



Annual Review 2007



Tibet was a country the size of Western Europe when it was invaded by China in 1950. Since the Chinese occupation began, large portions of the country have been absorbed into provinces of the People's Republic of China. Tibet's culture, religion and resources have now been under systematic assault by the Chinese government for decades. In this time, 6000 Buddhist monasteries were destroyed along with the centuries of knowledge they contained, and hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have been executed, imprisoned and tortured for the "crime" of not wanting to be Chinese.

Free Tibet Campaign stands for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future. We campaign for the fundamental human rights of Tibetans to be respected and for an end to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. We are independent of all governments and are funded by our members and supporters.

This Annual Report covers the 2006/2007 financial year. Free Tibet Campaign is registered in England as a Company Limited by Guarantee, No. 3103487.



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Message from the Chairman

Our politicians cringingly dissemble about how China is moving forward; the Olympics Committee fawningly pretends its games will 'encourage' improvements in human rights in Tibet and throughout China. We are told to wait for diplomacy and markets to work, and all the time – nearly 60 years now – the regime's claws are squeezing the life out of Tibetan freedoms, crushing the people, shredding their heritage.

Governments and industry turn a blind eye to suffering to make profits; to expect anything else would be naïve. But we, the people, ultimately have a more powerful voice than they do. Why? Because they depend more on us than we do on them: without our votes, without our custom, they are nothing. That makes us the more powerful.

We live where we can speak out, where people are not killed for their beliefs, where rights are not up-for-sale. Should we continue to wait and wait for 'improvements' in Tibet, or should we stand up and demand them?

Tibet remains the largest country in the world under enforced military occupation. It is the jewel in China's empire, a place where teenage nuns risk torture and death for talking about their spiritual leader, where they are shot if they try to leave.

China's desperation to join other nations, its 2008 Olympics, its new reliance on outside markets, all are the best defence Tibet has ever had. So long, that is, as our voice is not muted or reserved. One voice is weak; in harmony with thousands it is unstoppable. Free Tibet Campaign is the loudest way of singing the song which will one day welcome freedom back to Tibet.

I hope and believe that this campaign, which depends entirely on you, its supporters, will continue to meet that challenge.

Stephen Corry, Chairman, Free Tibet Campaign

The year in review

In **April 2006** China hosted the World Buddhist Forum in Hangzhou, the first religious conference held in China since the Communist Party took control in 1949.

The keynote speaker was Gyaltzen Norbu, the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama. The world's most revered Buddhist teacher was not invited. Asked by the press why the Dalai Lama had been snubbed, Qi Xiaofei, Vice President of the China Religious Culture Communication Association said: "In my opinion, if he appears at the forum, he will surely impose a disharmonious note to the general harmonious tone of the forum."

Free Tibet Campaign said: **"The Dalai Lama is a Nobel Peace Laureate, revered by Buddhists everywhere and greatly admired by people of other faiths or no faith at all. China's motive for staging this conference is clearly political – the isolation of the Dalai Lama – rather than any desire to see Buddhism flourish in China or Tibet."**



On **30 June 2006** the Qinghai-Lhasa Railway was formally opened, amidst Chinese claims that the multi-billion pound project would benefit development in Tibet.

Free Tibet activists from the UK, Canada and the USA countered this by unfurling a banner at Beijing Central Railway Station. Free Tibet Campaign used the media coverage to make clear the real objective of the railway: to bring Chinese settlers in and take Tibet's natural resources out.

In **September 2006** Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in London for talks with Prime Minister Tony Blair. Free Tibet Campaign ensured human rights in Tibet were part of the media story with demonstrations outside Downing Street.

According to BBC news, "Outside No 10, about 100 human rights activists could be heard beyond the gates of Downing Street, protesting in Whitehall. Their banners read 'Human Rights Before Trade' and 'Wen Will You Free Tibet?'"



