



“It is Time to Take Action”: Day 20 TYC Hunger Strike

TYC [Friday, 27 July 2007]

Friday 27 July marks the 20th day of the Hunger Strike in Delhi. Mr. Kalsang Phuntsok, President of TYC, announced that the hunger strikers will now be going through the most difficult phase of the strike. He asked Tibetans to give their prayers for more strength for them.



Mr. Su-Jei Own, Deputy Secretary General, Taiwan Tibet Exchange Mr. Su-Jei Own

According to Mr. Phuntsok, “This is one of the most important phases for the hunger strikers. When they reach the 20th day, the main effects of fasting: fall in weight, weakness, and feelings of hunger, have been very strong. After the 20th day, these physical symptoms will be much less. However, there has not as much pressure on their minds as there will be from now on. A new challenge, much more daunting than those of hunger and weakness, is coming for the hunger strikers: Facing the experience of death. This will be weighing on their minds much more heavily than the previous demands of the body for food. The hunger strikers have not wavered in their commitment, yet will be facing the normal human reactions of fear and anxiety, and will need all of their inner resources to cope with this and to recommit to their pledges. So henceforth, although visits to the Hunger Strike venue are as welcome as ever, there will be restrictions on direct interaction with the hunger strikers. This is to reduce outside pressures and interruptions, and free their inner resources for their inner struggle.”

He further said, “In this struggle some may go through a rapid deterioration in their health due to the effect of the inner turmoil of their minds on their already weakened bodies. So I want to appeal to all Tibetans to pray for their peace of mind and strength to face the coming battle.”

Tibet supporters from Taiwan visited the hunger strikers giving their support.

They were: Mr. Su-Jei Own, Deputy Secretary General, Taiwan Tibet Exchange Foundation, Ms. Mei-Lin-Pan, National Chaio Tung University, and Ms. Jeh-Mei-Li, Taiwan Friends of Tibet.

Mr. Su-Jei Own made the following comments: “I’m so touched to see you, with the greatest courage in the world, showing your will to the Beijing government, that Tibetans are like all people in the world, and deserve the basic human rights, to go back to their homeland, with their free will. As you can see, I wear my t-shirt, with the Tibetan national flag on it. It says “Free Tibet” in English, and also in Chinese, “Independent Tibet”. We Taiwanese are standing together with Tibetans to search for freedom and independence, so we are really like brothers and sisters. We Taiwanese feel the same way you feel because we are all under the pressure of China too. So we must persist, we must work hard, so that the Tibetans have the political freedom to go back to their homeland, to do whatever you want in your homeland. We Taiwanese will work together with Tibetans to fulfill this wish as soon as possible. Freedom is the basic right of all human beings, so we should work our best to struggle for it. Now the Tibetan culture is the precious heritage of human civilizations. So the Tibetans must be able to keep their own cultural tradition. Please work hard, be attentive, but also take care of your own physical condition. We will work long and hard until we really gain the freedom, so for the time being you still have to take care of your body, for the longer struggle for the freedom of Tibet. And finally, my best wishes, and the best wishes of the Taiwanese people, I wish you success. And soon one day, we can see each other in Lhasa, the capital of the new Free Tibet.”

Mr. Own further said, "I think that the demands of the Hunger Strikers are too humble. They deserve every right to demand of Beijing their most basic human rights, to return to their homeland, to live as Tibetans as they wish. So these current demands are too humble, too simple. Yet, for this small request, if Beijing can't respond properly it just shows how short-sighted the Beijing government is. It only indicates that the Beijing government never seriously considers any request from the Tibetans. If Beijing doesn't respond correctly, even to these simple demands, it only shows the true nature of the Beijing regime, which is not really as they say that they respect the minority rights. They don't, they haven't shown anything to prove it."

What might Chinese in Mainland China think about the movement? Mr. Own gave his view of the feelings of the Chinese inside China: "I think the average Chinese will show their understanding and sympathy for these hunger strikers, because the average Chinese also suffers the same experiences like the Tibetans here. The government really doesn't value their basic rights, and I think with this kind of activity, it will encourage the Chinese people to also learn from these courageous Tibetans to stand up to fight for their own basic rights. So I think the average Chinese will understand and sympathise with the hunger strikers."

