

## Tibetan activists protest China's role in exhibit

Written by Taipei Times

Monday, 16 August 2010 01:06 -

---

Shouting matches and minor clashes erupted at the National Palace Museum yesterday after officials turned down a request by Tibetans and activists to present a photo of the Dalai Lama to “fill the missing part” of an exhibition on Tibetan Buddhist art.

“The Dalai Lama is the highest spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism. How could a portrait of the Dalai Lama be missing at an exhibition about Tibetan Buddhism?” asked Regional Tibetan Youth Congress-Taiwan (RTYC-Taiwan) chairman Tashi Tsering, wearing a traditional Tibetan outfit and holding up a large portrait of the Dalai Lama.

Several police officers stood in front of Tashi and other activists, blocking their attempt to enter the exhibition with the picture, asking them to leave immediately.

“If you accept the portrait, we will leave right away,” Tashi said.

Police refused the request, with one officer saying they would not allow anyone to take “that thing” — referring to the Dalai Lama’s portrait — into the venue.

The remarks were not well received by the Tibetans.

“It’s not ‘a thing,’ it’s a portrait of the Dalai Lama, the highest figure in our religion,” they said.

The standoff lasted about 20 minutes.

Police said the activists were in violation of the Assembly and Parade Act (集會遊行法) because they had not applied to hold a political rally. The Tibetans countered that their action was religious as they were there to defend their religion, adding that by law, an assembly and parade permit is not required for religious activities.

“We’re all about religion, it’s the Chinese government that’s trying to politicize everything,” RTYC-Taiwan vice-chairman Tenzin Chupel said. “They are trying to reinforce the impression that Tibet has always been part of China through this exhibition, that’s why they’re purposely avoiding talking about the Dalai Lama in the exhibition.”

“If we have to apply to deliver a portrait of the Dalai Lama, who applied to the Tibetans to take these pieces of art — which belong to all Tibetans — to an exhibition outside of Tibet?” Chupel said.

Students for a Free Tibet--Taiwan spokeswoman Jade Kuo (郭玉潔) said items in the exhibition “were stolen by the Chinese government from the Tibetans when they invaded Tibet in the 1950s.”

Although police said the activists should have applied for a permit before the demonstration, an officer told the Taipei Times it would not have been approved even if they had applied.

## Tibetan activists protest China's role in exhibit

Written by Taipei Times

Monday, 16 August 2010 01:06 -

---

“We could not possibly have approved the application because it involved politics,” the officer said.

The officer could not explain why, if the application for the rally had been political in nature, it would have been turned down.

“You ask me based on which law?” he said. “Well, maybe I should not answer this question.”

Museum Southern Branch deputy director Lin Chen-feng (林陳鋒), who is in charge of the exhibition venue, said the museum would only deal with purely -cultural and artistic issues.

“[The activists’] demands are political. That’s not something I can respond to,” he said.

Asked why a portrait of the Dalai Lama could not be considered a piece of art, Lin said he did not consider a person’s portrait art.

Failing to receive a positive response from the museum, the Tibetans and their supporters sat down to recite Buddhist chants and sing the Tibetan national anthem before leaving.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2010/08/16](#)