



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Teen monk beaten and arrested as wave of protests and self-immolations continues in Tibet

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On a major anniversary in Tibet, a 17-year-old monk was beaten and arrested for calling out for Tibetan freedom, just one day after unconfirmed reports said two teens lit themselves on fire in protest of Chinese rule.

On Dec. 10, the anniversary of the Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, 17-year-old Sanggye Gyatso of the Kirti monastery in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) in northeastern Tibet carried out a solo protest, calling for 'Freedom for Tibet.' As he attempted to walk along the main street, he was detained immediately by police, who beat him as they took him away, according to two Kirti monks living in exile in Dharamsala, India.

Sanggye Gyatso has now disappeared into custody, and there is no further information about his safety or whereabouts. According to the two monks in Dharamsala, he is from Soruma village in the Choejema area of Ngaba county and joined Kirti monastery at a young age from a family of pastoralists.

Sanggye Gyatso's peaceful protest follows three earlier such demonstrations in September by three monks in the Tibetan region of Amdo who have now disappeared. They are the most recent occurrences of an act of remarkable courage that has become a [trend in eastern Tibet](#)—particularly in Ngaba, where the wave of self-immolations began in 2009—since around 2014. This trend seems linked to a wish by protestors to make a strong statement about freedom and loyalty to the Dalai Lama without undertaking the more extreme act of self-immolation.

On Dec. 9, two 16-year-olds, Gendun Gyatso and Choekyi Gyatso, were reported to have set themselves ablaze in Ngaba. These details could not immediately be confirmed, and exile sources gave differing accounts as a result of the intense restrictions on information flow in the area and the dangers to Tibetans in speaking about such incidents to anyone outside Tibet.

Chinese authorities take systematic steps to prevent information about self-immolations and protests from reaching the West. They have also sought to turn Tibetans against those who set fire to themselves, although without success.

There has been a new wave of self-immolations and protests in Ngaba in recent months in a political climate of intensified and harsh suppression by Chinese officials. The latest incidents follow three self-immolations in Ngaba this year, the [most recent one](#) by a young man on Dec. 8, and solo protests by two other Kirti monks in September.