are using the term "government-in-exile" to describe the structure established in Dharamsala. We are not implying any recognition of its legitimacy or authority.

violations that take place. (One of the profiles in this report mentions intense fighting that broke out in late 1997 and 1998 over land that both Gansu and Qinghai provinces claimed as theirs. The fighting went utterly unnoticed in the international press.)

From the 1950s onward, Chinese officials have been as intolerant of dissent and Tibetan nationalist sympathies in the eastern areas as they have been in the T.A.R. The profiles here show that the basic freedoms of expression, association, and assembly are denied. Tibetans involved in political activities face arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, and trials that ignore all standards of openness and fairness. The state routinely violates freedom of religion, imposing curbs on the allowable number of monks and nuns in Tibetan Buddhist institutions, requiring "patriotic education" or political indoctrination of monks and nuns, and expelling those who refuse to denounce the Dalai Lama or accept other elements of official teaching from the monasteries and nunneries. Torture of detainees after arrest is common, and conditions in both detention centers and prisons are said to be poor, in terms of food, medical treatment, sanitation, and working conditions. The profiles also document discriminatory educational practices.

Some of the refugees we interviewed had been open advocates of Tibetan independence. Chinese authorities consider such advocacy tantamount to subversion. Human Rights Watch takes no stand on Tibet's political status, but we maintain that international human rights law protects the right of Tibetans to peacefully express pro-independence views in public. The types of activity described in this report—leafleting, putting up posters, flying the Tibetan flag, distributing books and tapes containing the writings and speeches of the Dalai Lama, teaching other Tibetans about Tibetan history and culture outside the aegis of Chinese institutions, shouting slogans or waving banners—are all protected under the right of free expression. None have taken place in the context of insurrection or threat of insurrection, and all are themselves peaceful acts. While the messages these expressions convey are repugnant to the Chinese government, none have taken place in a context that could genuinely be said to threaten the national security of China in the sense that the term is understood in international law, that is, a threat of force to the very existence or territorial integrity of the state. A landmark conference of international experts on free speech and national security in Johannesburg in 1995 concluded specifically that criticizing or insulting the state and its symbols, advocating nonviolent change of government or government policies, and communicating human rights information are all protected speech.[4]

Human Rights Watch urges Beijing-based diplomats, foreign correspondents, and donor organizations to make periodic visits to the Tibetan autonomous prefectures in western China as a way of indicating concern and opening up a troubled region to greater international scrutiny.

II. TSEGYAM

Tsegyam grew up in a large semi-nomadic family in restive Aba county, in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of northwestern Sichuan province. Thirty-four when we interviewed him, he had been in Dharamsala, seat of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan "government-in-exile," since 1992 and had a secure position in the "government-in-exile" as director of the security department's research and analysis division.

[4] The principles list specific types of expression which should be protected, including criticizing the state and its symbols, advocating nonviolent change of government or government policies, and communicating human rights information. They state that any disclosure of information should not be punished unless demonstrable harm was caused by its disclosure. Principle 7, Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, October 1, 1995. The principles were drafted by an international team of human rights experts at a conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1995 convened by the London-based NGO, Article 19. The full text is available in *The New World Order and Human Rights in the Post-Cold War Era: National Security vs. Human Security*, papers from the International Conference on National Security Law in the Asia Pacific Region, October 1995 (Korea Human Rights Network, 1996).

Tsegyam was a teacher in Aba. Between 1980 and 1983, he studied at a teacher training school in Barkham, the prefectural capital, where he had first-hand experience with discrimination. He then returned to Aba where he taught Tibetan at a middle school until 1988. That year he resigned from teaching and went to further his own studies at the Southwest Nationalities Institute, a government-run college, in Chengdu, Sichuan. By that time, he had thought a lot about Tibetan identity. Some of his interest came from family stories and some from talking with friends and people he considered influential. But the main source of his concern came from the reading he had done secretly while still at the teacher training school. As he grew more familiar with Tibetan culture and history, he grew to think he had a duty to preserve what he regarded as its unique character, and he became an activist.

The events that led to Tsegyam's eventual flight to India started on June 13, 1988 when four large posters appeared on the main Aba street at the time of a major local religious festival. Four feet high, they called for the Chinese to leave Tibet, supported the Dalai Lama as both the political and spiritual leader of Tibet, and wished him long life. While it was two of his former students who actually hung the posters at the intersection of four roads in Aba and at Kirti and Se monasteries and distributed independence leaflets on a well-traveled bridge that spanned the Ngachu river in Aba, Tsegyam said it was he who was responsible for writing the materials in Tibetan and Chinese and he who had supervised the students.

In February 1989, eight months after the posters appeared, the Public Security Bureau (PSB), China's police, was finally ready to arrest the perpetrators. Tsegyam was in Aba at the time, home on holiday from his studies in Chengdu. He said one of his students managed to flee and eventually made his way to Switzerland, but a second student, Dargye, was quickly caught. For three days, Dargye was held with his hands cuffed so that one arm was extended over his shoulder and met the other in back. At the same time he was badly beaten in an effort to get him to name names. When the police finally told him that they knew he had been accompanied by a teacher, Dargye implicated Tsegyam.[5]

One week after Dargye was detained, four Aba county policemen and one from the prefecture came to arrest Tsegyam at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. "They told me to come with them and they would explain the matter at the police station. They took me away in a Beijing Jeep. I never saw a warrant." Tsegyam found out later that some officials ransacked his quarters in Chengdu.

Tsegyam's interrogation at the Aba County Detention Center was, he said, intense but not physically traumatic. As he recounted:

> [It was mental torture; I could have stood physical torture....] Because I was considered an intellectual, they didn't beat or [physically torture me.] I was interrogated for one month except for one or two days, from 8:00 in the morning until 12:00, sometimes even during lunch, then from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m. I was asked about my contacts with the Tibetan "government-in-exile," who encouraged me to put up posters, what the posters said. And they asked me what I knew about socialism, capitalism, and the system in Russia. They even asked if I learned psychology and what it was. I don't know why. During the break, one officer would tell me that if I told the truth, they'd give me money and a high post. He boasted that he had promoted and demoted people.
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> After the month, the deputy director of the prefecture-level Public Security Bureau questioned me for fifteen days. For the next two and a half months, no one paid any attention to me. I was told to think. After four months, PSB officials told me, "You're a teacher, a scholar. You're educated. Until now you have been looked after by the Chinese government. Now it's your chance to do something for us—be an informer."

With that, Tsegyam was released, but he could not return to school and was under constant surveillance.

[5] Dargye had to endure four more months of torture before he was finally released. He died in 1993, and Tsegyam said he believed Dargye's death was the result of his treatment in detention. Dargye told Tsegyam when they met in 1990 that he had a damaged right and irregular heartbeat since his imprisonment.

I had to report to the police station once a week. I had to tell what I did during the week; who I met with; what this person or that person said; what people thought of Tibetan independence; what I had learned from the outside. But I had nothing to report. It went on like this for four months. During the last month I was free, they told me I absolutely had to do something for my country. They said they were giving me this opportunity. But I told them that I couldn't do any more than I was already doing. Finally I said, "Arrest me."

In early November 1989, Tsegyam was arrested for the second time.

I was called to the PSB office. They told me I hadn't reported anything. After one week, the procuracy issued a formal arrest warrant (*qisushu*) for the crime of counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement. The Aba prefecture procuracy questioned me for about thirteen days and the people's court for one day. I was not offered a lawyer. I defended myself.

A committee composed of three high officials, one each from the court, procuracy, and the Public Security Bureau, decided that Tsegyam's trial should be public. But the process did not work out quite the way they envisioned it. "They thought," he said, "that judging me in public would help educate the people. But my public answer to the charges included calling out 'Long Live the Dalai Lama,' and after that trials were closed."

In addition to the three judges, two procurators, and one secretary, about 500 people, mostly Tibetan and many government and Communist Party cadres, observed the March 1990 trial."The court had 200 spaces," Tsegyam said, "so people were standing in the hallways and in the streets where they could listen to the loudspeakers. Video, audio, photos, and note taking were banned. There were twenty to thirty PSB officials spread out among the public."

The trial lasted three hours, from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and it was conducted in Chinese.

As the court police brought me in by jeep, the announcement was made, "Now we are bringing the accused." I was in handcuffs. The charges were read, and the judge asked me if I accepted them. I argued against the charges, but it didn't help. Instead, I was accused of bad behavior. The judges left the courtroom for fifteen minutes and then came back with the sentence: one year.

Tsegyam argued that the four months he had been in detention and the four months that he had been sent to inform should be counted as time served. Only the first four were deducted. In addition to his one-year sentence, Tsegyam was deprived for a second year of his political rights, including the right to speak and associate freely.

