Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Special Report: Tibetan Self-Immolation
Rising Frequency, Wider Spread, Greater Diversity

August 22, 2012
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The frequency, geographic spread, and diversity of Tibetans who reportedly have committed self-immolation as they called for Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama’s return has increased since a December 2011 Commission report. The December report covered 13 self-immolations (8 reported fatal) that occurred from February 2009 to December 2011. All 13 of those self-immolations involved current or former monks or nuns; 12 took place in Sichuan province. Since then, as of August 10, 2012, an additional 33 Tibetans reportedly have committed similar self-immolation protests (29 reported fatal). Of these 33 self-immolations, 13 took place outside Sichuan province and 14 were persons who did not have a monastic background (i.e., laypersons).

The wave of self-immolations is concurrent with increasing Chinese Communist Party and government use of legal measures to repress and control core elements of Tibetan culture, and with the failure of the China-Dalai Lama dialogue process to achieve any sign of progress. The Party and government have also not indicated any willingness to consider Tibetan grievances in a more constructive manner and to hold themselves accountable for Tibetan rejection of Chinese policies. The Party and government have handled the crisis as a threat to state security and social stability instead of a policy failure. Note: This report covers the period up to August 10, 2012.

As Self-Immolations Spread and Involve Laypersons, Kirti Monks Less Prevalent

As of August 10, 2012, the total number of reported incidents of Tibetans committing self-immolation since February 2009 in protests focusing on political and religious issues—e.g., Tibetan freedom and the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet—increased to 46 (37 reported fatal) from the 13 incidents (7 reported fatal) listed in a December 2011 Commission report. This report does not characterize the reported June 27, 2012, Tibetan self-immolation of Deki Choezom in Yushu (Yushul) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP), Qinghai province, as political or religious because she committed self-immolation in protest against government expropriation of her family’s property, according to international media and advocacy group reports.
Self-immolation frequency has increased. Of the 13 Tibetan self-immolation protests that took place from February 2009 to December 2011, 12 of them (8 reported fatal) occurred during the 10-month period March to December 2011. In comparison, 33 self-immolations (29 reported fatal) took place in 2012 as of August 10. [See Table and Map below.]

Self-immolations have spread. The first 12 of the 13 self-immolations that took place from February 2009 to December 2011 occurred in Sichuan province; 1 self-immolation, in December 2011, took place in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). In comparison, of the 33 self-immolations that took place in 2012 as of August 10, 20 took place in Sichuan and 13 took place in other provincial-level areas. [See Table and Map below.] The following summary provides provincial-, prefectural-, and county-level location information for the 33 self-immolations that took place in 2012 as of August 10.

• Sichuan province. A total of 20 self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture. Thirteen of the 20 self-immolations took place in Aba county; 4 were in Ranqang (Dzamthang) county; and 3 were in Ma’erkang (Barkham) county, the prefectural capital. [See Table and Map below.]

• Qinghai province. A total of eight self-immolations took place in a total of four prefectural-level areas. Three self-immolations took place in Huangnan (Malho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP): two took place in Tongren (Rebgong) county, the prefectural capital, and one was in Jianzha (Chentsa) county. Three self-immolations (excluding the property-related protest of self-immolator Dekyi Choezom mentioned above) took place in Yushu (Yulshul) TAP: all three took place in Chenduo (Tridu) county. One self-immolation took place in Dari (Darlag) county, Guoluo (Golog) TAP. One self-immolation reportedly took place in Tianjun (Themchen) county, Haixi (Tsonub) Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture—a reliable Tibetan-language map, however, indicates that Bongtag Monastery, the reported location of the self-immolation, is in neighboring Wulan county. [See Table and Map below.]

• Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). A total of three self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Lhasa municipality. Two took place in Lhasa city, the TAR capital, and one was in Dangxiong (Damshung county). [See Table and Map below.]
• **Gansu province.** A total of two self-immolations took place in one prefectural-level area: Gannan (Kanlho) TAP. One took place in Hezuo (Tsoe) city, the prefectural capital, and one was in Maqu (Machu) county. [See Table and Map below.]

**Kirti prevalence has declined.** As the frequency of self-immolations increased and spread geographically, the prevalence of Kirti Monastery monks among self-immolators has decreased. If the total of 46 self-immolations as of August 10, 2012, is divided into halves, then current or former Kirti monks made up 12 of the first 23 self-immolations (February 27, 2009, to February 19, 2012). In comparison, current or former Kirti monks account for 5 of the last 23 self-immolators (March 3 to August 10, 2012). [See Table below.]

**Laypersons dominate recent self-immolation.** As self-immolation increased and spread geographically, laypersons have taken on a greater role. Once again comparing halves of the 46 total self-immolations as of August 10, 2012, all but 1 of the first 23 self-immolators (February 2009 to February 19, 2012) were current or former monks or nuns—the 23rd self-immolation was the first by a layperson. In comparison, 13 of the last 23 self-immolations (March 3, 2012, to August 10, 2012) were laypersons. Nine of the 13 self-immolations that took place during the period April through August 10, 2012, were laypersons. Self-immolations involving laypersons since April have taken place in Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and the TAR. [See Table and Map below.]

