

Biography: Ngawang Sangdrol

Ngawang Sangdrol (born in Lhasa, Tibet, in 1977) is a former political prisoner, imprisoned by the Government of the People's Republic of China in 1992 for peacefully demonstrating against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Her sentence was extended repeatedly for continued protest in prison, which included recording a tape of freedom songs with 13 other nuns from Drapchi Prison that was smuggled out of Tibet. As a result of intense international pressure from various Human Rights and Tibetan political organizations, as well as the Dui Hua Foundation, her sentence was commuted to 11 years from her original 23 year sentence. She was released in October 2002.



On June 17, 1992, the then 15 year old Sangdrol was arrested for staging a peaceful pro-independence demonstration in Lhasa, along with others from her Garu Nunnery, and some monks from Gaden monastery. Despite her adolescence, she was sentenced to three years and incarcerated in Lhasa's notorious Drapchi prison. In June of the following year, Ngawang Sangdrol and 13 other women recorded songs and poems of independence on an audiocassette and smuggled them out of prison. Her sentence was extended by 6 years for

the incident. In 1996 Sangdrol and other female prisoners were severely beaten for their refusal to stand when Party members visited a workroom in the prison. Sangdrol and two other nuns were placed in solitary confinement, where she remained for 6 months. In 1998 Sangdrol's sentence was increased by 6 years for her involvement in a prison protest on May 1 & 4 in which 9 inmates reportedly died.

On July 31st, 2001 Sangdrol received another, 8 year, sentence extension. With a total sentence term of 23 years, the 24 year old Ngawang Sangdrol became the longest serving Tibetan female political prisoner. As a result of intense international pressures from Dui Hua, ICT and other human rights organizations and governments, Sangdrol's sentence was commuted to 11 years and on 17 October 2002 she was released on medical parole. A year later she was able to travel to the USA for medical treatment, where she remained. Ngawang Sangdrol currently resides in New York.

You can see Ngawang Sangdrol appeal for international support against the death sentences of Tibetans Losang Gyaltse and Loyak on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjJDt_UN_L0