Chinese authorities would not permit Tsegyam to return to his studies at the Southwest Nationalities Institute in Chengdu after his release in July 1990, and the Aba middle school where he had taught was only willing to take him back on a part-time basis and for much less money, 100 *renminbi* (approximately U.S.$14) per month as compared to the 280 renminbi he had previously earned. Even so, the job lasted just two months, until the Sichuan provincial government revoked his right to teach.

Tsegyam's choices were limited. He applied to the public service job bureau and to the Sichuan People's Government for work, admitting what he had done but insisting that he had served his sentence and should be assigned a job. He never received a response. Fortunately, he was able to keep his living quarters at the school, and he could and did stay with his parents part of the time.

But, rather than do nothing, Tsegyam borrowed money from friends and for seven months, from February through August 1991, he traveled through parts of Kham and Amdo to conduct research and gain experience. He spent a month in Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and three months in Haidong Prefecture, both in Qinghai province. After two months traveling in Chamdo in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and in Dege and Kangding in Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province, he spent another month in Chengdu.

He spent some time at Kirti monastery, studying with two *geshe* (holders of the highest scholastic degrees within the Tibetan monastic system). Tsegyam's primary goals were to learn what Tibetans thought about independence and to inform Tibetans living in remote areas about Tibetan issues.

In July, as part of his trip, Tsegyam traveled to the Tibet-Nepal border to examine conditions there and to see if he was still under surveillance. Once home, with no work, he spent his time reading religious texts and books. In April 1992, Tsegyam and Tsering Lhamo, his former student and later secretary to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, were married. After she told her work unit she was planning a honeymoon and visits to relatives, the couple fled Sichuan for Dharamsala, arriving in India on May 18, 1992. In no time, Tsegyam passed the civil service exam of the Tibetan "government-in-exile" with flying colors.

III. SONAM GONPO

Sonam Gonpo, twenty-nine, is a singer and songwriter who since April 1997 has been in Dharamsala, where he and his wife manage a cafe. He is also the former student of Tsegyam, above, and like him, grew up in Aba county in Sichuan's Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture.

With his older sister and younger brother, Sonam was raised in what he describes as a poor nomad family in the high mountainous village of Thabo in the area of Tshenyi, in Aba county. By 1994, Tibetans made up only 48.8 percent of the population in the autonomous prefecture, but the sparsely populated county was still 90 percent Tibetan and only 4 percent Chinese. It is one of several Tibetan areas that Chinese authorities consider particularly restive, and parts of it are closed to foreigners.

Sonam said his family was one of the poorest of some 500 families in the area. "We didn't have many yaks or sheep, no goat, no cows. No good food to eat, no good place to stay. With no education, it was difficult to find work. We did whatever came our way."

Although the family had no permanent housing, living year round in tents, the Tshenyi area was developed enough and large enough to house four schools for first through third graders, and one six-grade primary school. There, Sonam studied math, Tibetan language, Chinese, political science, history, and arts, before going on to lower middle school in Aba and then on to upper middle school in Skakdom, Dzoge county. He was the only one in his family to be formally educated and then only because a cousin who was a monk was able to help.

By 1989, when he was twenty, Sonam was back home teaching Tibetan language to third-graders in the all-Tibetan, 135-pupil primary school he had attended as a student. The school's head had recruited him even before he finished upper middle school. Happy to have the promise of a job, Sonam never took the State Universal College Entrance Examination that would have enabled him to pursue his studies; he said financially, it would have been impossible to go to college.

Two months before the teaching job started, however, Sonam did a risky thing.

> I went into the market. There are a lot of shops and restaurants there—Tibetan and Chinese. So about midnight I put up seven large posters that said in Tibetan, "Long live free Tibet" and "Tibet belongs to Tibetans" and things like that. I wasn't caught until October when I had already been teaching for four months.
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> And I had done something else when I was in school. I wrote a letter to my middle school Tibetan language teacher, Tsegyam, who was in prison. I heard that he was arrested because he worked for the Tibetan cause.

He put up wall posters and distributed a lot of leaflets in Aba. Then I heard that he confessed what he did and was released, and I was very happy. So I wrote a letter to express sympathy [for what he had suffered].

> I wrote, "Dear teacher, I was very sad that you were arrested, and I'm sure you had a lot of trouble in prison, like beating and everything. But do not worry anymore, because I hope that one day the Tibetans will be able to gain happiness."

Like that—just a letter to comfort him. And I wrote that Tibet will be independent and the Chinese will be out of Tibet. Then I wrote his address on an envelope, put on the stamp, and put the letter in the post office. But at that time, Tsegyam was really still in prison. So the letter was sent to his address at school. The police took the letter and opened it and read it, and my name was in it. After that they started watching me, and after a few months I was arrested.

Six Public Security Bureau (PSB) policemen came to my room in the staff quarters at school and said I had to go with them to the police station in Aba. They had some questions to ask me. They were all Tibetan. As soon as we got to the police station they started saying I should confess my guilt. I said, "I don't think I am guilty. I haven't done anything." But after five days, they showed me one letter, the letter I wrote to my teacher. And also they showed me posters from the market and said, "The handwriting is the same as on the envelope of the letter you mailed to your teacher." And then I couldn't find anything else to say. And finally I accepted [that they knew what I had done].

Sonam also reported that between the time he was detained and the time the policemen showed him his own letter, four Tibetan policeman repeatedly took him from the detention center to an office in the police station where they beat him with sticks, kicked him all over, and gave him electric shocks.

Once Sonam confessed, he remained alone in a cell in the detention center for nine months without any idea of what was going to happen to him. The chief of the political section of the Public Security Bureau actually told him, "You'd better stay in the cell. We don't know what to sentence you to. We still haven't decided." Contrary to many other political prisoners' experience, Sonam's family knew where he was almost from the moment he was detained and once a month could leave a package of clothes and supplementary food for him. The detention center provided only one meal a day, usually rice noodles at lunch.

There was little for Sonam to do while he waited other than read the books provided by detention center authorities.

> They gave me a lot of books, including the four volumes of *The Autobiography of Chairman Mao* and articles Mao wrote. They told me, "Your mind is not clear; it is not pure. You can read these and purify your brain." I read the four thick books, all in Chinese. About once a month, occasionally twice a month, I was called to work in the center's vegetable garden, sometimes harvesting and sometimes digging to break up the ground. And about once a month, sometimes more often, I was driven, or two guards with guns in their hands walked me, the kilometer between the police station and the detention center. They asked some questions, like "Is it all right in prison?" "Did you read the books we gave you?" "Did you get some knowledge from the books?" Because I was a political prisoner, no one was allowed to visit me.

Sonam remained in detention until the Public Security Bureau accepted a petition for his release from students and staff at his school. The petition, routed through the Aba county education department, read in part, "Our primary school is in need of our teacher. We have a shortage of teachers. So we request that the police officers release him. We will pay a fine." The fine amounted to 5,000 renminbi (approximately U.S. $700) and was paid to the Public Security Bureau. Sonam explained:

This was my school's money. The school gets money from the higher authorities, the Chinese government. They give a certain amount of money to every school. Sometimes the school gets donations from the public. And [when I was released], I was warned, "You should be careful in the future. If you continue these activities, then you know what we will do."

For years after the incident, Sonam was able to continue teaching Tibetan language to third-grade students, and he continued to perform with a music and dance group he had organized. During his August 1996 vacation, Sonam traveled with the group to some eight Tibetan counties in Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan to give two-hour-long public concerts. Performances, some fourteen or fifteen in all, included traditional and modern songs and solo and group dances. Tickets cost between one and five renminbi. Gross receipts ran about 3,000-4,000 renminbi (U.S.$425-565) which barely covered lodging and food, the money needed to rent the county hall, and an extra charge for electricity. Sonam explained why the tour cost him his freedom:

Some of my songs praised the Dalai Lama, and some words were related to "Free Tibet." The authorities found out, and on November 27, 1996, nine policemen came to my room in the school's staff quarters with a letter from the Public Security Bureau. The letter said that whenever the police came with this letter, they had the right to check everything in the house. After they showed me the letter, they started searching every part of my place. They finally confiscated seventy-two tapes and about fifty-two photographs of the Dalai Lama, all different sizes, some small, some big, and two song books. A lot of lyrics were written in the books. Some were mine, and some were written by others.

Sonam provided several examples of his own lyrics including his "Song of Prayer":

Cuckoo with your beautiful sounds,
You who come from Mon in the south,
Your sweet sounds resonate among the black-headed Tibetans,
An omen for the fulfillment of Tibet's hopes!

