

Tibetan Youth Congress Marchers Reach Varanasi after walking 780 km from Delhi

The Tibetan Youth Congress had organized an 'Independence March' from New Delhi to pay homage and respect to the brave Tibetans who died struggling for independence in the recent riots under China's repressive policy. History stands testimony to the fact that Tibet has always been an independent nation.

Marchers reached Varanasi May 16 after walking 780 kilometers from Delhi. The day broke with cries of 'Bod Gyalo' by the kitchen crew to wake the marchers for their next stop. So after having a usual traditional breakfast of Tsampa with butter tea, they resumed with their journey.

The marchers moved from Babatpur Airport at 4 in the morning under the guidance of Sonam Dorjee (RTYC Dharamsala) after their usual prayer. They have been walking for six hours every day for the past five weeks braving the cruel, sweltering heat from the sun in Uttar Pradesh. Several people who fell prey to injuries and other complications during the course of the march were taken to the Apollo Hospital and treated for blisters and warts/corns on their feet.

The March comprised of 106 official numbers, a signification that Tibet belongs solely to the Tibetans and their undying spirit and determination to fight for the complete independence of Tibet and 30 other support marchers who help with the cooking and other chores.

The group reached Varanasi around 2 in the afternoon passing through Sarnath where Buddha gave his first public sermon and were given a warm welcome with traditional scarves by TYC- Regional Chapter and students from the Central Institution of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS). They gained support of the local Indians with their non-violent form of struggle as well.

Regional Tibetan Youth Buddhist Association had arranged their accommodation at the Tibetan Temple and the same evening saw TYC Joint Secretary Tenzing Norsang give a brief introduction to recent activities by TYC in Delhi on April 17 to Boycott Beijing Olympic Torch and the significance of 2008 Olympic for the Tibet issue. It was followed by a long debate between marchers and the day ended with a documentary movie on the recent uprising in Tibet.

TYC marchers also visited many Buddhist shrines during their 2 day stay in the holy city and held a special function to interact with students and Tibetan people inviting Jampa Samden (Ex President of Tibet Freedom Movement and Professor of Tibetan History) as a chief Guest where Mr. Pempa Tsering International Relation Secretary TYC introduced the purpose and significance of the march.

In the evening TYC marchers in collaboration with Tibetan students organized a special pray and candle light vigil in front of Buddha Stupa to express their solidarity to the Chinese and Burmese citizens who lost their lives in recent natural calamity and offered 108 butter lamps for their souls. Mr. Norsang told media that their grievance was against the Beijing Government and not the Chinese people. Marchers will be heading towards Bodh Gaya tomorrow to raise the awareness on the plight of their brethren back home and the suffering endured by our brothers and sisters.

The oldest male marcher is Mr. Kunsang 80 yrs old who had earlier participated in the un-do death hunger strike organized by TYC in 1998 where late Thupten Ngodup self immolated sacrificing himself for what he believed was a greater cause. He said it came as a shock to him when he learned that more than 300 Tibetans were killed in Tibet recently.

"I don't have the same energy like I did when was younger but I will walk try to walk far to spread our message to the world even at this stage of my life" he said.

The oldest female marcher Passang Dolma 65 yrs old from Raipur said, "I have high blood pressure and a weak heart hence I counter a lot of health problems in the march but it's nothing when I compare my pain with Tibetans who suffer inside Tibet and though I may not have long to live but while I am alive, I will continue to take part in any activity that furthers our cause. This story has been read 184 times.