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PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

@Three detained in Panchen Lama controversy

20 June 1995

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According to unofficial sources, a Tibetan abbot, **Chadrel Rimpoche**, his assistant **Jing-lag** and businessman **Gyara Tsering Samdrup** have been detained by police in connection with a controversy over the recognition of the reincarnation of Tibet's second highest lama, the Panchen Lama.

Chadrel Rimpoche, the abbot of Tashilhunpo monastery, which is the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, was arrested with Jing-lag on, or around, 17 May 1995 in Chengdu, Sichuan province. They are reported to have been held incommunicado since then and may have been moved to a detention centre in Beijing. Chadrel Rimpoche was appointed six years ago by Chinese authorities in Beijing to head the official committee to identify a successor after the death of the 10th Panchen Lama.

Gyara Tsering Samdrup (c)T.I.N.

Gyara Tsering Samdrup, aged about 40, is reported to have been arrested on 1 June 1995 in Tingri, southern Tibet, on the Nepalese border, while on his way to a meeting with wool merchants. He originally comes from Eastern Tibet and spends most of his time in Tibet, but his home is in Beijing with his wife, two daughters and a son.

All three men are reported to be under investigation for allegedly communicating with the Dalai Lama over the choice of the reincarnated Panchen Lama. The Dalai Lama announced on 14 May, before any official announcement was made by the search committee appointed by the Chinese authorities, that Gendun Choekyi Nyima, a 6 year-old boy from Nagchu prefecture in Tibet, had been identified as the 11th Panchen Lama. The Chinese authorities have disputed the Dalai Lama's right to make such an announcement, and an emergency session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference issued a statement on 24 May describing the Dalai Lama's statement as "illegal and invalid".

According to reports, several senior lamas associated with Tashilhunpo monastery have been summoned to Beijing since the Dalai Lama's announcement; there have been reports of restrictions on visitors to the monastery and Party cadres are holding re-education sessions there during which the monks are encouraged to criticise Chadrel Rimpoche.

In the past few weeks there has reportedly been an increase in tension in the city of Shigatse, near to Tashilhunpo monastery and in Lhasa, police surveillance of dissident **Yulo Dawa Tsering**, has intensified. The police are reported to have withdrawn his identity card, meaning that he is restricted to the city, and he has been instructed to report to them every second day.

At the beginning of June, the State Nationalities and Religious Affairs Commission in Beijing issued a statement denying that Chadrel Rimpoche had been arrested.

Amnesty International is concerned that Chadrel Rimpoche, Jing-lag and Gyara Tsering Samdrup have been arbitrarily detained for the exercise of their right to freedom of speech and urges that they be immediately and unconditionally released

Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in English, Chinese or in your own language, expressing concern that Chadrel Rimpoche, Jing-lag and Gyara Tsering Samdrup have been detained solely for the exercise of their right to freedom of speech and urging that they should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Please send appeals to:

Minister of the State Nationalities Commission of the People's Republic of China

Ismail Amat Zhuren

Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui

252 Taipingqiao Dajie

Xichengqu

Beijingshi 100800

People's Republic of China

Telegram: Minister of the State Nationalities Commission Ismail Amat, Beijing, China

President of the Xizang Autonomous Regional People's Government

Gyaltzen Norbu Zhuxi

Xizang Zizhiqu Renmin Zhengfu

1 Kang'angdonglu

Lasashi 850000

Xizang Zizhiqu

People's Republic of China

Telexes: 68014 FAOLT CN or 68007 PGVMT CN

Salutation: Dear President

Telegram: President of the Regional People's Government Gyaltzen Norbu, Lasa, Xizang Autonomous Region, China

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