**Officials Blame Self-Immolations on “the Dalai Clique,” Disparage Self-Immolators**

Chinese government and Party officials have not acknowledged the role of Party policy and government legal measures in Tibetan decisions to commit self-immolation. Officials have blamed self-immolations on the Dalai Lama and organizations and individuals the Party associates with him (“the Dalai Clique”). On January 12, 2012, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman asserted that the self-immolations “were organized, premeditated and instigated by overseas groups and people.” Speaking to European Union officials on December 29, 2011, Zhu Weiqun, Executive Deputy Head of the Communist Party’s United Front Work Department (UFWD) and Director of the Party’s General Office of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs blamed the Dalai Lama directly for the self-immolations and told the EU officials to expect no change in Chinese government policies on Tibetan issues:

> The Dalai Lama wants to turn Tibetan Buddhism into a religion of suiciders and self-immolators in order to serve his own political

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7. [See Table and Map below.]

8. [See Table and Map below.]

9. [See Table and Map below.]

10. [See Table and Map below.]
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purpose. . . . I want to frankly tell all my friends here that if these incidents continue to occur the Chinese government will not change its policies and principles for the work in Tibet or its attitude toward combating the Dalai clique.11

Chinese officials and media have attempted to discredit some of the self-immolators—and by extension, the basis for their suicides—by describing them or their deaths in pejorative terms including terrorist,12 criminal,13 and copy-cat.14 A November 2011 Xinhua article described self-immolations as “brutal and terrorist acts in disguise,”15 and a March 2012 Xinhua report asserted that by “instigating” Tibetans to commit self-immolation, “the Dalai Lama clique” showed willingness to “use terrorism to reach their objectives.”16 The same March report alleged that “a number of the self-immolators were “secularized monks with criminal records.” In June 2012, for example, Xinhua reported on two former monks who attempted self-immolation: one allegedly had stolen a “golden Buddha statute [sic]” from a monastery and the other allegedly had stolen money from a relative.17 The same Xinhua report featured a psychologist stating, “Teenagers aged 18–22 and the stressed are the most prone to copycat suicides as they are impulsive and lack self-control.”

Policies, Legal Measures, Stalled Dialogue May Influence Self-Immolators’ Decisions

International media and advocacy groups continued to report that as self-immolators burned they shouted anti-government slogans and called for Tibetan freedom (or independence) and the Dalai Lama’s return.18 The consistency of the reports, if they are accurate, indicates that Tibetan self-immolators rejected the outlook for the Tibetan culture under Party policy and government legal measures. Based on Commission analysis, several factors and trends that developed or worsened following Tibetan political protests that began in March 2008 may have contributed to the environment that influences Tibetan decisions to self-immolate. Examples of such factors and trends include:

- **Government failure to implement the PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law** (REAL) in a manner that provides local ethnic autonomous governments the “right to administer their internal affairs”—as guaranteed in the REAL’s Preamble;19

- **Erosion or elimination of future potential for ethnic autonomy** as the Party and government promote demographic transformation [see Box on Zhu Weiqun below];20
• Deteriorating outlook for the Tibetan culture, language, and environment as the government continues to prioritize development initiatives that accelerate infrastructure construction and resource exploitation;\(^{21}\)

• Steepening decline since 2007 in the status of religious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists resulting from national-, provincial-, and prefectural-level government regulation of the religion;\(^{22}\)

• Ongoing security crackdowns and enforced “education” campaigns that pressure Tibetans to accept policies and regulations that Tibetans resent, but officials say “uphold [the] normal order of Tibetan Buddhism,” safeguard “social stability,” and foster a “harmonious society;”\(^{23}\) and

• Lack of hope that Party officials will resume dialogue with the Dalai Lama’s envoys and engage in substantive discussions.\(^{24}\)

Zhu Weiqun, in his capacity as UFWD Executive Deputy Head (or Deputy Head prior to 2006\(^{25}\)), served as a principal interlocutor in the dialogue between Party officials and the Dalai Lama’s representatives starting in the 2003 second round\(^{26}\) through the ninth and most recent round in January 2010.\(^{27}\) The period of time since the ninth round—more than two-and-one-half years—is the longest without a formal meeting since dialogue resumed in 2002.\(^{28}\) On June 1, 2012, the Dalai Lama’s envoys, Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen, reportedly resigned their positions as Special Envoy and Envoy respectively and noted “the deteriorating situation inside Tibet since 2008 leading to the increasing cases of self-immolations by Tibetans.”\(^{29}\)

Zhu Wei Quinn: Retirement of A Tibet Policy Hardliner, Not Necessarily of the Hard Line

According to a Hong Kong newspaper, Zhu Wei Quinn is retiring—\(^{30}\) an expected development based on his age (he turns 65 in 2012),\(^{31}\) his membership in the 16th and 17th Communist Party Central Committees (2002-2012),\(^{32}\) and the approach of the 18th Party Congress that will select a new Central Committee.\(^{33}\) Zhu was a Central Committee member during all of the rounds of dialogue in which he participated from 2003–2010.

Zhu’s prominence as an exponent of harsh Party policies toward Tibetan political,\(^{34}\) religious,\(^{35}\) and ethnic\(^{36}\) aspirations has been more apparent after the 2008 Tibetan protests, when
the Party leadership strengthened its capacity throughout Tibetan autonomous areas to coordinate and implement policy. For example, when China Directory 2009 (published November 2008) included for the first time a list of members of the Central Committee’s Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs (CCGTA), it did not list Zhu Weiqun as a member. China Directory 2010 (published November 2009), however, recorded for the first time a CCGTA General Office and listed Zhu Weiqun as Director. China Directory 2010 also showed that the number of CCGTA members ranked as a deputy head increased from one to three.