Red tiger, six smiling spotted yaks,
You who come from the dark fortress of China,
Your brave roar resonates among the black-headed Tibetans,
An omen of the spread of Tibet's power!

White lioness with a turquoise mane,
You who come from the peak of the white snows,

Karma's auspicious mark of self-respect now belongs to Tibet.
I pray for your long life![6]
Sonam described what happened next:

They handcuffed me and said, "Come with us to the Public Security Bureau office." They asked why I went to those places in August, and I said, "To sing songs and get donations for our band." They started beating me and beat me on the face and broke my glasses. For two or three days it went on like this. They told me, "It was not for this reason you went. You had something else on your mind."

Then one day the PSB chief came to my cell and called my name out. I was in a cell with a Chinese businessman who was selling pictures of the Dalai Lama to make money. The chief said, "I know your sister's husband very well. We are almost like brothers. He wants me to release you. I haven't any way to release you unless you confess truthfully." My sister's husband is a rich businessman. Then the chief took out a small notebook and asked me the dates of the concerts, who sang, who played the guitar. "All right," he said. "Now

[6] The reference to the cry of the cuckoo from the area of Mon, which is the area south of the Himalayas, represents the call of the Dalai Lama back towards his homeland. Such a reference would be considered subversive by Chinese authorities.

tell the police officers the same thing." And after two months, probably February 1, [1997], they called me in, and the head of the PSB's political section said I would be released if I could meet five conditions. I had to pay a fine, 3,400 renminbi (U.S.$460) because I had "done something political against the nation and the law." I needed a guarantor. I couldn't travel outside my home area without police permission. I couldn't teach anymore. My sister's husband paid the fine, and the village head acted as guarantor.

Sonam Gonpo reported that he "confessed everything." His interrogators wrote it all down, but he never saw the transcript, nor did he ever appear in court. The only advice he received during the process came from the PSB chief who told him how to respond to questions and what not to say.

During his interrogation, officials suggested that before Tibetans gave up the comforts of Chinese government jobs and support, they should think twice about how hard it would be to earn a living under a Tibetan government. The police chief in charge of Sonam's case told him that there was no way "our government is going to pay for people like you."

According to Sonam, nothing ever happened to the thirteen others in the band because he was the only one who sang songs about the Tibetan cause. But, he said, there was no way he could remain home and earn a living. And, he said, he was under constant surveillance. On March 8, 1997, he and his family left Amdo, arriving in India almost one month later.

IV. DOLKAR KYAP

Dolkar Kyap, a twenty-eight-year-old nomad from Gansu province, arrived in Dharamsala for the second time in January 1999. He had grown up in the high grassland area of Ngulra, a township in Machu county, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, near the border with Qinghai. In 1994, Tibetans constituted the overwhelming majority of the county's population and at least half that of the prefecture. Dolkar Kyap's family used the children's labor to supplement adult work as did other large nomadic households. In his case, in 1981, at age ten, with only two grades completed, he left the township school to help his family care for livestock they had come to own with the abolition of the commune system the year before.

For the nine years he remained at home, Dolkar Kyap was able to learn to read and write Tibetan with the help of his mother's brother**.** As is the case with many Tibetans who have little formal education, he studied on his own, reading stories and novels. In 1990, at the end of the summer, aware that a few students from Machu had taken advantage of educational opportunities in Dharamsala, Dolkar Kyap made the trek to India. He was then nineteen. He reported that it was during his almost four years there, first as a student and later as a teacher, that he truly began to understand the Tibetan struggle. But in March 1994, notified that his father was seriously ill, he abruptly left India and returned home.

Once home, Dolkar Kyap faced two days of questioning by the Machu County Public Security Bureau, He did have difficulty finding work, hardly unusual for Tibetans returning from India. His solution, with his parents' financial support, was to enroll in a special two-year program of Tibetan Studies at Northwest Nationalities University in Lanzhou, Gansu's capital. Anyone who had completed lower middle school and had 4,400 renminbi (approximately U.S.$630) to cover tuition, room, water, and electricity, plus additional funds for food and supplies, could enroll. Although Dolkar Kyap never even went to middle school, he obtained a certificate indicating he had graduated.

School began on September 10, 1994, but Dolkar Kyap did nor complete his first year. For the few months he was enrolled, he took part in political discussions among his fellow Tibetans, passed around books and documents about the Tibetan cause which he had obtained from nearby schools and monasteries, and finally involved himself in a pro-independence poster campaign.

At 10:00 p.m. on March 27, 1995, four officers from Gansu province's security unit picked Dolkar Kyap up for two days of questioning at a mountain "guest house" on the outskirts of town. Some seven officials queried him about his political activities:

> They asked, "Do you know what you have done? You aren't a robber or a thief. You're a political suspect. So if you confess, there will be leniency, but severe punishment if you don't." I replied, "I visited India once. Except for that I haven't done anything against the government." I was not beaten that night, but I was given a lot of political education.
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> When they released me, they said, "For the time being you can study at the university. We will go there if we have more questions." They also told me, "It would be good if you didn't tell anyone about your arrest. If you want to continue your studies, don't tell anyone."
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> I was arrested again on the afternoon of March 31. I was sleeping in my room during Chinese language class. I had a stomach ache. That time, three people from the prefecture police and security bureau came. They took me to a hotel on the outskirts of Lanzhou for interrogation. It was not the same as before. I had to hand over all my belongings. They said, "You know what you have done. You should tell the truth. Don't think you can work against the government. We have worked on many such people, and they all confessed. So if you confess when the interrogation starts, it will be better for you. We know a lot about you already."

Dolkar Kyap said he was badly mistreated during this second round of interrogation. Some eight hours after he arrived, he was tied by the wrists to the iron water pipe on the ceiling so that he was standing flat on the floor with his hands above his head. "I was kept that way for one night. The next day they told me I should carefully think over what I had done... At 1:00 [p.m.], both my hands were again tied to the ceiling." He said that for six days he spent part of each twenty-four-hour period in the same position.

Interrogation followed the usual pattern of attempting to elicit a confession partly through gentle persuasion, partly through more violent means. One official told him, "So far, we mainly observed your actions and behavior. I tell this to you out of sincerity. Later, if we become angry, you will be beaten and forced to tell the truth like we squeeze out toothpaste." Dolkar Kyap went on:

> After about a week, they showed me a copy of a two-page letter I had written. It was about a meeting in New Delhi about Tibet attended by [representatives from] twenty-five countries. A friend of mine kept the copy for me, and they found it. They said they knew this was only a small part of what I had done. An official with a Labrang accent told me, "You are a tool of the Dalai Lama. I also have faith in him religiously. But politically I have no faith in him. If he is a religious person, he should concern himself only with religion and should not interfere in political matters. Just look at the differences between the old society and the new society." Then he told me, "You think you are a ball of iron. But we have special sharp tongs to take care of iron balls." That night I was handcuffed behind my back for six hours with three beer bottles forced between my hands. Then I was chained to the ceiling again and beaten.

In addition, Dolkar Kyap reported, he was thrown against a cement wall and made to stare at a strong ray of light which damaged his eyes.

As the interrogation progressed, it became clear that the Public Security Bureau was very familiar with Dolkar Kyap's activities. They even reminded Dolkar of an earlier incident when he had photographed trucks transporting lumber, and they had given him a choice of paying a fine of 500 renminbi (approximately U.S.$70) or having his camera confiscated. He said two PSB officers had grabbed him by the shoulder then and told him, "These timbers are being transported by the government, and no one is allowed to photograph them. This is in violation of the law."

After six days, during which he was moved from place to place, Dolkar Kyap confessed to what the Chinese authorities already knew. He admitted that at 3:00 a.m. on August 19, 1994, at a time a horse racing competition was being held in Machu, he put up one hundred posters all over the market, reproducing a speech by the Dalai Lama. He also acknowledged that on February 11, 1995, during the New Year school vacation, a few hundred of two different leaflets were distributed in six monasteries in the county, one announcing a peace march from New Delhi to Tibet beginning on March 10, later canceled, and another a copy of a speech by the Dalai Lama. He explained further:

> My friends helped distribute the leaflets in the different monasteries. We had formed a small organization in 1994 called the Snow Eye Group, and when we distributed the leaflets, the stamp of the organization was on the back. Our stamp had a drawing of three mountains representing the three provinces of Tibet. In the middle there was an eye with tears flowing to form a big river. Our organization had six members. Later, one person informed on us to the authorities.

> Dolkar Kyap went on, "The people in our region are so educationally backward, they don't even know the Tibetan cause... They are ignorant about the political situation. So we had this aim of distributing tapes and showing video films of the Dalai Lama's speeches. We also hoped to distribute political literature."

