

FREE TIBET

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It's about time



freeTIBET

• Tibetan language under threat • Prince Charles shames the Games •

**“As Chancellor of Germany, I will decide on whom to meet and where.
I can't give up my own principles for a trade relationship with China.”**

Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, after being denounced by China for meeting the Dalai Lama



Anne Holmes,
Campaigns Manager

Dear Friends,

As you are aware, this is going to be a crucial year for Free Tibet Campaign.

Not surprisingly the approach of the Beijing Olympics is heightening the international media's interest in China's appalling human rights record. We have already been working with UK and international media to expose the truth of life in illegally occupied Tibet.

In December we were denounced as members of the "Dalai Clique" when we publicised the launch of *No faith in the state*, a Tibet Watch report on religious repression in Tibet. According to Reuters, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a news conference he thought so little of the Tibet Watch report he would not comment on it. "Their lies are too many," he said.

We expect to be similarly denounced this month when we reveal the truth about education and the state of the mother language in Tibet (see page 4).

The Beijing Olympics will be here on 6 April when the official torch relay passes through London on its way to Paris. As part of our campaign to Shame the Games (see page 7), the alternative Tibetan Freedom Torch will be lit in central London at a rally and celebration of Tibetan culture. Plans are still being finalised, so please check our website

for details on this and other events.

In the UK, interest in Tibet will be intense in May during the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Last year many world leaders (including Chancellor Angela Merkel and President George Bush) met formally with the Dalai Lama.

We want 2008 to be the year the UK Prime Minister takes an equally principled stand. On the day the Dalai Lama was presented with the US Congressional Medal of Honour by President Bush, Free Tibet launched a petition on the Downing Street website calling on Gordon Brown meet the Dalai Lama. (If you have not done so already, please sign the petition at www.petitions.pm.gov.uk/DalaiLama and encourage everyone you know to do the same)

Everyone at Free Tibet Campaign is excited about the coming year. It will be exhausting, but rewarding work. And we couldn't do it without your dedication and support.

Thank you so much.

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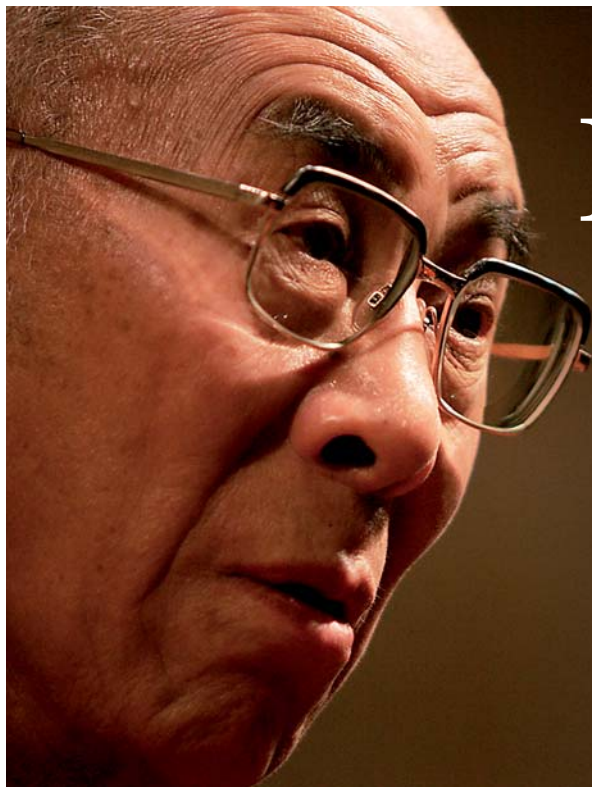
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Free Tibet Campaign stands for the Tibetans' right to determine their own future. It campaigns for an end to China's occupation of Tibet and for the Tibetans' fundamental human rights to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet Campaign generates active support by educating people about the situation in Tibet. It is independent of all governments and is funded by its members and supporters.

Views expressed in *Free Tibet* are not necessarily those of Free Tibet Campaign.

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Cover: Montage of Gordon Brown and the Dalai Lama



Brown must meet the Dalai Lama in May

ELIANA APONTE/REUTERS

Will Gordon Brown follow in his predecessor's footsteps and refuse to meet the Dalai Lama?

Action

Sign the petition.

Please sign our petition urging Gordon Brown to meet the Dalai Lama. Go to www.petitions.pm.gov.uk/DalaiLama

Alternatively, write to the Prime Minister at:
The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1A 2AA

Salutation:

Dear Prime Minister

You can submit an email to the Prime Minister via the 10 Downing Street website: www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page3.asp

Or you can fax the Prime Minister: 020 7925 0918 (From outside the UK, the number is +442079250918)

The Dalai Lama will visit the UK between 22 and 30 May 2008. Highlights of his visit include public talks in London's Royal Albert Hall and in Oxford and Nottingham. He will also be meeting various public figures whilst in the UK, although details of such meetings have not yet been released.