The Dalai Lama’s envoys arrived in China in January 2010 for the ninth and most recent round of dialogue—with Zhu as their main interlocutor—less than a week after the Party’s Fifth Tibet Work Forum (Fifth Forum). With the entire Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in attendance, the Fifth Forum for the first time expanded the Party’s Tibetan policy purview beyond the administrative boundaries of the TAR to include the Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties located in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces, and applied the highest imprimatur of political power to achieving sweeping policy objectives throughout the Tibetan areas of China by 2020.

Zhu’s statements since the Fifth Forum on issues such as the China-Dalai Lama dialogue, Tibetan Buddhist monastic affairs, and ethnic minority rights—likely made with some level of acceptance from CCGTA leaders and members—underscore Party resolve to transform core elements of Tibetan culture to conform with Party objectives.

In a February 13, 2012, Study Times article, Zhu advocated for ethnic “amalgamation” and advised that development initiatives should promote and make “irreversible” the trend toward “mixed habitation” of ethnic groups. Zhu described himself as “personally predisposed” to removing ethnic information from household registration (hukou) cards, “desegregating” education (i.e., assimilating ethnic minority students into Chinese-language educational programs and ending minority-language education programs), and not establishing any additional areas with ethnic autonomous status.

On February 23, the Chinese Association of Ethnic Theory Research convened a symposium under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) to discuss “current hot-button ethnic theoretical and practical issues.” The group posted on the CASS Web site a summary of symposium views. Referring to a “leading cadre”—likely directed at Zhu Weiqun—the summary warned that turning away from “the basic [ethnic autonomy] system and policy” could “easily lead to ideological chaos and thereby cause a negative impact on
The article warned of increasing risks posed by the declining status of ethnic minority affairs:

The blind spot in knowledge, the erroneous zone in education, and the deficiency in mutual trust, which can be seen everywhere across the ethnic spectrum in today’s China, are turning gradually into a social governance tragedy.

Based on Commission analysis, the 46 Tibetan self-immolation protests (37 reported fatal) known or believed to focus on political and religious issues as of August 10, 2012, demonstrate an unprecedented level of intensity in Tibetan rejection of Chinese governance. [See Table and Map below.]