On April 17, 1996, seventeen days after his detention, Dolkar Kyap was moved from Lanzhou to the Gannan Prefecture Detention Center. After four months he was moved again, this time to the county detention center in Machu. Three months later, he was returned to the prefecture facility and formally arrested. It was only after this last move that Dolkar Kyap's family finally found out where he was. Later, even though family members could not visit, they could send food and clothes.

Dolkar Kyap's arrest was part of a pattern of arrests from May through August 1995. Some thirty people from Machu were detained, including all members of Dolkar Kyap's organization. Most were held only a few days, primarily, he said, because he claimed total responsibility for the political activities and for "tricking" all the others into joining his organization. Nevertheless, a few others were formally indicted and sentenced.

Some of the activities that brought about charges of "counterrevolution" against Dolkar Kyap included making a timetable of Voice of America broadcasts and possession of the dissident magazine *China Spring*. In addition to the arrests and repeated interrogations, some with government jobs were demoted.

On September 19, 1996, a year and a half after he was first detained, Dolkar Kyap was tried by the Gannan Intermediate People's Court on charges of counterrevolution and sentenced to a three-year term and two years' subsequent deprivation of political rights. While the trial was attended by some thirty observers, they were all officials from the public and state security bureaus, and for all practical purposes, the trial was not public.

Two other men were tried with him, Jigme Gyarak and Konchok Jigme. The latter, also known as Jigme Jamdrug, was a monk at Labrang monastery with whom Dolkar Kyap exchanged audio and video tapes and political books and other literature, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and *Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution*.[7] Jigme Jamdrug received a two-year sentence but with little time left to serve, remained at the detention center. Jigme Gyarak, who Dolkar Kyap said had been tortured, was released after one month in detention, then called back for the trial and sentenced only to deprivation of political rights. The court session for all three trials lasted some five hours; the verdicts were delivered after a twenty-minute recess.

The heart of Dolkar Kyap's defense was related to his educational level. According to the charges, he met the educational standard of a university graduate. However, his lawyer argued that since Dolkar Kyap left school when he

[7] The document is a statement by the Dalai Lama, dated February 26, 1992, laying out now well-known policies such as his decision not to remain the head of state in an independent Tibet.

was very young, he was educationally backward and ignorant of politics. There was no mention of Dolkar Kyap's home study or of his schooling in India. The procurator retorted that although Dolkar Kyap did not admit it, he had, in fact, attained sufficient literacy in school to be able to write and make posters. No witnesses were produced although the procurator alleged they existed. "The only evidence was the book and the documents found in my room and the posters I had pasted up." As for his right to counsel, Dolkar Kyap met his lawyer for the first time just before the court proceedings actually started. They spent approximately a half hour together within earshot of the guard who escorted Dolkar Kyap to the courtroom.

A month after sentencing, Dolkar Kyap was sent to Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture Prison No.2, also known as Gansu Province No.2 Prison, "Muslim" prison, and Yanya Factory. He said he was the only Tibetan political prisoner there, although the prison housed several prominent Chinese political and religious dissidents.

When he first arrived at the prison, Dolkar Kyap said, he had to learn the prison's fifty-eight rules and regulations by heart and also a few patriotic songs that the prisoners might be called on to perform. He said that inside the prison, inmates could use money to buy better treatment, such as lighter workloads. One division within the complex made carpets; another did metal work which included melting and molding iron into desired shapes. Other divisions manufactured leather shoes, did carpentry work, or made gloves. Dolkar Kyap was assigned to glove manufacture. He explained:

> We had six machines. For that we needed only six people. The rest had to stitch the gloves together [by hand]. Then the gloves had to be nailed and stretched on a plank of wood. First, I was in the stitching section. After that, because of my failure to finish my task, I did the work of stretching the gloves...They had to be made into shape so we would put them on a plank with nails... The ones who stitched gloves had to stitch 700 pairs a month. I couldn't stitch more than 200.

A work day for the glove makers lasted twelve hours and forty-five minutes and included a two-hour lunch break, Sundays included.

According to Dolkar Kyap, health problems were endemic in Gansu No.2 Prison:

> Prisoners get medical check-ups when they first come to the prison. The prison authorities would pass sick prisoners as fit. Those who are sick have to pay their own medical bills. That's because they are told that they brought the diseases from outside. Once eighteen of us were taken for check-ups. Except for six, all had gotten TB. Among the prisoners making gloves and mattresses, the number of TB patients was increasing day by day. The hospital wouldn't give the proper medicines.

After his release, on March 31, 1998, Dolkar Kyap had to report to the Machu security office once a month on the "usefulness of the thought reformation that I underwent in prison." Because he could not travel outside the area without permission, he lost the opportunity for further study and because he was unable to find other work, he felt he added to his family's burdens. As far as Dolkar Kyap was concerned, he had no choice other than to emigrate to India.

Before he could do so, however, Dolkar Kyap became involved in fighting that had erupted in 1997 over 33,000 mu (5,437 acres) of disputed pasture land in the border area between Qinghai and Gansu provinces.[8] The conflict had its origins in the Chinese government's policy of promoting permanent settlement of Tibetan nomads and parceling out to families the land that had previously been available to the community for grazing.

Dolkar Kyap explained:

[8] A mu is a common unit of area in China, the equivalent of 0.0667 hectares.

The policy of fencing pasture land was first introduced in 1989, but was not put into practice for many years. Afterwards, when the government declared that if you put a fence around your pasture land, a house would be built for you, it spent some money in some areas building houses. Then many nomads said they would put up fences. But after the fences were put up, the government stopped building houses.

"The fencing," Dolkar Kyap said, "brings many benefits to the government" but harms Tibetan communication and cooperation and exacerbates tensions. His family, he said, was lucky in that there was water on their property. But others had no water, especially in winter. With the government making no moves to help, the unlucky ones had to buy from the lucky ones, and quarrels mounted up. The fencing was costly and, according to Dolkar Kyap, paid for by the individual families. His family spent some 50,000 renminbi (approximately U.S.$7,140) to fence 4,400 mu (725 acres) and to divide it internally into summer and winter pasturage. Dolkar Kyap did admit that with fencing, herding was a little less arduous.

The Gansu-Qinghai dispute erupted after the Ngulra township nomads and Gansu officials refused to accept a decision that awarded a large unfenced pasturage area to the Qinghai province township of Nyintha. According to Dolkar Kyap, repeated petitions to central authorities asking for clarification of ownership went unanswered. Instead the provinces were left to settle the dispute, and they, in turn, left it to the nomads to fight it out. As he explained, "From both provinces, no effort was made to stop the fighting. We could buy any number of guns and bullets. Officials from [our] province taught us how to dig trenches and throw hand grenades."

At first, the Ngulra nomads began abducting people and cattle from Nyintha; later the fighting escalated to skirmishes fought with smuggled automatic and semi-automatic weapons. At the height of the tension, some 2,000 fighters on both sides were on call, Dolkar Kyap among them. Between August 3, 1997 and October 15, 1998, a total of twenty-four people died. On October 15, just before dawn, twelve people from Ngulra, including Dolkar Kyap's cousin, were killed and another five wounded in a grenade attack. Two from Nyintha died. Officials arrived as the survivors were casting the bodies into the river, but, according to Dolkar Kyap, no one was arrested and the prefecture authorities were ordered to settle the dispute themselves. After the incident, both parties retreated to again "prepare their defense."

On November 29, 1998, a month and a half after the fatal fight, Dolkar Kyap left Gansu, arriving in Kathmandu on December 24 and in India on January 17, 1999. As he explained his decision, "I always wanted to do something for the Tibetan cause. I also realized that I would have a greater impact if I did something at home, but under the government's eye, I really couldn't do much. I was living constantly in a state of fear."

V. TRINLEY GYATSO

Trinley Gyatso, or Badzra Trinley as he prefers to be called to personally honor his teacher, is a soft-spoken thirty-year-old monk who escaped to Dharamsala in 1998 after detention, torture, and a sham trial in Gansu province. On the surface, he has adjusted well to life in exile, but he is deeply disappointed at what he sees as the failure of the Tibetan "government-in-exile" to help him find meaningful work, pursue further study, and secure legal status in India.

Badzra Trinley was part of a large nomadic family, growing up with his seven brothers and sisters in Xiahe county, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, an overwhelmingly Tibetan area. Home was a traditional black tent made of yak wool in a village some three hours by car from the town of Xiahe itself. For three years, from the time he was seven, Badzra Trinley attended a Tibetan primary school, then helped tend the family's goats and yaks until 1982 when, at the age of fourteen, he entered Labrang monastery. Badzra Trinley explained:

It is not unusual for a Tibetan family to ask a child if he wants to be a monk. When my parents asked me, I said, "Yes, I very much want to be a monk." I have two brothers who are monks and a sister who is a nun. Another sister became a nun when she was thirty, after she had four sons.