On his last visit to London in May 2004 then Prime Minister Tony Blair refused to meet His Holiness, citing "diary pressures". The last British Prime Minister to meet the Dalai Lama was John Major.

Despite criticising the Burmese regime last year for its crackdown on street protests in Burma, the new British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, has so far failed to make similar public criticisms of the Chinese government for its ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet.

Free Tibet Campaign wrote to the Prime Minister before his recent trip to China in January 2008, calling on him to publicly address human rights abuses in Tibet with Chinese leaders and to confirm that he would meet the Dalai Lama in London in May. Responding, the Prime Minister's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Tom Fletcher, said "the Government is aware that the Dalai Lama intends to visit the UK in May 2008. No decisions have yet been taken on arrangements for his visit."

Mr Brown's equivocation comes despite a response to a Parliamentary Question by then Foreign Office Minister,

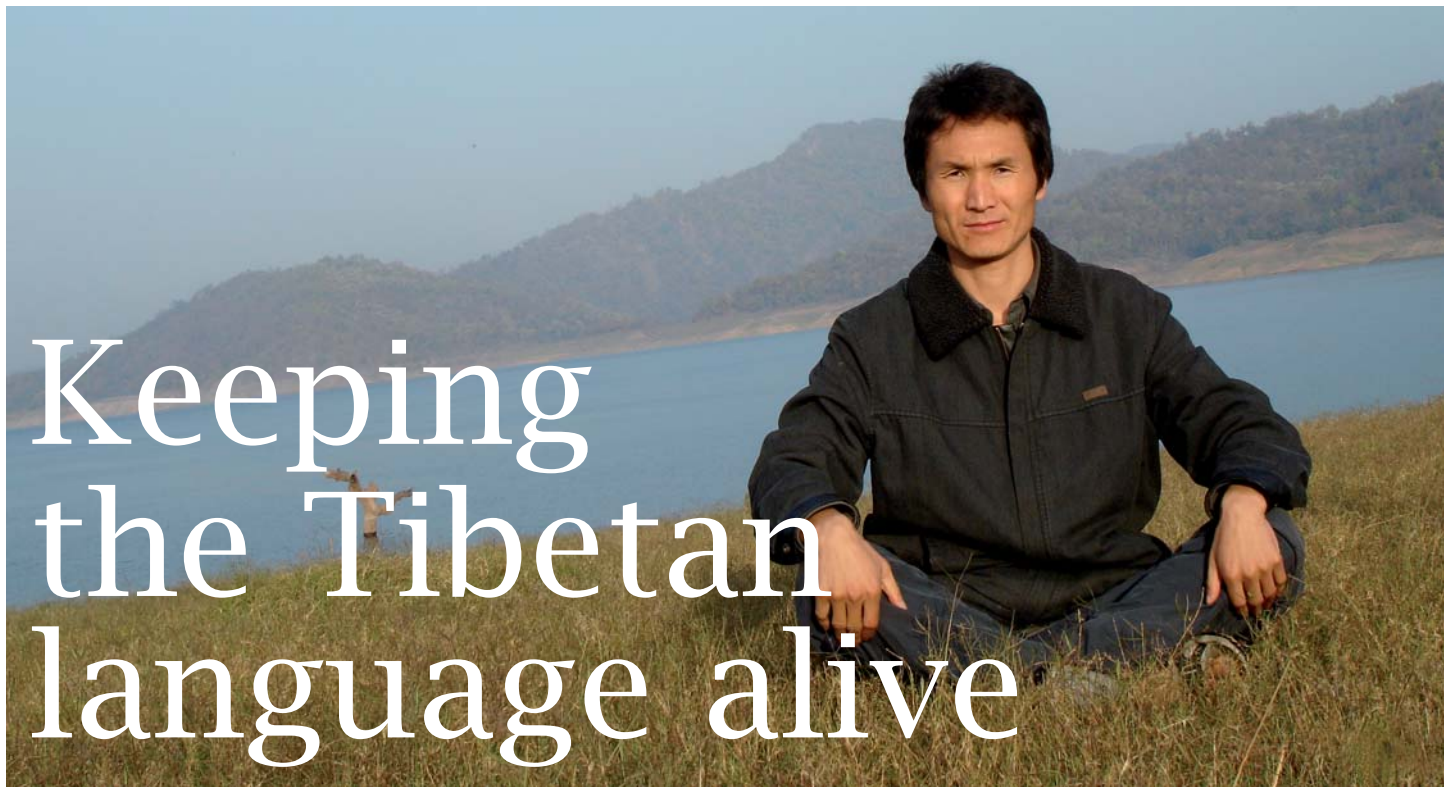
Ian McCartney, in March 2007 that the Dalai Lama "could meet the Foreign Office and have discussions about a range of issues with senior Ministers, including the Prime Minister".