TIBETAN SELF-IMMOLATION (FEBRUARY 27, 2009–AUGUST 10, 2012)
(Instances Reported or Believed To Involve Political or Religious Protest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date of Self-Immo.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex / Approx. Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Self-Immol L. Location Prov. / Pref. / County</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Tashi (Tabe)</td>
<td>M /24</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba T&amp;QAP/ Aba county</td>
<td>Detained in hospital⁵⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Phuntsog</td>
<td>M/20</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Deceased⁵⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>Tsewang Norbu</td>
<td>M/29</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Nyitso Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Ganzi TAP/ Daofu county</td>
<td>Deceased⁵⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>Lobsang Kalsang,</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Gepheling</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Both hospitalized⁵⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lobsang Konchog both</td>
<td>M/18</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>Kalsang Wangchug</td>
<td>M/17</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Hospitalized⁶⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Choephel, M/19</td>
<td>Khayang, M/18</td>
<td>Former monks</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Both deceased⁶¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>Norbu Dradal</td>
<td>M/19</td>
<td>Former monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Deceased⁶²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Tenzin Wangmo</td>
<td>F/20</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>Dechen Choekorling Nunnery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Deceased⁶³</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>Dawa Tsering</td>
<td>M/30s</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Gepheling Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Ganzi TAP/ Ganzi county</td>
<td>Hospitalized then released⁶⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Palden Choetso (Choeseang)</td>
<td>F/35</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>Gaden Choeling Nunnery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Ganzi/ Daofo</td>
<td>Deceased⁶⁵</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Tenzin Phuntsog</td>
<td>M/46</td>
<td>Householder</td>
<td>(former monk, Karma Monastery)</td>
<td>TAR/ Changdu prefecture/ Changdu county</td>
<td>Deceased⁶⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>Tsultrim, Tennyi</td>
<td>both M/about 20</td>
<td>Current or former monks</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba/ Aba</td>
<td>Deceased⁶⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Sonam Wanggyal (Zoepa)</td>
<td>M/42</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Dungkyob Monastery</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Guoluo TAP/ Dari county</td>
<td>Deceased⁶⁸</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Date of Self-Immo.</td>
<td>Name / Sex / Approx. Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>Self-Immolation Location Prov. / Pref. / County</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Lobsang Jamyang M/21</td>
<td>Former monk</td>
<td>Andu Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 09</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>Rigzin Dorje M/19</td>
<td>Former monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 06</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>Sonam Rabzang M/mid-30s</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Lab Monastery</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Yushu TAP/ Chenduo county</td>
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<tr>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Tenzin Choedron F/18</td>
<td>Nun</td>
<td>Dechen Choekorling</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 02</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Lobsang Gyatso M/19</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Hospitalized 03</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>February 17</td>
<td>Damchoe Zangpo M/38</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Bongtag Monastery</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Haixi M&amp;TAP/ Wulan county</td>
<td>Deceased 04</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>Nyadrol (Nyangrol) M/18</td>
<td>Layman</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Rangtang county</td>
<td>Deceased 05</td>
<td></td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Tsering Kyi F/19</td>
<td>Middle-school student</td>
<td>Gansu/ Gannan TAP/ Maqu county</td>
<td>Deceased 06</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>Rinchen F/32</td>
<td>Widowed mother</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 07</td>
<td></td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Dorje M/18</td>
<td>Layman</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 08</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Gepe M/18</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 09</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>Jamyang Palden M/34</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Rongbo Monastery</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Huangnan TAP/ Tongren county</td>
<td>Hospitalized, removed by monks 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Lobsang Tsultrim M/20</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 01</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Sonam Dargyal M/44</td>
<td>Farmer (father)</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Huangnan / Tongren</td>
<td>Deceased 02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Sherab (Lobsang Sherab) M/20</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32, 33</td>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>Tenpa Dargyal, M/22</td>
<td>Monks</td>
<td>Tsodun Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Ma’erkang county</td>
<td>Both deceased 44</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>34, 35</td>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Choephag Kyab, Sonam both M/early 20s</td>
<td>Laymen</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Rangtang</td>
<td>Both deceased 45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36, 37</td>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>Dorje Tseten, M/19 Dargye, M/25</td>
<td>Both, restaurant staff</td>
<td>TAR / Lhasa municipality/ Lhasa city</td>
<td>Deceased 46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Rikyo (Rechog) F/33</td>
<td>Wife and mother</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Rangtang</td>
<td>Deceased 47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>Tamdrin Thar M/50s</td>
<td>Settled nomad, father</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Huangnan/ Jianzha</td>
<td>Deceased 48</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40, 41</td>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Tenzin Khedrub, M/24 Ngawang Norphel, M/22</td>
<td>Former monk, Zilkar Monastery Carpenter (hailed from Rikaze prefecture, TAR)</td>
<td>Qinghai/ Yushu/ Chenduo</td>
<td>Both deceased 49</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>Tsewang Dorje M/22</td>
<td>Settled nomad</td>
<td>TAR / Lhasa municipality/ Lhasa city</td>
<td>Deceased 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>July 17</td>
<td>Lobsang Lozin M/18</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Tsodun Monastery</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Ma’erkang county</td>
<td>Deceased 51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>August 6</td>
<td>Lobsang Tsultrim M/21</td>
<td>Monk</td>
<td>Kirti</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>August 7</td>
<td>Drolkar Tso F/26</td>
<td>Wife and mother</td>
<td>Gansu/ Gannan/ Hezuo</td>
<td>Deceased 53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>Choepa M/24</td>
<td>Nomad</td>
<td>Sichuan/ Aba / Aba</td>
<td>Deceased 54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tibetan Autonomous Areas of China

Tibetan Self-Immolations
Reported or Believed To Focus on
Political and Religious Issues

August 10, 2012
Total: 46
Sichuan: 32
Qinghai: 8
Gansu: 2
TAR: 4

See Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008-2009 for a version of this map without self-immolation labeling.
ENDNOTES


2 International Campaign for Tibet, “Where is China Heading on Tibet?—Remarks by Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari to the Council on Foreign Relations Washington, DC, April 23, 2012,” 23 April 12. In prepared testimony, Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of the His Holiness the Dalai Lama, stated, “I am not here today to give you a report on my progress because there is nothing new to say on that front.” Referring to the “volatile situation in Tibet,” he said, “The Chinese government’s failure to grasp the reality of this situation and to act responsibly is of serious concern to many governments.”

3 See, e.g., ‘Monks’ Radical Moves in Tibet Opposed,” Xinhua, 15 March 12, reprinted in China Daily (remark attributed to Premier Wen Jiabao: “China opposes radical moves taken by a number of Tibetan monks such as self-immolation, as these actions disturb and undermine social harmony.”); “Zhu Weiqun Talks About Dalai and Other Issues With EU Officials, Scholars, and Reporters” [Zhu weiqun yu oumeng guanyuan, xuezhe, jizhe tan dalai deng wenti], China Tibet Online, 29 December 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 12 January 12) (Zhu Weiqun: “The Dalai Lama wants to turn Tibetan Buddhism into a religion of suiciders and self-immolators . . . .”); “Investigations Show Political Motive Behind Self-immolations in Tibetan-Populated Regions,” Xinhua, 7 March 12 (Wu Zegang, head of the Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture government: “[The Dalai Clique] . . . are leading Tibetan Buddhism onto the track of extremism . . . and are not hesitant to use terrorism to reach their objectives).

4 “Tibetan Woman Sets Herself Alight,” Radio Free Asia, 2 July 12 (Dekyi Choezom “set herself ablaze last week in western China’s Qinghai province in protest against what she said were unjust Chinese land confiscation policies”); Free Tibet, “Tibetan Mother Self-Immolates During Protest Over Land Rights; Family Members Detained and Beaten,” 3 July 12 (Dekyi Choezom “set fire to herself alongside a protest being held by approximately 70 local families against Chinese state land confiscations”).


