

Tibetan Filmmaker Jigme Gyatso Released from Prison

Jigme Gyatso (age 39), also known as “Golog Jigme”, was temporarily released from Kachu (in Chinese: Linxia) prison on October 15, 2008 and is now back in his monastery in Labrang Tashikyil. Jigme Gyatso and his friend filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen were arrested in March 2008. It is not clear, according to information from Tibet, if all charges against Jigme Gyatso have been dismissed. He was told by the authorities that he will stay under observance and his probation will last one year.

Jigme Gyatso told sources that he was severely tortured after his arrest in March 2008. The interrogators beat him continuously and hanged him by his feet from the ceiling for hours and kept him tied for days on the interrogation chair. During the interrogations he fainted several times due to the beatings. After May 12 when the region was shaken by strong earthquakes beatings stopped and after August 11 there was a noticeable improvement.

A big crowd of fellow monks and nearby Tibetans gave him an emotional welcome at Labrang Tashikyil monastery on October 15. According to sources in Tibet who were present, the crowd cheered him and thanked him for filming the documentary "Leaving Fear Behind".

Jigme Gyatso was born in 1969 in Golog Serta, in the Kardze region of Kham (in Chinese: Ganzi, Sichuan province). He is a Tibetan Buddhist monk in Labrang Monastery in Gansu Province. Jigme Gyatso assisted Dhondup Wangchen in filming “Leaving Fear Behind”. Dhondup Wangchen is still in detention and there is no news on his pending trial.

Tenzin Lushol, a second monk from Labrang, arrested for activities not in connection with the filming, was also released from Kachu prison and accompanied Jigme Gyatso to Labrang.

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