



Published on *International Campaign for Tibet* (<http://www.savetibet.org>)

Amidst heavy security presence, thousands of Tibetans attend funeral of monk who set fire to himself in Ngaba (UPDATED March 20)

International Campaign for Tibet
18 March, 2011

The Tibetan monk who set himself on fire in Ngaba on Wednesday was cremated today in an emotional ceremony attended by thousands of monks, according to sources in exile. <p> New information has reached ICT of detentions following protests in the aftermath of the self-immolation, including a Tibetan mother of a nine-month old baby whose husband is already in prison.

***Update:** According to sources in exile in contact with people in Ngaba, Tsering Kyi, the mother of two young children and whose husband is currently serving a three year sentence on political charges, was released on March 18, after being severely beaten and having her hair cut off while in detention. It is not known if other Tibetan protesters detained at the same time have been released.*

According to the same sources, government authorities in the area have prohibited regular religious services at Kirti monastery since March 19, including a prayer service for a recent funeral. The monastery is currently under lock-down. Monks are not allowed to leave the monastery and members of the public are not allowed entry. The monks believe they will be subjected to political re-education, but details remain unknown.

The Tibetan monk who set himself on fire in Ngaba on Wednesday was cremated today in an emotional ceremony attended by thousands of monks, according to sources in exile.

New information has reached ICT of detentions following protests in the aftermath of the self-immolation, including a Tibetan mother of a nine-month old baby whose husband is already in prison.

According to Tibetan sources in exile in contact with the area, 20-year old Phuntsog's body was handed over to his family yesterday evening after he died in the early hours of March 17 following his protest in the main area of Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) county town, Ngaba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province. (See: <http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/chinese-authorities-confirm-death-monk-after-self-immolation-military-crackdown-kirti> [1]).

Monks gathered at Kirti monastery at 8 am local time on March 18, according to the same sources, to make offerings and pray for Phuntsog, in accordance with tradition. The same sources said that "thousands" attended, saying: "Monks laid khatags (traditional white blessing scarves) on Phuntsog's body, and so many were weeping. They took his body to a place around three kilometers from the monastery, followed by laypeople as well, to cremate Phuntsog. It was a vast crowd, with so many people following the Kirti monks."

A Tibetan from Amdo who is now in exile and who spoke to some sources said: “They really wanted to show their respect for this young monk’s sacrifice for his country and freedom.”

According to the same source, officials at Kirti monastery successfully sought permission for the ceremony and cremation. The Tibetan source in exile said: “I think the authorities may have been quite shocked by the numbers of people but the ceremonies went peacefully. People noticed many strangers in plain clothes amidst the crowds who were certainly police, and there were also police who were more visible.”

Phuntsog’s self-immolation was followed by major peaceful protests by monks and laypeople in Ngaba TAP, Sichuan province (the Tibetan area of Amdo), detailed in ICT’s report yesterday. (<http://savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/chinese-authorities-confirm-death-monk-after-self-immolation-military-crackdown-kirti> [1]). The number of Tibetans who remain in detention is not known, although seven monks were released yesterday following discussions between monastic officials and the local authorities. According to the same source, a Tibetan woman called Tsering Kyi who has a nine-month old baby, and whose husband was imprisoned last year, remains in detention.

Tsering Kyi, who is from the rural area of Trinken Dewa in Ngaba, was detained following the protests on March 16. Her husband, Kesang Jinpa, editor and contributor to the Amdo literary journal called 'I of the modern age,' is serving three years in prison after he was arrested on charges of separatist activity on July 19, 2010. Kesang Jinpa’s detention was just over a month after his daughter’s birth. The couple also has a three-year old daughter.

Chinese media issued a second official statement yesterday about Phuntsog’s death, suggesting that monks had delayed hospital treatment and giving misleading details about his identity. The article offers no clear refutation that Phuntsog was beaten by police. Instead, it denies “foreign media reports” that Phuntsog had been “beat[en] [to] death by police,” citing a hospital administrator who claimed that “no other wounds were found on [Phuntsog] during emergency treatment or post-mortem examination of [the] body surface.” In addition, an anonymous eye-witness was only quoted as having seen “a monk on fire running from the Kirti Monastery. The flames were raging and he collapsed on the street near the store... Then police arrived and put out the fire.” (Xinhua, 'Doctor says Tibetan monk died from serious burns,' March 18, 2011)

The article also makes no mention of the demonstrations that immediately followed Phuntsog’s protest.

Phuntsog’s self-immolation was followed by major peaceful protests by monks and laypeople in Ngaba.

International Campaign for Tibet
1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC | 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org
© 2011 International Campaign for Tibet

Source URL: <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/amidst-heavy-security-presence-thousands-tibetans-attend-funeral-monk-who-set-fire-himself>

Links:

[1] <http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/chinese-authorities-confirm-death-monk-after-self-immolation-military-crackdown-kirti>