7 See, e.g., “Religious Activities Remain Normal in Sichuan,” Xinhua, 12 October 11 (reprinted in China Daily) (Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Weimin said “‘the Dalai Clique’ . . . openly embellished and played [self-immolation] up, and spread rumors to incite [more self-immolations]”); “A Self-Immolation Incident Occurs in Sichuan’s Daofu County” [Sichuan daofu xian fasheng yiqi zifen shijian], Xinhua, 3 November 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 5 November 11) (according to “a county official,” “initial investigations . . . showed that the event was another radical event that took place with the Dalai clique’s orchestration, instigation and support”); “Zhu Weiqun Talks About Dalai and Other Issues with EU Officials, Scholars, and Reporters” [Zhu weiqun yu oumeng guanyuan, xuezhe, jizhe tan dalai deng wenti], China Tibet Online, 29 December 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 12 January 12) (Zhu Weiqun: “The Dalai Lama wants to turn Tibetan Buddhism into a religion of suiciders and self-immolators in order to serve his own political purpose; . . . .”).

8 “FM Warns US on Exploiting Tibet Issues,” China Daily, 12 January 12 (the article attributed to the MFA spokesperson the observation that self-immolations “were organized, premeditated and instigated by overseas groups and people”).


10 Ibid., 27.

11 “Zhu Weiqun Talks About Dalai and Other Issues With EU Officials, Scholars, and Reporters” [Zhu weiqun yu oumeng guanyuan, xuezhe, jizhe tan dalai deng wenti], China Tibet Online, 29 December 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 12 January 12).

12 See, e.g., “Investigations Show Political Motive Behind Self-immolations in Tibetan-Populated Regions,” Xinhua, 7 March 12 (Wu Zegang, head of the Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture government: “[The Dalai Clique instigates] people to emulate this behavior and are not hesitant to use terrorism to reach their objectives”); “A Self-Immolation Incident Occurs in Sichuan’s Dawu County” [Sichuan daofu xian fasheng yiqi zifen shijian], Xinhua, 3 November 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 5 November 11) (“promote separatist activities through employing brutal and terrorist acts in disguise”); “China: Dalai Lama Stance on Suicides is Terrorism,” Associated Press, 19 October 11, reprinted in Yahoo!.

13 See, e.g., “Investigations Show Political Motive Behind Self-Immolations in Tibetan-Populated Regions,” Xinhua, 7 March 12 (the head of the Aba T&QAP government described some self-immolators as “secularized monks with criminal records”); “Self-Immolation Truth,” Xinhua, 25 June 12, reprinted in China Internet Information Center (the article described two “secularized monks” who self-immolated on September 6, 2011, as thieves).

14 See, e.g., “Self-Immolation Truth,” Xinhua, 25 June 12, reprinted in China Internet Information Center (the article cited a psychologist stating that persons aged 18–22 are “most prone to copycat suicides”); “China Paints Self-Immolators as Distressed Criminals, Terrorists,” Voice of America, 7 March 12 (the head of the Aba T&QAP reportedly accused “the Dalai clique” and others of “inciting more clerics and lay people to engage in copycat incidents.”).
“A Self-Immolation Incident Occurs in Sichuan’s Dawu County” [Sichuan daofu xian fasheng yiqi zifen shijian], Xinhua, 3 November 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 5 November 11).

“Investigations Show Political Motive Behind Self-Immolations in Tibetan-Populated Regions,” Xinhua, 7 March 12.


19 PRC Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL) [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo minzu quyu zizhifa], issued 31 May 84, effective 1 October 84, amended and effective 28 February 01 (translated by CECC). For information on impediments to ethnic autonomy created under the PRC Constitution and laws, see CECC, Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008–2009, 22 October 09, 25–28; CECC, 2007 Annual Report, 10 October 07, 189–91.

20 Zhu Weiqun, “Some Thoughts on Existing Problems in the Field of Nationalities” [Dui dangqian minzu lingyu wenti de jidian sikao], Study Times, 13 February 12 (translated in Open Source Center, 20 February 12). In the article, Zhu promotes “ethnic mingling and amalgamation” and advised, “[o]ur policy orientation should be to go along with this trend in depth and make it irreversible.”


“United Front Work Department Executive Deputy Head Reveals Inside Story of Communist Party-Dalai Talks” [Tongzhanbu changwu fubuzhang jiemi zhonggong yu dalai tanpan neimu], Phoenix Net, 23 December 08 (translated in Open Source Center, 25 December 08) (“Since 2003, Zhu Weiqun has participated in all the subsequent engage-and-talk interactions with the Dalai side.”).

“State Council Information Office Holds News Conference on Contacts and Discussions Between Concerned Central Departments and the Dalai Lama’s Private Representatives” [Guowuyuan xinwen ban jiu zhongyang youguan bumen yu dalai lama siren daibiao jiechu shangxiang hang xinwen fabuhui], Xinhua, 2 February 10 (translated in Open Source Center, reprinted in People’s Daily; “Press Conference on Central Gov’t’s Contacts With Dalai Lama (Text),” China Daily, 11 February 10.

Previously, the longest gap was between the November 2008 and January 2010 rounds of dialogue. “Press Conference on Central Gov’t’s Contacts With Dalai Lama (Text),” China Daily, 11 February 10. Zhu stated, “[We] first pointed out that more than one year has passed since the previous contact in November of 2008. This was the longest interval after we resumed contact and talks in 2002.”

