

Tibetan teachers strike in Qinghai

22 November 2007

(RFA) 200 Tibetans working as locally hired village teachers in Qinghai province have staged a two-week protest outside local government offices in protest at their meager pay, sources in the region told Radio Free Asia's (RFA) Tibetan service. A Rebkong (Chin: Tongren) resident told RFA: "The college graduates are employed as Tibetan temporary teachers in different schools in the county and are paid from 200 to 450 Yuan (UK GBP 16-26; US\$34-54; EUR 23-36) per month. This meager pay is not sufficient even to meet basic living costs". The teachers, who began their protest at the beginning of November, said they were demanding recognition as full-time teachers, a status that carries wages of 2,000 Yuan (UK GBP 160; US\$270; EUR 230) a month. Official media have reported calls for local governments to bring ethnic minority teachers' pay in line with that of regular teachers, but other reports have also said that this is taking decades to achieve. "County officials have promised a raise of 80 Yuan to resolve the demands of protesting teachers", a Rebkong county government spokesperson said.

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