

Tsewang Dhondup from Hor Chokri

My Tashi Deleg to all the guests, the organizers and all the Tibet supporters here.

The reason I am here before you today is to tell you about the Chinese communist government's oppression of the Tibetan people through my own experience – what I witnessed and what I experienced.

March 24, 2008 around 4:30 pm, led by 120 nuns of Ngagong nunnery of Chokri area, about 300 monks and lay people gathered in protest against Chinese government. At the time, armed police surrounded them, firing warning shots into the air, and blocked them. The nuns were allowed to continue and they started taking photos and video from in front and behind them. After that, at about 5pm, I joined the large number of monks, and nuns from Chokri monastery and Ngagong nunnery, and lay people peacefully gathered in protest. We shouted slogans, "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama," "Let His Holiness return to Tibet immediately," "Tibet is Independent," "Tibet belongs to Tibetans," "Chinese government leave Tibet." While we were shouting these slogans, over 300 Chinese military and police, without mercy, started firing randomly at the people gathered there, and fired various gas bombs, guns, police batons, and iron rods. I saw a young 20 yr old monk Kunga, son of Tashi Gyatsen from Dragla village get hit by a bullet and fall to the ground. I ran and picked him up on my shoulders and as I started moving, a bullet hit me on the lower back and I felt tear through my side and fly out from the front. After a little moment, another bullet hit my left elbow and I lost my grasp of Kunga. Then I asked the people around to help me pick him up, and I fell unconscious. My friend then took me on his motorcycle and secretly took me to a house of a villager. When I regained some consciousness, I heard that the army are coming to that village and I had to escape into the mountains. I fell unconscious again and underwent great difficulties.

For the next months or so, I had to lay down most of the time and I was not able to move around by myself. The pain from my wounds would render me unconscious and I could barely eat. Because of the wanted notes posted everywhere, I couldn't go to a hospital. My wound became infected and started oozing pus and decay. I used a knife to cut out the infected wound and let the pus out but it wasn't getting any better. Since this was too painful, I used a plastic pipe to take out more of the pus but the pain only got worse.

My only thought at that time was the wish to have one chance to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama before my death, and to be able to tell the truth about the suffering of the Tibetan people under the Chinese communist party to all the people who love justice and peace in the world and become a living testimony to this effect. Besides this, the Chinese government had posted posters everywhere offering reward of 50,000 to 100,000 Yuan for any information on me and others who had participated in the peaceful demonstration. Restrictions were placed on Chokri monastery and all the nearby houses, and searches were completed everywhere one by one. Because of these reasons, I wished that I could escape into exile but due to the tremendous pain I was in, I could not even fathom doing this by myself. At this moment, Losang Thupten told me that he would go with me. So I

told him that there is no guarantee whether we will live or die. Lobsang said that even though he doesn't have anybody to take care of his elderly mother, uncle, wife and children, for the cause of Tibet and the wellbeing of the Tibetan people, he would have not even a trace of regret. So Lobsang and I left our homeland by motorcycle on April 20. It was not an easy journey, riding mostly at night to avoid military check points and camps. We also faced many difficulties like the motor cycle breaking down, falling down, and facing shortage of gas etc. I was an invalid, who couldn't even wear clothes or eat without some help and for this, I remain ever grateful to Lobsang Thubten, who has now become one of those on the wanted list of the Chinese government. Like me, Lobsang Thubten cannot go back home now and his children, mother, uncle and wife, left behind have now become like orphan children. Facing much hardship along the way to india including walking over difficult terrains, hunger and thirst, by the blessing of the three jewels and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we arrived at the reception center in Nepal on May 18, 2009.

In short, the Chinese government has imprisoned many Tibetan heros who have not committed any crime, from across the three regions of Tibet. Some have been sentenced for 10 to 20 years. Those who have not been captured are roaming the hills and forests like wild animals, fearfully hiding, not able to sleep and suffering everyday. As my initial hope, these wounds that I carry on my body are a hard testimony of the truth of the Chinese government's oppression of the Tibetans in Tibet for the peace and truth loving people of the world.

Tsewang Dhondup of Chokri, Tehor.

Dated: May 19, 2012