Tibetan man calls for Dalai Lama’s long life as he sets himself on fire

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November 8, 2018

A young Tibetan man named Dorbe set himself on fire on November 4 in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), Amdo, saying “May the Dalai Lama live long! May we soon behold his golden countenance!” before he died.

Images that emerged depicted the young Tibetan man beside a nomad tent in traditional Tibetan dress.

According to Kanyag Tsering and Lobsang Yeshe, two Kirti monks in exile in India who passed on the news of the self-immolation, Dorbe was 23 and from Jakorma (Chinese: Xiakunma) village in the pastoral Choejema (Chinese: Qiujima) township of Ngaba county in present-day Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province. Ngaba is the area where the wave of Tibetan self-immolations began. Dorbe had been living at the house of his uncle. The Kirti monks said that no further details were known, due to intense restrictions on information flow in the area and grave dangers for Tibetans in speaking to those in exile.

Dorbe’s self-immolation follows the death of a Tibetan man in his 40s, Tsekho Tugchak, who set fire to himself on March 7, 2018, also in Ngaba, the first self-immolation in Tibet this year. Graphic images circulated at the time online of Tsekho Tugchak’s blackened body lying on the ground, his arms outstretched. He was from a nomadic village in Me’uruma township in Ngaba.

On December 23, 2017, Konpe, a Tibetan who was also from Ngaba, set himself on fire close to the area of the first self-immolation in Tibet in February 2009.

Dorbe’s death is the 154th self-immolation by a Tibetan in Tibet and China.