Encouraging Tibetans that it is time to take action, he said, "For the past years the Tibetans have been so polite, so cooperative, to the Beijing government. They have shown the faith, but the Beijing government has not responded positively. So I think this is a great moment. This hunger strike is to wake up every Tibetan to the fact that it is time to take action. I think the mass protest on the 8th is great. The movement is to increase the determination, the courage of the Tibetans, that they should stand up and search for their true goal of their life, that is, to go back to their homeland, and to have a free and independent Tibet."

Following this, visitors from Burma (Myanmar) came to see the hunger strikers. Dr. Tint Swe, Member of Parliament, Burma (Myanmar) NLD Party, and Myint Aye, ABSL, President, All Burma Student League, along with others, expressed their support and solidarity to the hunger strikers.



Mr. Gyalnor Tsewang, Member of Tibetan Parliament-in-exile

Mr. Swe spoke to the hunger strikers: "I really feel very sorry, at the same time I am really proud of you. I am one of the elected members of the parliament of Burma, and I belong to Aung San Sui Kyi's political party. I am in exile right now. In our movement for democracy and the Tibetan movement for your own cause, we have been working very closely and together, we share a common cause. So I come here for solidarity with your cause. While you are having the hunger strike here, our leader also has been living over 11 years under house arrest. Aung San Sui Kyi also has staged hunger strikes in her house. So this expression of non-violence against tyranny, against misrule, we share with the Tibetan people. Our leader Aun Sang Suu Kyi will be proud of you as well. At the same time, we also understand your leaders, the Tibetan parliament, how difficult is yours and our struggle, but with the commitment, with the sacrifice you are doing today and since last 20 days, we have to sacrifice for our good noble cause, for your people, for our people, for our nation, for our country. I am also Buddhist, I think with this good deed we will bring good result. Life will not end with this hundred years of our life, we are passing through this samsara -- we believe in that. We have to win over this tyranny, so I have to leave my strong words with you: in solid solidarity, and I wish you all the best."

Commenting on the demands, he said, "These demands seem to be very moderate, and in a very soft approach. I think these demands are very legitimate. I think that the TYC and the Tibetan people want to be very realistic, so they chose a realistic approach. I think this realistic approach is quite good, one or two of these demands, I think that is very realistic. So China may do something in response to these demands, it may be minimal, it may be superficial, I hope that China will do something in response to these demands, maybe within one year."

Mr. Tapir Gao, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, India, visited the hunger strikers to express his solidarity and support.

"It is very heartening to know that it has been 20 days since all of you have been on this hunger strike. I want to assure you that you have all my support for this struggle for freedom. I request the people of the world to support your cause and would like to convey to them that Tibet was always an independent nation. I support your cause and will continue to do so. I request the government of China to end its occupation of Tibet, respect the wishes of the Tibetan people and let them live in peace in their own country. Everyone in the Tibetan society has the right to live in peace and they should not be denied this right. I want the US, UK, the European countries and the entire world to come forward to help the cause of Tibet. I want the whole world to put pressure on China and fight for the Tibetan people. I request the Indian government to support and provide whatever facilities required by the activists of the Tibetan Youth Congress who are on hunger strike. For as long as your struggle will continue, you will always have my support. I pray to God to be kind to you."

Later that day, Mr. Gyalnor Tsewang, Member of Tibetan Parliament-in-exile, Director/Founder, HIMS School, and a noted social activist, applauded the determination of the hunger strikers: "I would like to thank you from the core of my heart for sitting on the Hunger Strike in support for the cause of the Tibetan people and Tibet. The six million Tibetans are behind you."

Later in the evening, Ms. B Tsering, President, Tibetan Women's Association (TWA), along with TWA executives, visited the hunger strikers to express support and solidarity.

Several Indian supporters, mostly advocates of Delhi High Court, came around in the evening to express their solidarity to the hunger strikers. Among them were Mr J.P Sharma, Advocate, Convener Delhi Regional Core Group for Tibetan Cause, C.S. Dhawan, Advocate, Mr Chhatrapati Shivaji, Advocate and Mr Avinash Sharat, advocate and Mr. Awadesh Kumar.

The Indefinite Hunger Strike at Jantar Mantar, Delhi, is part of the Tibetan Youth Congress-led People's Movement, pressing demands for accountability from China regarding the Tibet situation. Current updates and photos at <http://www.tibetanyouthcongress.org>