Also in **September 2006**, European climbers witnessed and photographed Chinese border police shooting defenceless Tibetan refugees on the Nepal-Tibet border, leading to the confirmed death of a Tibetan nun. Free Tibet Campaign broke the story with the western media and immediately began lobbying the UN High Commission for Refugees.

The Times quoted us: **"It is now vital that UN agencies and the wider international community both take immediate steps to ensure the safety of Tibetan refugees fleeing into Nepal and launch an independent and transparent investigation into the killings."**

In **December 2006**, China announced it was easing restrictions on foreign journalists reporting from China in the run-up to, and during, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Soon afterwards China's determination to keep foreign journalists out of Tibet became apparent with a follow up announcement that journalists wishing to report from Tibet would still be expected to obtain a special permit prior to travel.

In **January 2007**, China announced the discovery of huge new mineral deposits near the railway, confirming Free Tibet Campaign's assertion that expediting the extraction of Tibet's vast mineral resources to fuel China's economic boom had always been the driving force in building the China-Tibet railway. As always, Tibetans will be denied the right to determine how their economic resources are utilised. Free Tibet Campaign led the way on exposing this story.

CNN quoted us: "Clearly China's leaders have never intended the railway to benefit Tibetans." The news broadcaster continued: 'And future development priorities do little to alter that image. Last March, China announced – among the national priorities listed in its 11th Ten-Year Plan – an extension of the railway from its present terminal in Lhasa to the western city of Shigatze, and beyond.'

March 2007 was a particularly busy month. First, China announced a surge in investment in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) of £6.5bn over the next four years. Again Free Tibet Campaign challenged Chinese claims that the investment was intended to benefit Tibetans, when in reality it is subsidising huge Chinese infrastructure projects on the Tibetan Plateau such as the Railway.

"While seeking to win the hearts and minds of Tibetans, China's control and repression of religion in Tibet, aimed at erasing Tibetan national and religious identity, have recently been intensified."

Our views were picked up by *The Guardian*, Reuters, *The Washington Post* and many media outlets.

Also in **March 2007**, Dewatsang Sangye, monk and human rights defender, undertook a UK speaking tour. While he was here we arranged a meeting with officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to brief them on his experiences of the lives of political prisoners in Tibet following their release. He also met the Archbishop of Canterbury's Principal Adviser on Interfaith Affairs at Lambeth Palace to discuss the escalating level of state control and repression of Tibetan Buddhism.

In an Uprising Day statement, Sangye said:

"Tibetans' desire for a free Tibet and a peaceful resolution to China's occupation remain as strong as ever, despite China's brutal policies in Tibet and its killing of defenceless Tibetan refugees on the Nepal border last year."

Preparations also began in **March 2007** to mark the 18th birthday of Gendun Choekyi Nyima. At age six he became the world's youngest political prisoner when he was abducted by Chinese officials three days after being recognised by the Dalai Lama as the 11th **Panchen Lama**.



In addition to renewed lobbying for his release, we worked with BBC Radio and *The Independent* on features produced for his birthday, telling *The Independent*:

"China's detention of the Panchen Lama represents a crime not only against a child but against the entire Tibetan people who regard the ongoing detention of one of their most important religious leaders as a source of great distress. It is a clear demonstration of the lengths to which China is prepared to go to control, and ultimately crush, both Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan identity."

Free Tibet Campaign is renewing calls for the Chinese government to provide conclusive proof of Gendun Choekyi Nyima's health and safety. Please fill out and return the postcard on the back cover.

Action and success

The work Free Tibet Campaign does to raise awareness of the plight of political prisoners in Tibet is ongoing.

The Chinese authorities would never admit to being influenced by international public opinion, nor do they want to be embarrassed by the death in custody of the political prisoners we identify. Thus it is not uncommon for prisoners to be released early on medical grounds.

This was almost certainly the case with **Nyima Choedron** whose release was announced in June 2006 – a year before her sentence for ‘splittism’ was due to expire. She and her husband Bangri Rinpoche ran a children’s home and school before their arrest in 1999. He is not scheduled for release until 2021.