“Kalon Tripa Accepts Resignations of the Dalai Lama’s Envoys,” Phayul, 3 June 12. The article attributes the quoted remarks to the envoys’ resignation letter.


Ibid. Zhu was a member of the 16th Central Committee (2002–2007) and the 17th Central Committee (2007–2012).

“Welcoming the 18th CPC National Congress With Excellent Results—Celebration of the 91st Anniversary of the CPC” [Yi youyi chengji yingjie dang de shiba da—qingzhu zhongguo gongchandang chengli 91 zhounian], Seeking Truth, 4 July 2012 (translated in Open Source Center, 4 July 12; reprinted in Xinhua, 3 July 12). According to the article, “The 18th CPC National Congress will be held in the second half of 2012.”


For information on Zhu’s approach to Tibetan Buddhists’ religious aspirations, see, e.g., CECC, 2011 Annual Report, 10 October 11, 208; Chang Chuan, “Tibet Buddhist Theological Institute Is Completed and Open—Pagbalha Geleg Namgyal, Qin Yizhi Attend Ceremony, Zhu Weiqun, Hao Peng Speak, Luosang Jiangcun Unveils Signboard, Qizhala Presides Over Ceremony, 11th Panchen Erdini Oqiqyi Gyibo Sends Congratulatory Message” [Xizang foxue yuan luocheng kai yuan pabala gelie langjie qin yizhi chuxi dianli zhu weiqun hao peng jianghua luosang jiangcun jiepai—qizhala zhuchi shiyi shi banchan e’erdeni—queji jiebu zhi hexin], Tibet Daily, 21 October 11,
reprinted in China Tibet Information Center (translated in [Open Source Center](http://www.opencore.org), 26 October 11), also reprinted in [China Tibet News](http://www.chinatibetnews.com).

36 For information on Zhu’s approach to ethnic issues, including with respect to Tibetans, see, e.g., Zhu Weiqun, “Some Thoughts on Existing Problems in the Field of Nationalities” [Dui dangqian minzu lingyu wenti de jidian sikao], [Study Times](http://www.studytimes.com.cn), 13 February 12 (translated in [Open Source Center](http://www.opencore.org), 20 February 12).

37 In China there are 1 provincial-level area of Tibetan autonomy, 10 prefectural-level areas of autonomy, and 2 county-level areas of Tibetan autonomy. The area of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) (approximately 1.2 million square kilometers), the 10 TAPs (approximately 1.02 million square kilometers), and 2 Tibetan autonomous counties (TACs) (approximately 0.019 million square kilometers) total approximately 2.24 million square kilometers. The 10 TAPs make up approximately 46 percent of the TAR/TAP/TAC total area. According to China’s 2000 census data, the Tibetan population of the TAR (approximately 2.43 million persons), the 10 TAPs (approximately 2.47 million persons), and the 2 TACs (approximately 0.11 million persons) totaled approximately 5.01 million Tibetans. The Tibetan population of the 10 TAPs made up approximately 49 percent of the TAR/TAP/TAC total Tibetan population as of 2000. Tabulation on Nationalities of 2000 Population Census of China, Department of Population, Social, Science and Technology Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics, and Department of Economic Development, State Ethnic Affairs Commission (Beijing: Ethnic Publishing House, September 2003), Tables 10-1, 10-4; Steven Marshall and Susette Cooke, Tibet Outside the TAR: Control, Exploitation and Assimilation: Development With Chinese Characteristics (Washington D.C.: self-published CD-ROM, 1997), Table 7, citing multiple Chinese sources. Table 7 provides the following information. Tibet Autonomous Region (1.2 million square kilometers, or 463,320 square miles). Qinghai province: Haibei (Tsojang) TAP (52,000 square kilometers, or 20,077 square miles), Hainan (Tsolho) TAP (41,634 square kilometers, or 16,075 square miles), Haixi (Tsonub) Mongol and Tibetan AP (325,787 square kilometers, or 125,786 square miles), Huangnan (Malho) TAP (17,901 square kilometers, or 6,912 square miles), Guoluo (Golog) TAP (78,444 square kilometers, or 30,287 square miles), and Yushu (Yushul) TAP (197,791 square kilometers, or 76,367 square miles). Gansu province: Gannan (Kanlho) TAP (45,000 square kilometers, or 17,374 square miles) and Tianzhu (Pari) TAC (7,150 square kilometers, or 2,761 square miles). Sichuan province: Ganzi (Kardze) TAP (153,870 square kilometers, or 59,409 square miles); Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang AP (86,639 square kilometers, or 33,451 square miles); and Muli (Mili) TAC (11,413 square kilometers, or 4,407 square miles). Yunnan province: Diqing (Dechen) TAP (23,870 square kilometers, or 9,216 square miles). The Table provides areas in square kilometers; conversion to square miles uses the formula provided on the Web site of the U.S. Geological Survey: one square kilometer = 0.3861 square mile. For more information on the Tibetan autonomous areas of China, see CECC, Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008–2009, 22 October 09, 22–24. For additional information on the Tibetan autonomous prefectures, see CECC, Special Topic Paper: Tibet 2008–2009, 22 October 09, 22–24.

