

November 20, 2007: Tibetan monk, a PEN Canada honorary member, released six months before the expiry of his 18-year sentence

Ngawang Phulchung, a senior monk in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa and an honorary member of PEN Canada, was released on October 29, 2007, six months before his sentence was due to expire.

Phulchung was one of the leaders of the "Group of 10", or Drepung printing group, a publishing collective formed after peaceful demonstrations were violently suppressed by Chinese authorities in September 1987. Their publications included a Tibetan translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and "The Meaning of the Precious Democratic Constitution of Tibet", a manifesto calling for a democratic system based on Buddhist tradition.

Phulchung is currently with his family, but is in poor health due to the torture and inhumane treatment he suffered in prison.

PEN Canada remains concerned for his health, for the continued imprisonment of our nine other honorary members and other writers across China and the Tibet Autonomous Region, and about the restrictions on media freedom in China in the lead-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.