Labrang monastery, where Badzra Trinley was enrolled, is one of the great Tibetan religious institutions. For Chinese and foreigners alike it is one of the two most popular Tibetan tourist attractions outside the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and the Chinese government takes pains to maintain the site both for the revenue it produces and as a symbol of the government's alleged policy of religious freedom. According to official Chinese sources, Labrang attracts over 10,000 foreign visitors a year. To better assist them, monks there are studying English and learning to use computers.

Founded in 1709, Labrang grew to have a population of over 3,000 resident monks before the Chinese invasion in the 1950s and its eventual destruction during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). When Badzra Trinley entered Labrang it had been reopened only a few years. Today, considerably restored, although nowhere near its original size, it is a protected cultural monument celebrated for its great physical beauty and its impressive standards of scholarship and discipline. Although the Chinese government limits the resident monastic population, to less than a third that of the 1950s, hundreds of non-resident monks continue their association with Labrang.

In 1989, Badzra Trinley passed an exam which gained him entrance to the Gansu Buddhist Studies Institute (Gansu Sheng Foxueyuan), a four-year school run by the provincial government. It was added to Labrang in 1985. Almost all the school's population, students and teachers alike, were monks, but the curriculum was partly secular and political. In addition to Tibetan subjects, Badzra Trinley and his classmates studied dialectics, Mao Zedong thought, socialist theory, and Chinese language and history. They were instructed that they should first love their country *(ai guo*), then their religion (*ai jiao*) and the people (*ai min*), and they were taught that the Chinese authorities respected religious freedom.

Badzra Trinley finished his studies in 1993, a member of the institute's third graduating class, but his future was decisively influenced by his experiences in the fall of 1992 when he and twenty-three classmates went on a government-sponsored pilgrimage to Lhasa. During the month they were housed in a hotel there, Badzra Trinley came to better know his classmate, Kalsang Gyatso, and Konchok Khachen ("Konchok Big Mouth"), a friend of Kalsang's living in Lhasa. From Konchok, Badzra Trinley received books and video tapes including the Dalai Lama's autobiography, *My Land and My People*; a videotape of a speech the Dalai Lama made when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989; a booklet of his March 10 statements (March 10 is the anniversary of the 1959 uprising in Lhasa); *Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution*; and copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Another influential event for Badzra Trinley was his meeting in Lhasa with Hortsang Jigme, a scholar from Amdo who was getting ready to leave for India. He gave Badzra Trinley a copy of his poem, "The Character to be Discarded," in which he criticized the Chinese government for forcibly invading Tibet, for its deforestation and mineral extraction policies in Tibet, and for arrogating to itself total sovereignty in Tibet. The poem went on to accuse the Chinese of preempting settlement of the most attractive Tibetan environments, and it urged Tibetans to learn to differentiate between what elements of Chinese influence were worth keeping and what needed to be discarded. (See Appendix.)

For Badzra Trinley, all of what he learned in Lhasa reenforced what he had already learned in Labrang and at home about the Chinese occupation of Tibet and about Chinese interference with traditional Tibetan religious and economic practices. He had heard the stories, coming from many parts of Tibet, of parents killed by the Chinese invaders. And he mentioned some seemingly small irritants that signaled Chinese control:

Although I joined the monastery when I was fourteen, the Chinese rule was that you couldn't wear monk's robes until you were eighteen. And before the Chinese divided and enclosed the grazing land with barbed

wire, the nomads had no problems. Later, there were troubles between families and between neighbors and between Tibetans.

Before he left Lhasa, Badzra Trinley purchased enough of the cotton material used to make monks' robes to wrap and transport his newly-acquired books and tapes. Once back at Labrang, he began to make copies of the materials for distribution. He used his room or the room of a close friend to show the video to other friends. Kalsang Gyatso, his classmate, did the same. The several video halls near the school made it easy to rent a projector. Using the school's typewriter, Badzra Trinley made a copy of Hortsang Jigme's poem and arranged for it to be stenciled and the copies sold through a small book stall. He also composed two posters and hung copies up in several different locations in and around the school. The contents, he said, expressed his inner feelings as best as he could, given what he called his limited knowledge and his inability to use "appealing" words. He wrote:

> The determination of the Tibetan people should not be undermined. The Tibetan people should not forget the material destruction and abolition of human rights brought by the Chinese government. We have a unique and enlightened leader. We should not be discouraged in our struggle. We will achieve independence because the truth is on our side.

On June 20, 1993, Badzra Trinley graduated. Twenty days later, on July 10, 1993, a Wednesday, the police caught up with him. He explained:

> Two new students, Kalsang Lodroe and Kalsang Drakpa, hand-copied the Dalai Lama's March 10 statement and sent the copies, through friends, to their homes in Luchu and Machu [two small overwhelmingly Tibetan counties in Gannan]. Chinese security officers found out when one of Kalsang Lodroe's friends took a copy to a third party in Kalsang Lodroe's monastery in Luchu. That person told where he got the copy. The officers came to my school and questioned Kalsang Lodroe and Kalsang Drakpa, and they informed on me.
>
> Two county Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers—Pakpa Kyap, was a Tibetan from the political section, and, "Tho," was Han Chinese—came to my room late one evening and asked if I was Trinley Gyatso. They wanted me to come with them; they had something to ask me. I was with my elder brother and some friends. My brother tried to stop them, but they showed an official paper.
>
> They took me in a jeep to an office in the Xiahe County Public Security Bureau. At first they interrogated me politely. "Tell us honestly what you have done, and you will not face problems... If you confess your guilt, you will receive leniency." I said, "I don't know what to tell you. I don't know why I am here." They took out an electric baton and handcuffs and laid them on the table. Then they said, "If you don't tell us honestly, we will treat you with these."

Badzra Trinley repeated that he did not know why he was being detained. He said that he had not been involved in any criminal activities and that he was not harming economic development. He said he did not realize the seriousness of the situation. He told his interrogators, "If I murdered someone, take me to prison."

> But they told me, "Don't be silly; you didn't do that. You did something against the law and we know it." I said, "I don't remember that I did anything illegal. If you two know, say so, and if it is true, I will accept it."

He asked them if they were sure they had the right Badzra Trinley, and it was then they told him that one of his friends had already confessed. He realized that he was being held because of the copying.

> Then they handcuffed me in front and used the cattle prod, primarily on my arms because I was wearing a monk's robe and my arms were bare. They did this four or five times. Then I had to get on my knees and was

cuffed to a table with my arms spread wide until morning. I couldn't sleep. The cuffs had spikes. I was slapped, too, and beaten but not seriously.

The next morning, a police officer named Gelek came to see Badzra Trinley and politely inquired if he had "suffered last night." He suggested, as the other officers had, that by confessing everything honestly, he would avoid further suffering. At Badzra Trinley's repeated protestations that he had no idea what he had done, the officer pointedly mentioned "giving books to friends." At that point, Badzra Trinley saw Kalsang Lodroe being escorted to the bathroom. He immediately replied, "If it is that case, you should have told me earlier and I could have told you, 'Yes, I gave books to some of my friends.'"

When pressed to divulge the whereabouts of the rest of the books, Badzra Trinley told the officer that he had burned them, and in response to further questions, said that no one had seen him do it because "it was not good to burn them with the Dalai Lama's picture in them." He said that he had received the books in 1992 from Hortsang Jigme, who was then safely in India.

At this point in the interrogation, a friend of Badzra Trinley's named Jamyang intervened with the police to get Badzra Trinley released for the weekend on condition that he bring the books to the police station on the following Monday. Badzra Trinley returned to the police station as his friend had promised he would, but he did not have the books with him. As a result, he was subjected to an all-day interrogation at the station, then moved to Menkar, a county-level detention center nearby. There he was forced to change from his monk's robe into a track suit for which he had to pay 100 renminbi (approximately U.S.$14).

Badzra Trinley spent two months in Menkar, where he was interrogated fifteen times by the same two officers who had seized him originally and occasionally by Gelek as well. The process generally started off politely enough but degenerated into a routine of punches, kicks, beatings, over-the-shoulder handcuffs, and electric shocks coupled with repeated admonitions to "Tell us about your collaborators and we'll release you," or "Give us the books and you'll be released."

At the end of the two months, Badzra Trinley's older brother, a student at a Buddhist school in Beijing, came home on summer holiday. He and Jamyang together petitioned for Badzra Trinley's temporary release and put up the bail money. The agreement permitted him to return to the monastery in monk's robes but required him to report daily to the Public Security Bureau office, confine himself to the monastery's premises, and refrain from any activities connected to the Tibetan independence struggle. Badzra Trinley had to agree to come when called either for questioning or reimprisonment. He was also unofficially advised that if he became a PSB informer and did well, he would be paid secretly. If not, he would be rearrested.