38 For information on the Party’s principal policy meeting after the 2008 protests, see, e.g., “Communist Party Leadership Outlines 2010–2020 ‘Tibet Work’ Priorities at ‘Fifth Forum,’” [China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update](http://www.chinahumanrights.org), No. 3, 16 March 10; “The CPC Central Committee and the State Council Hold the Fifth Tibet Work Forum”
Rising Frequency, Wider Spread, Greater Diversity

39 China Directory 2009, ed. Radiopress (Kawasaki: RP Printing, November 2008), 26. China Directory 2009 listed a total of nine members of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs: Head Jia Qinglin; Deputy Head Ma Kai; Members Meng Jianzhu, Du Qinglin, Zhang Ping, Xie Xuren, Zhang Qingli, Ye Xiaowen, and General Wu Shuangzhan. Jia Qinglin was a member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee’s Political Bureau; Ye Xiaowen was an alternate member of the Central Committee; all the others were members of the Central Committee.


41 Ibid. China Directory 2010 listed a total of nine members of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs: Head Jia Qinglin; Deputy Heads Ma Kai, Meng Jianzhu, and Du Qinglin; members Zhang Ping, Xie Xuren, Zhang Qingli, and General Wu Shuangzhan; General Office Director Zhu Weiqun. Jia Qinglin was a member of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee’s Political Bureau; all the others were members of the Central Committee. Ye Xiaowen was not listed as a member of the group.


45 See, e.g., “Zhu Weiqun Talks About Dalai and Other Issues With EU Officials, Scholars, and Reporters” [Zhu weiqun yu oumeng guanyuan, xuezhe, jizhe tan dalai deng wenti], China Tibet Online, 29 December 11 (translated in Open Source Center, 12 January 12); “Press Conference on Central Gov’t’s Contacts With Dalai Lama (Text),” China Daily, 11 February 10.

46 Chang Chuan, “Tibet Buddhist Theological Institute Is Completed and Open—Pagbalha Geleg Namgyai, Qin Yizhi Attend Ceremony, Zhu Weiqun, Hao Peng Speak, Luosang Jiangcun Unveils Signboard, Qizhala Presides Over Ceremony, 11th Panchen Erdini Qoigyi Gyibo Sends Congratulatory Message” [Xizang foxue yuan luocheng kai yuan pabala gelie langjie qin yizhi chuxi diannl zhu weiqun hao peng jiangan luosang jiangcun jiepai—qizhala zhucshi shiyi shi banchan e’erdeni—queji jiebu zhi hexin], Tibet Daily, 21 October 11, reprinted in China Tibet Information Center (translated in Open Source Center, 26 October 11), also reprinted in China Tibet News.

47 Zhu Weiqun, “Some Thoughts on Existing Problems in the Field of Nationalities” [Dui dangqian minzu lingyu wenti de jidian sikao], Study Times, 13 February 12 (translated in Open Source Center, 20 February 12).

48 For information on additional senior Party and government positions held by members of the Central Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs (CCGTA) that establish official areas of authority for those members, see China Directory 2012, ed. Radiopress (Tokyo: JPM Corporation, December 2011), 27. China Directory 2012 lists a total of 11 members of the CCGTA: Head Jia Qinglin (Standing Committee of Political Bureau); Deputy Heads (in
the order listed) Ma Kai (Central Committee), Meng Jianzhu (Central Committee), and Du Qinglin (Central Committee); members (in the order listed) Zhang Qingli (Central Committee), Zhang Ping (Central Committee), Yang Huanning (Central Committee alternate member), Xie Xuren (Central Committee), Lt. Gen. Wang Jianping (Central Committee alternate member), Wang Zuo’an (Central Committee alternate member), and Zhu Weiqun (Central Committee). According to China Directory 2012, some of the additional positions held by members of the CCGTA and the referenced page number are: Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (153); Ma Kai, State Councilor (45); Meng Jianzhu, Deputy Secretary of the Central Committee Political and Legal Affairs Commission (19), State Councilor (45), and Minister of Public Security (76); Du Qinglin, Head of the United Front Work Department (17); Zhang Qingli, Secretary of Hebei Province Communist Party Committee (291); Zhang Ping, Minister of the National Development and Reform Commission (69); Yang Huanning, Executive Vice Minister of Public Security (76); Xie Xuren, Minister of Finance (82); Lt. Gen. Wang Jianping, Member of the Central Committee Political and Legal Affairs Commission (19) and Commander of the Headquarters of the People’s Armed Police (203); Wang Zuo’an, Director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (115); and Zhu Weiqun, Executive Deputy Head of the United Front Work Department (17).

49 Zhu Weiqun, “Some Thoughts on Existing Problems in the Field of Nationalities” [Dui dangqian minzu lingyu wenti de jidian sikao], Study Times, 13 February 12 (translated in Open Source Center, 20 February 12). In the article, Zhu promotes “ethnic mingling and amalgamation” and advised, “[O]ur policy orientation should be to go along with this trend in depth and make it irreversible.”

50 Ibid. In the article, Zhu described himself as “personally predisposed to removing the ‘ethnicity’ box from the residence identification card.”

51 Ibid. Zhu stated in the article that he “[promotes] desegregated education for students of different nationalities,” and observed, “Now some of our educational and administrative measures have, by accident or design, weakened the education on the sense of nationhood and identification with the Chinese Nation.”