While Chinese officials do use her case as proof they can be lenient, there was still much cause for celebration when Phuntsog Nyidrol was not only released from prison after serving three quarters of her 21-year sentence, but in March 2007 was permitted to leave Tibet to seek medical treatment in the USA.

Too few stories have a happy ending and not every campaign alert is about a political prisoner, but, as in the case of **Phuntsog Nyidrol**, inroads have been made in our campaigning for justice in Tibet.

Bombarding Edinburgh

When news reached us that Bombardier was in the running for a contract to supply Transport Initiatives for Edinburgh (TIE) with tram cars, supporters bombarded TIE with information about the Canadian company’s involvement in the controversial Gormo-Lhasa Railway. Our involvement led to an article in the *Edinburgh Evening News* about the Chinese railway project.

Although Bombardier was considered a front-runner when our campaign began in May 2006, their bid ultimately failed.

Nangpa La

On 30 September 2006 western tourists witnessed the cold blooded killing by Chinese soldiers of a nun and a youth, who were in a group of about 70 Tibetans making the perilous journey into Nepal over Nangpa La Pass. The soldiers, who later tried to claim they were defending themselves, opened fire without warning on the group which contained at least 14 children, some as young as six.



Free Tibet Campaign broke the story to the world's press and asked members to send urgent appeals to the Chinese government and international bodies, first demanding that those responsible for the killings be brought to justice.

Following an unprecedented investigation, the Chinese general in charge of the troops involved in the incident was forced to step down.

Ne mentionnez pas le Tibet

We discovered in January 2007 that the French government had produced a guide for businessmen and tourism employers which recommended avoiding offending Chinese visitors by not mentioning Tibet, Taiwan or Tiananmen Square. An urgent campaign alert was sent out asking people to protest to French officials.

The French embassy in London later announced the withdrawal of the publication, stating: "It is not, of course, French policy to encourage anyone to keep silent regarding their concerns about values and human rights, for any reason."

Our Urgent Campaign Alerts do get results.

If you are not already a member, you can join on our website at

www.freetibet.org/campaigns/urgent

(Members are requested to make a donation towards maintaining the costs.)

Treasurer's report and accounts

Summary income and expenditure account for the year ending 31 March 2007.

	2007 (£)	2006 (£)
INCOME		
Merchandising Income	43,213	58,286
Other Operating Income	405,831	465,050
Interest Receivable	4,395	4,090
	453,439	527,426
EXPENDITURE		
Cost of Sales	- 26,958	- 34,125
Operating Expenses	- 237,751	- 294,059
Staff Costs	- 226,596	- 224,612
	- 491,305	- 552,796
Operating Deficit/Surplus before Tax	- 37,866	- 25,370
Taxation	- 676	-
(Deficit)/surplus for year after Tax	<u>- 38,542</u>	<u>- 25,370</u>
Tangible Fixed Assets	7,432	196
Current Assets		
Stocks	6,976	5,317
Debtors	2,808	8,417
Short term investment—money on deposit	105,083	104,423
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>36,565</u>	<u>66,801</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due in 1 year	35,582	18,334
net current assets	115,846	161,624
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>123,278</u>	<u>161,820</u>
RESERVE		
Accumulated reserves	<u>£123,278</u>	<u>£161,820</u>

As the accounts show Free Tibet Campaign's membership and supporter base remained stable providing a solid financial basis from which to grow the campaign activities of the organisation. Investment was made into organisational infrastructure and additional staff during 2006 to 2007 which is reflected in a reduced reserve. Having made these investments Free Tibet Campaign placed itself at the forefront of the global network of organisations campaigning for the right of Tibetans to self-determination.

[The Executive and staff of Free Tibet Campaign would like to extend their thanks to all the members and supporters of the Campaign.](#)

These financial statements were prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies. A signed copy of the accounts is available from Free Tibet Campaign.



MISSING

**China stole a boy,
the world demands to meet the man**

freeTIBET

www.freetibet.org

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