After Badzra Trinley returned to the monastery, he said he was constantly harassed by the police.

> Sometimes, they came to my room in the middle of the night and asked me questions like whether I was truly working for them. They would repeat that if I was able to tell them about other Tibetans engaged in anti-Tibetan activities, they would pay me and my past mistakes would be forgotten and forgiven.

During this time, Badzra Trinley served in the Kalacakra tratshang, a monastic college with a particular emphasis on the Kalacakra tradition, a specific set of Buddhist teachings and practices. As a monk who worked as well as studied, he assisted during the cycle of teachings which constitute the Kalacakra and was part of the monastic dance corps that performed ritual dances during the cycle. He also assisted during the Monlam Chenmo or Great Prayer festival, celebrated immediately after the Tibetan New Year.

On July 11, 1994, Badzra Trinley went to Sangkok, a town twenty kilometers from Labrang, for Kalacakra teachings. By then, he had become involved again in political activities. Two days later, on July 13, despite thousands of visitors and heavy security, people awoke to find political slogans painted on hundreds of tents, motorbikes, and

police jeeps. Badzra Trinley, already under surveillance, came under heavy suspicion and was immediately questioned. He said he truly did not know who had managed the feat. Once the teachings finished the following day, the attendees celebrated for five days with picnics, operas, and religious dances. At the end of the festivities, on July 19, Badzra Trinley returned to Labrang.

A few weeks later, Badzra Trinley, having decided to go to Lhasa, went to the Public Security Bureau, as his bail conditions demanded, to ask Pakpa Kyap, the PSB officer responsible for his case, for an identity card. He did not, however, reveal his true destination. When he returned one evening with the necessary passport-sized photo, Pakpa Kyap told him the picture was not good enough, to come back the following morning with a better one. Badzra Trinley was well aware of Pakpa Kyap's suspicions, so at 5:00 a.m. the following morning, in violation of his bail agreement, he went directly to the Public Security Bureau section that issues identification cards, and by 6:00 a.m. was on his way to the capital. A week later, he went back to Labrang.

After Badzra Trinley returned, his cousins and friends were quick to bring him up to date, telling him that once he was gone, Pakpa Kyap came repeatedly to the monastery to inquire about him. They also told him that when Jamyang, Badzra Trinley's friend who had helped arrange bail, returned from a home visit, he was repeatedly questioned until he told Pakpa Kyap, "If you don't trust me, put me in prison in Badzra Trinley's place."

> The very next day, July 30, 1994, I went to see Pakpa Kyap at his home, but his father told me he had gone to the capital [of Gannan prefecture]. I went back to the monastery, but I didn't want to get my friends in trouble, so the next day at 5:00 a.m., I went to Pakpa Kyap's office. He wasn't there either. Another officer asked my name and then told me to wait. About when it was getting dark, some officers came from Gannan. About 9:00 p.m. they put me in a jeep and took me to the detention center in Gannan, about seventy miles away. When we got there, at 10:30 p.m., they took me right to the interrogation room. They put me in a metal chair, handcuffed me, and for two hours, two officers questioned me about why I went to Lhasa and what I did there.
>
> There were many Tibetan prisoners at the detention center, and the officers were afraid news of my arrest might leak out, so they took me to a Public Security Bureau guest house for the night. My room had three beds. They handcuffed me to the middle one.

The next afternoon, Badzra Trinley, with his hands and feet bound in chains, was transferred to a detention center 150 kilometers away in Linxia Huizu Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province. The facility was about ten kilometers from the center of town. "I stayed there for four months, and no one knew I was there. I was the only Tibetan." Again, Badzra Trinley had to remove his monk's robe and again the officials used his own money, 200 renminbi (U.S.$28), to buy a track suit and a bowl for food. Badzra Trinley described his first fifteen days at the facility, a time when he was interrogated by PSB officers from his home county:

> I was badly treated. The torture started at 8:00 a.m. and went on until 9:00 p.m. I was removed to an empty cell. I was cuffed in the over-the-shoulder way. It destroyed my shoulder joint. Two wooden rods were placed behind each of my knees and another on the front. Then they were tied together and I was told to kneel. Electric shocks were applied all over, my mouth, my face; and I was kicked and punched everywhere. They put wood slabs between my legs and made me kneel for hours. I still have marks from the handcuffs; some scars have faded.
>
> I was there during the coldest month of the year. Every morning before the sun rose, I was taken to an empty cell and told to strip. Then they kept throwing buckets of icy water on me. I couldn't bear to gasp. I couldn't even breathe properly after awhile. Sometimes I blacked out. Sometimes they took me to a fire to keep me from fainting. Sometimes they hit me all over my body with a sharp thin bamboo stick. My whole body became like a chicken, blue with patches of white.

All during the sessions, Badzra Trinley's interrogators made it clear that they knew about his independence activities, and it would be best if he confessed. He was told, for example, "You painted slogans during Kalacakra. We have observed this through scientific methods. And you wrote political posters when you were in college. We compared the handwriting with your textbooks." They went on, "Can you yourself beat the Chinese Communist Party and bring independence to Tibet? Chiang Kai-shek tried with thousands of troops and arms and failed to beat the Communist Party."

Badzra Trinley said he told them that he was only one person, but that "If we look into the history of China, dynasties changed. These were not natural events, but they happened because people changed their minds. The same thing will happen to the Party."

After four months, Badzra Trinley was transferred back to the detention center in Gannan, where he remained for the next two years and four months, in a special section for political prisoners. For one week, he was interrogated around the clock. The questions hardly changed; the beatings and the taunts persisted. "Will the Dalai Lama appoint you king of Tibet in an independent Tibet?" his torturers kept asking.

After the first week, Badzra Trinley shared a prison cell with ten others. The days were spent in idleness except for those prisoners who, thanks to good relations with prison guards, were called on to wash clothes or perform other personal services. There was no exercise time, nor did prisoners ever get to go outdoors.

The main charge against Badzra Trinley was that he was a spy for the Tibetan "government-in-exile," having distributed independence literature in 1994 at a Kalacakra initiation. "There was little chance I could deny it or deny that I had put up posters in the monastery. They had checked my handwriting."

He was finally sentenced in late 1996 to two years and seven months in prison on charges of counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement. He also received two years' subsequent deprivation of political rights. He was released two days before his term was up and two and a half years after his bail was revoked. During the more than two years before he was sentenced, his father received permission for only one visit.

Before his trial, Badzra Trinley had been interrogated by two branches of the Public Security Bureau and by the procuracy. When the procuracy handed up the indictment, he was told to accept the charges, which he did even though he believed in his innocence. Although Badzra Trinley reads Chinese, he pretended not to, so all pre-trial documents were read out in Chinese and orally translated. Badzra Trinley was offered a lawyer approximately one month before trial, but he refused, asking instead for an interpreter. The closed trial lasted three hours, after which the judges left the room for ten minutes, then announced the sentence and asked if he had anything to say. When he tried to object to the charges, they said they had scientific proof of his guilt. Badzra Trinley decided rather than run the risk of a longer sentence, he would not appeal.

Badzra Trinley returned to Labrang after he was released. He said he had no place else to go and the authorities did not object. He stayed almost a year but found the atmosphere very unpleasant.

> People were afraid of me. They were frightened to speak with me. People didn't want to get close to me. My friends were even afraid to bring me food when I was in prison. Once, some friends did come with food, but the Public Security Bureau asked them, "What is your relation to Badzra Trinley." A friend of mine got the highest marks but they [the monks at the college] weren't allowed to give him first place. I told my brothers not to ask me anything. I wanted to protect them. And I was constantly harassed by the local police.

Finally, in early 1998, Badzra Trinley left for India. He did not say a word to his friends or his family, because they would have insisted on helping him.

A few days later I reached Lhasa. I was with a friend. We didn't have any I.D. so we went to the Public Security Bureau. My hair was a bit long, so they didn't know I was a monk. But then the PSB got a phone call from Amdo telling them not to give us I.Ds. So we fled through Dram. By then we were five people. Two were my friends. At 3:30 one afternoon, we were at a place in Tibet with a lot of soldiers. They started shooting. One of my friends got arrested. I went back to Dram and gave 2,500 renminbi [approximately U.S.$355] through an acquaintance, and my friend was released.

On April 19, 1998, Badzra Trinley arrived in Dharamsala and soon was at work at the Norbulinga Institute, a facility dedicated to preserving Tibetan culture.