52 Ibid. Zhu stated that he favors “not adding any more localities with regional autonomy for ethnic minorities” and “not implementing [the status of a] ‘national autonomous city.’”


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

“Monk in Tibet Sets Himself on Fire; Shot by Police During Protest,” 27 February 09.


Tibet, “First Self-Immolation in Tibet Autonomous Region; Former Monk Sets Himself on Fire,” 1 December 12;

67 See, e.g., “Self-Immolation Truth,” Xinhua, 25 June 12, reprinted in China Internet Information Center (the article provided the names as “Tsering” and “Darle” and represented Darle as a survivor); “Two Tibetans Set Themselves Ablaze,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 12; “Tsurtrim, Tenyi, and Norbu Damdul All Succumb to Injuries,” Phayul, 10 January 12.


See, e.g., Lian Zhenxiang and Huang Wenxin, “The Incident of the Student’s Self-Immolation in Maqu, Gansu, Has Been Made Clear by Investigation” [Gansu sheng maqu xuesheng zifen shijian yi chaming], Xinhua, 6 March 12 (translated in Open Source Center, 13 March 12); “Tibetan School Girl Dies in Self-Immolation Protest,” Voice of America, 5 March 12; International Campaign for Tibet, “Tibetan Student and Widowed Mother Self-Immolate in Tibet,” 5 March 12.


See, e.g., “Self-Immolation Truth,” Xinhua, 28 June 12, reprinted in China Internet Information Center (the article provides the decedents’ names as “Chimed Palden” and “Nganlam”); International Campaign for Tibet, “Self-Immolation of Two Tibetan Monks From Tsodun Monastery, Ngaba,” 30 March 12; “Monk Dies A Week After Burning,” Radio Free Asia, 7 April 12; “Self-Immolation Death Toll Rises to 25 in Tibet, Tenpa Darjey Passes Away,” Phayul, 8 April 12.

86 See, e.g., Xu Tianran, “Tibet Officials Condemn Latest Self-Immolation,” Global Times, 29 May 12 (apparently misreports Dorje Tseten’s name as Tobgye Tseten; origin Xiahe county [Gannan T&AP, Gansu province]; deceased); Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “China Confirms Twin Self-Immolation in Lhasa,” 28 May 12 (provides name Dorje Tseten); International Campaign for Tibet, “Detentions, Fear After Lhasa Self-Immolations; Prayer Gathering in Dzamthang,” 1 June 12 (age 19, left Gansu home after high school and moved to Lhasa).


88 See, e.g., “Self-Immolation Truth,” Xinhua, 25 June 12, reprinted in China Internet Information Center (the article provided the name as “Rechok”); Free Tibet, “Latest Self-Immolation in Tibet,” 30 May 12 (provides name as “Rechog”); “Thousands Honor Burned Mother,” Radio Free Asia, 31 May 12 (provides name “Rikyo,” age 33, mother of three); International Campaign for Tibet, “Detentions, Fear After Lhasa Self-Immolations; Prayer Gathering in Dzamthang,” 1 June 12 (from nomadic family);


90 See, e.g., Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Two Tibetan Youngsters Self-Immolate in Jyekundo, One Dies,” 20 June 12 (Tenzin Khedrub disrobed in 2006; Ngawang Norphel hailed from Aba county, Aba T&AP); “Two Young Tibetans Self-Immolate,” Radio Free Asia, 20 June 12; “Two Tibetans Set Themselves on Fire in West China,” Associated Press, 21 June 12, reprinted in Huffington Post (Xinhua reportedly described Tenzin Khedrub as a local herder and Ngawang Norphel as a migrant from Aba prefecture); “Self-Immolator Hospitalized,” Radio Free Asia, 21 June 12 (Ngawang Norphel reportedly was hospitalized in Xining); Tendar Tsering, “Ngawang Norphel Passes Away in a Chinese Hospital,” Phayul, 30 July 12 (Ngawang Norphel reportedly died on Monday [July 30, 2012] in a hospital; he hailed from Nielamu (Nyalam) county, Rikaze (Shigatse) prefecture, TAR [not from Aba county as initially reported]).


92 See, e.g., International Campaign for Tibet, “Teenage Monk and Model Student Self-Immolates in Tibet,” 17 July 12; Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, “Teenage Tibetan Monk Burns Self to Death in Ngaba,” 17


94 See, e.g., “Tibetan Woman Dies of Self-Immolation,” Xinhua, 8 August 12, reprinted in *China Internet Information Center* (Xinhua cited a written statement released by the Gannan TAP Communist Party Committee and provided Drolkar Tso’s name as “Drung Gertso”; “Mother of Two Burns Herself and Dies in Eastern Tibet,” *Voice of America*, 8 August 12; “Woman strips, self-immolates,” *Radio Free Asia*, 7 August 12 (Drolkar Tso reportedly died as monks took her from Tso Monastery to her home).

95 See, e.g., *Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy*, “Young Tibetan Nomad Sets Himself on Fire, 10 August 12; “Third Burning Death in a Week,” *Radio Free Asia*, 11 August 12 (RFA sources: “Choepa died as he was [taken] away by Chinese security forces”); “Self-Immolator Choepa Passes Away,” *Phayul*, 11 August 12 (Tibetan monk living in India: “Martyr Choepa passed away at around 3 pm (local time) the very day of his protest”).