VI. GYALWA GYATSO

Gyalwa Gyatso, thirty-four years old, had been in Dharamsala a little over a year when we first met him in 1998. He told us then that he was "finally ready to tell my story in detail." Until then, he said, his concern for those still in Tibet made him unwilling to speak. In the following account, names have been changed to protect those still in Tibet.

Gyalwa is from a farming and trading family in Kharo, in Chamdo in the Tibet Autonomous Region, but as far as he is concerned he is a Khampa, that is he comes from historical Kham, an area that today is divided between the Tibet Autonomous Region and the western part of Sichuan province.

A concern for Tibetan causes was always a part of Gyalwa's home life. His family's resistance to Chinese rule, he said, was no different than the resistance of other families in his village and in other villages. In many cases, he said, his generation is the third to protest what he called the Chinese occupation of Tibet. His family did suffer, he continued, but other village families suffered even more. His wife's family, according to Gyalwa, was decimated.

Gyalwa's own active involvement in what he called the struggle for freedom began in 1985, but even in school, he said, "I realized the importance of individual liberty." Because his family belonged to a "property-owning" class and because the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) was not quite over, Gyalwa's schooling was cut short. He had started his formal education when he was six, an education, he said, that even at that age was mostly political. Students were taught to oppose Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi and to love the Communist Party.[9]

After five years in the township school, five students were chosen to go on to the county middle school. Although Gyalwa's teacher selected him as one of the five, the township Chinese Communist Party secretary vetoed the choice. Instead, from the age of thirteen on, Gyalwa began to work in the people's commune. At sixteen, he married and went to live with his wife's family, then began to spend most of his time in Chamdo, the most important city in the T.A.R. portion of Kham. By then the "new responsibility system," which dismantled the commune system and allowed families considerable leeway in managing their own resources, had been promulgated, and Gyalwa could improve his family's income by selling first fruit, and later tea leaves and clothing in Chamdo.

In 1985, Gyalwa and some Chamdo friends began to discuss finding a solution to the "unbearable oppression" in Tibet. He explained:

[9] Deng Xiaoping was China's paramount leader from 1978 until he died in 1997. He was purged by Mao Zedong during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), rehabilitated in 1973, and purged again in 1976. Liu Shaoqi was former president of China whom Mao branded a "rightist" and who died in custody during the Cultural Revolution.

I knew very clearly we had the truth to fight the Chinese. We decided to fight by nonviolent methods. We were not fighting against the Chinese people and their country, but we wanted the international community to know the facts about how much Tibetans were suffering in their own country. So we began by putting up posters in different parts of Chamdo, "Long live independent Tibet," "Long live individual liberty," "Long live the Dalai Lama."

In early 1989, Gyalwa, all alone, shouted slogans in Chamdo during a festival. Following the incident he fled, first to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, and later to Lhasa, but escaped detection for only four months. In July 1989, after he had been in Lhasa barely a month, eight or nine plainclothesmen from the Public Security Bureau (PSB) picked him up and returned him to Chamdo. They had been actively looking for him and one day found him near the PSB hospital on his way to the Jokhang temple, the most important pilgrimage site in Lhasa.

An officer called out my name, and I turned around. They told me to face the fence, then frisked me, handcuffed me but didn't rough me up. Then they put me in a jeep and took me to Seitru [a state security detention facility in the northeastern suburbs of Lhasa].

They put me in with six or seven political prisoners, but I wasn't handcuffed or in leg irons. I was never beaten in Seitru and interrogated only once by four people. I was asked to confess what I had done, and I told them I shouted slogans. They wanted me to tell how many people were behind me, and I repeated that I had only shouted slogans. They told me they knew everything and that if I didn't confess clearly, they would see me again in Chamdo.

Later on, when he was back in Chamdo, Gyalwa's interrogators showed him a picture of himself taken when he was in Chengdu and told him, "You were traveling by motor, but we were traveling by telephone and telegraph. You could not escape from us forever."

Gyalwa talked at length about what happened to him after he was sent back by jeep to Chamdo accompanied by three PSB officers and one soldier:

I was handcuffed and in leg irons and tied to the seat of the car. The journey took three days. We spent one night in the Nagchu prefecture prison, one in the county jail in Bachen and one in the jail in Tengchen. I was kept cuffed and in irons, and the soldier who was with us was in the cell to watch me.

When he arrived back in Chamdo:

Four or five PSB officials came to take me from the jeep and right away started kicking me. They took me to the prison in Chamdo—there is only one. I was kept in a separate cell in the corner of the prison, and I was also isolated from the staff. I spent one year and four months in that cell; for the first four months I was continuously handcuffed. I never saw any papers.

I was interrogated thirteen times over a period of ten months, most of the time late in the evening until midnight or sometimes from midnight until dawn, five or six hours each time. Sometimes when there was an all-night session, the officers would take a break, relax, make tea, and leave me in the interrogation room. There were six people, two Chinese and four Tibetans, some from Chamdo and some from Dayab, whose duty was to torture people. They took me to the interrogation room secretly and used three different size cattle prods, a wooden stick, and a wire switch to beat me. I had to kneel on sharpened wood. Most of the time, I could feel the taste of blood in my mouth.

Gyalwa's interrogators sought information on the number and names of his co-conspirators. They asked him who was behind his slogan shouting and about his relationship with the Tibetan "government-in-exile." He was asked to turn

over videotapes and documents from the exile community. Often he said, "They tried to frighten me by saying my friends, my wife, my parents were already in prison and had confessed. So tell all, they said, before it is too late." Gyalwa said he knew it was not true. He hadn't told anyone in his family about his activities. Sometimes, he said, his interrogators would tell him that one of his three children was seriously ill in the hospital and might die, so he had better confess quickly so he could see his child.

At the end of each session, Gyalwa had to sign a transcript of the session and affix his thumbprint indicating he had read the transcript and agreed with its contents. But the transcript was in Chinese, and Gyalwa cannot read Chinese.

After the interrogation phase of the investigation was over, Gyalwa was left alone for some six months. Once during that period, he was presented with alleged evidence of his "crime," a slogan that had been put up as a poster on the gate of a government building in Chamdo several years earlier. Gyalwa's signature on the interrogation record provided the needed handwriting comparison.

Toward the end of Gyalwa's sixteen-month incarceration in Chamdo, the procuracy twice reviewed the record with him and finally showed him the indictment papers. Gyalwa still isn't really fully certain of the charges, which were written in Chinese and never explained to him. All he understood were the generalities "counterrevolution" and "counterrevolutionary propaganda."

According to Gyalwa, he never had a trial. A Tibetan judge and a female officer of the court came to tell him he had received a five-year sentence and three years' subsequent deprivation of political rights. The judge asked if he was satisfied with the sentence; Gyalwa asked if he could appeal; the judge, "a good Tibetan," told him honestly he wouldn't "get any profit from an appeal."

Less than one month after he was sentenced, Gyalwa was transferred to Powo Tramo, now officially called Tibet No.2 Prison, located in the southeastern part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Just before the move, he was able to see his wife and parents for the first time since his detention. His parents lived close by; for his wife it was a seven-hour bus trip each way. The visit lasted five minutes. His father, who had managed to find out Gyalwa's whereabouts, had tried several times to visit him or at least to leave food and clothes. Not only did his father's efforts fail, but at one point, a guard even struck him. And despite Gyalwa's best efforts to keep his activities secret, his family suffered considerably from their relationship to him. Over a period of years, some relatives were detained, some beaten, and at least one sentenced. Family members also found their educational and employment opportunities restricted**.**

At Powo Tramo, Gyalwa worked ten hours a day on the 1,300 mu (approximately 214 acres) prison farm which was expected to produce 41,000 *jin* (one jin = .5 kilogram) of barley a year, and helped care for some 300 pigs, 400 chickens, and 500 sheep. Sometimes, in addition to a day's work, prisoners were sent to the hills at night to collect mushrooms. Some of the produce was sold, and the prisoners usually got the worst of what was left. During the winter, prisoners gathered leaves for decomposing into fertilizer; and they collected night soil.

Gyalwa said:

> It was common for prisoners to be beaten. The officials [probably from the People's Armed Police] were young and strict. I was in solitary once for three days. I had a stomach ache and couldn't work, so I went to the office to get excused. There were seven people asking for excuses that day. I was first in line. One Chinese office, the team leader (*dui zhang*), said, "You are all pretending. Actually you are avoiding work." And he ordered us to come with him to collect night soil. But I really was sick and repeated my request. The office got angry and kicked me. The soldiers came and handcuffed me and took me to solitary.

His family visited rarely, three times in all as the trip took even longer than the one to the detention center. For his wife, a one-way trip took a day and a half, for his parents, two days. According to Gyalwa, there were no rules about

who could visit a prisoner, but any potential visitor needed to get two recommendations from the county-level Public Security Bureau. Regulations at Powo Tramo prison provided for a fifteen-minute visit every forty-five days, but the actual length depended on the soldier-guards. "It could last a half hour or even forty minutes," he said.

After his release in mid-1994, Gyalwa went directly to Chamdo to meet his parents. His plan was to wait two weeks before traveling to his native village to see his wife and children. The day before he was to leave, at 1:00 a.m., public security officers came by and told him not to go. They said they needed to speak with him. At 9:00 a.m., they returned to escort him to the police station for a two-hour interrogation and discussion session. Part of the officers' agenda was to persuade Gyalwa to accept his guilt and apologize, but he was adamant. He "would not," he said, "accept that he had made a mistake." Much to his surprise, he was permitted to leave for home, as planned, the following day. For the next several years, Gyalwa not only helped operate the family farm but visited Chamdo regularly to manage his revived business operations there. His interest and engagement in Tibetan independence activities went on.

On six other occasions, strung out over twenty-three months, Gwalya was picked up for brief "interrogations." All the interrogations took place in Chamdo. At the second session, Gyalwa was asked what his future ideological direction would be, and he was instructed to write out the details of his travels from Chamdo to Chengdu to Lhasa. He replied that he did "not know what his future political direction would be." He said his intent was to "follow the masses."

Sometimes, Chamdo PSB officers came by at 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m. to check on whether his family had unregistered guests. (Families housing guests, whether long- or short-term, must register them with the police.) And before major holidays or anniversaries, such as the anniversary of the June 4, 1989 crackdown in Beijing, or when posters appeared in Chamdo, Gyalwa said, he could expect a PSB visit.

By early 1997, Gyalwa came to know that he could be rearrested at any moment, and although he did not want to leave home, he quietly began to plan his escape. By spring, the trek had begun. With fifty others, he reached Nepal where Nepali police officers caught up with them. Fortunately, a Tibetan shopkeeper living in Nepal had the telephone number of the Tibetan "government-in-exile" office in Kathmandu. When that office asked the Nepali police not to return group members to China, the police complied.

Gyalwa arrived in Dharamsala in May, leaving behind a pregnant wife, two children, and parents already in their seventies. His wife, he said, has to take care of them, the baby, and the two other children while managing the family farm. He said he knew he was needed at home, but to return would only add to his family's difficulties. For now he studies English in exile in India, and waits.

VII. APPENDIX: "THE CHARACTER TO BE DISCARDED"

In his poem, "The Character to be Discarded," Hortsang Jigme has four main messages for Tibetans. He counsels them to forsake practices that have compromised their solidarity since the incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China, to recognize their common origins and remain true to their own traditions, and to become aware of the ways in which the Chinese government has tried to marginalize them and make them feel inferior. Finally, he warns Tibetans not to be fooled by Chinese promises but to struggle for their rights.

Heavy anger between parents and children,
Lawsuits among relatives,
Great disputes with neighbors on the left and right:
These are not Tibetan customs of self-respect.

The brave heroes among the tribes are many,
Their arteries are thick when seeking a haystack,
They sacrifice themselves for the ditch of a field boundary:
This is not the Tibetan way to display one's proud spirit.

There's no smile between Labrang and Rebkong when they meet,
The thinking of Ü and Tsang are different as east and west,
Every region has its own respect for itself:
These are not Tibetan thoughts for the common good.[10]

The incarnate lamas in each monastery are many,
The entourages of each individual incarnation are vast as the oceans,
Joining into each of these makes for vast entourages:
This is not the Tibetan way of making deep friendships.

Most of the lamas like Chinese silver,
Most of the geshes like prestigious titles,
Most of the monks like jealous words:
The is not the Tibetan way of serving as a monk.[11]

Quarrels over the prestige of Old and New give rise to clashes,
Seeking Mahamudra or Dzokchen, stupidity is revealed,
The four lineage traditions regard each other as enemies:
This is not the way to uphold the self-respect of the doctrine.[12]

High incarnations work for the victory of China,
Ordained monks are drawn to China,
Mahayana tantrics take delight in Chinese women:
This is not the way to turn the wheel of dharma.[13]

One victorious over hundreds of households serves as king,
When quarrels break out among the petty kingdoms they turn to China,
Bringing Chinese troops into Tibet, they overcome the Tibetans:
This is not the Tibetan way of being a king.
The mirror of earlier history is cast behind one's back,
The political and religious actions of the future are thrown far away,
For the moment one carries out Tibetan affairs by the pleasant tip of the tongue:
This is not the Tibetan way of rule.

[10] The stanza reminds Tibetans of the Chinese administrative system which divides Tibetans administratively. Labrang and Rebkong are two towns in Amdo with major monasteries. Labrang is in Gansu province and Rebkong in Qinghai. Ü and Tsang are two areas within the T.A.R. whose earlier history of contention has been exacerbated by Chinese authorities.

[11] Geshes are monks who, having passed rigorous academic and religious examination, attain high monastic degrees.

[12] The stanza refers to doctrinal disputes.

[13] To neglect of the dharma refers to the teachings of Buddha.

The master of logic has but one eye,
The master of language has but one eye,
No one has a pair of far-seeing eyes:
This is not the way to learn Tibetan culture.

Wild nomads can always eat raw flesh,
Poor villagers always eat tea and tsampa,
They spend their lives eating only one thing:
This is not the prosperous life of Tibetans.[14]

Father gives his ornaments to his son before he dies,
The son gives his torn out clothes to his nephew,
Long-life clothes, their color changed by smoke:
This is not the Tibetan way of gathering clothes.

Most of the good plains land has been taken by the Chinese and the Hui,
The cavernous interiors of all of the winding valleys are held by Tibetans,
There it is hard to work with the fields and animals:
This is the sort of settlement that should be rejected by Tibetans.[15]

There is great jealousy between scholars,
Savaged hatred between religious folk,
And much strife between villagers:
Their characters should be rejected by Tibetans.

In a world over which the dark cloud of ignorance moves,
One can't bear the prosperity of others; and yet,
In the bad omens of the decline of our own nationality,
The red-faced Tibetans attain less than others.[16]

With no future and a desire for liberation, a man takes up the dharma,
Seeing the clamor of sensual pleasure he becomes attached to the worldly,
And passes his life without either the dharma or the worldly:
This is not how Tibetans carry out undertakings.

A strong Amdowa shows his fist to the enemy,
A wild Khampa depends on his sword for his life,
A smart Tibetan from Ü shows his different colors:
This is not how Tibetans have a superior ear.[17]

Seeing the enemy who killed one's parents as a friend,
Holding the butcher who plundered one's ancestors as a kinsman,
Showing honor to the bandits who stole one's patrimony:
This is not how superior Tibetans do things.
Smiling if the nation's lineage is violently sundered,
Feeling happy even though the forests have been made grasslands,
Taking delight even though all of the mineral treasures are being mined:
This is not how Tibetans become happy.

We are helpless as the sphere of our land is taken by force,
A flock of hawks throws the lion's baby to the ground,
Sunbeams and moonlight together are thrown on the plain:

[14] Tsampa is roasted barley flour, the staple Tibetan food.
[15] The stanza refers to the marginalization of Tibetans by migrants. The Hui are Chinese Muslims.
[16] "Red-faced Tibetans" is one of many traditional names that Tibetans apply to themselves.
[17] This stanza comments on the divisions among Tibetans from the three major Tibetan areas, Amdo, Kham, and Ü-Tsang.

If you are truly concerned about the cause of Tibet, look back.

The assemblage of our kind, aged parents,
Starved to death, denied any food or drink,
Put to death by the sword, after a shower of bullets,
Put to death ignobly, through craft, deceit and cunning.

With the old father's lifeblood not yet dry,
Sons filled with happiness,
Brave ones bereft of beloved brothers:
Show the teeth of your sharp swords!

In the square enclosure of one's family one is highest,
In the eyes of one's loving parents one is handsome,
In one's own mind one's own nationality is highest:
There is no one who seems inferior to oneself.

Though the mask is beautiful, it is made from earth,
Though the pot's color is black, it is made from earth,
Though the earthen pot's bottom bulges, it is clumped earth:
All three of these are made of earth.

Between the fortunes of rising and falling is the barrel of a gun,
From the reversals of movement higher and lower,
The sounds of satisfaction are emphatically made; and yet,
It is like something emanating from the face of a witch.

This is not good for the nobly-born son,
One used to hearing sweet praise,
But it is the ever louder throbbing of a small living heart,
Coming from the blood of the Tibetans.

July 15, 1992

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