Whilst silent on whether he will meet the Dalai Lama in May, the Prime Minister has eagerly accepted an invitation to this year's Olympic Games in Beijing, extended to him on his recent trip to Beijing. His enthusiasm to attend the Games is in marked contrast to the principled position of Prince Charles who stated last year in a letter to Free Tibet Campaign (page 7) that he would not be attending the Opening Ceremony of the Games.

Mr Brown's attendance at the Beijing Games is inevitable. Before he goes, however, he still has the opportunity to make it clear that the British government is no longer prepared to remain publicly silent on China's ongoing human rights abuses in Tibet. The best way to signal such a change in policy would be by meeting the Dalai Lama in May.

To help secure such a meeting Free Tibet Campaign has launched an online petition (see action box) on the Downing Street website, calling on the Prime Minister to make an official announcement that he will meet the Dalai Lama in May.

For a full schedule of the visit please visit: www.freetibet.org/events/diary. Alternatively, you can call the Free Tibet Campaign office on: 020 7324 4605.



By Tsering Dorje. Tsering was born in Rebgong, Amdo, in 1974. He worked as a primary and middle school teacher in Tibet before leaving for India in 2005. He explains how Tibetan is in real danger of becoming a minority language in Tibet due to educational and employment pressures faced by Tibetans.

In order to qualify to enrol for the four-year course at the Prefecture Teacher's Training School, you had to be one of the top 80 students from the surrounding 600 schools. I was very proud that I was admitted.

There were around 300 hundred students and 25 teachers at the teacher training school. The students were all Tibetans or Tibetan speakers. Half the teachers were Chinese. All my classes, except English language, were taught in Chinese. The text books were all uniform textbooks by the Chinese Education and Textbook Bureau. They were all written in Chinese. It was very difficult for many of the Tibetan students to keep up, but we had to force ourselves. If we did not pass our exams we would be expelled from the school.

After students completed their four years of teacher training they were officially assigned to teach in one of the four counties within the prefecture. You have no choice about the school to which you are assigned. I had hoped to teach at a primary school in my home county of Rebgong, but I was sent to Tsekhok county.

I did not set out to become an English teacher in Tibet, but I completed my teacher training with a certificate of Excellent English Achievements at a time when English language teachers were in short supply.

The first school where I was assigned to teach English was a Chinese middle

school. At first I thought the students were all Han Chinese, but I soon realised a third of them were Tibetan. There were no Tibetan language classes at the school. The students all spoke to me in Chinese in class and during recess. I found out many Tibetan students also spoke Chinese to their parents at home, even though their parents were Tibetans.

Things were very different when I was reassigned to a Tibetan middle school. All the classes (except Chinese) were taught in Tibetan. The students all spoke Tibetan in their daily lives. Students and teachers spoke Tibetan in class and at recess. Almost all the students were from nomadic families and their favourite subject was Tibetan language.

In my next assignment I taught English to four classes, two of which were Tibetan students, two Chinese. Many of the Tibetan students mixed Chinese words in their daily speech. Although I was assigned to teach English, I attempted to create a stronger awareness of Tibetan language. When my students used a Chinese word, I corrected them, translating it into Tibetan. Their Tibetan language skills improved and my students no longer mixed Chinese words into their speech – at least not in my class.

In the Chinese classes nearly half of the children were Tibetan. They received no education in Tibetan language, mixed with Han Chinese pupils and learnt every subject in Chinese.

When I talked to some of the Tibetan parents, they said they wanted their children to be fluent in Chinese because this would give them a better future. Even some Tibetan language teachers sent their children to Chinese schools. In order to create a Chinese-speaking environment, these parents would demand their children speak Chinese at home. Other parents were trying to improve their own Chinese language skills by speaking it with their children.

Sometimes I tried to point out to Tibetan parents who sent their children to Chinese class that there was a growing imbalance between the number of local Tibetan teachers and non-Tibetan teachers. If all parents gave up on Tibetan-language teaching and sent their children to Chinese schools, I told them, we would risk losing our mother tongue forever.

This would be a terrible tragedy. What limited autonomy we had as Tibetans would be written out of the constitution. Put simply: we would no longer be Tibetans.

Some parents understood what I was saying, but for many the attitude was: "What do I care for generations far in the future? My concern is getting the best opportunities possible for my children now."

Are these parents being selfish or merely pragmatic?

Certainly there are few lucrative job prospects for Tibetans who have not been educated in Chinese. Nor is it possible for a student educated only in Tibetan to acquire professional qualifications at college or university. There are no relevant courses taught in Tibetan.

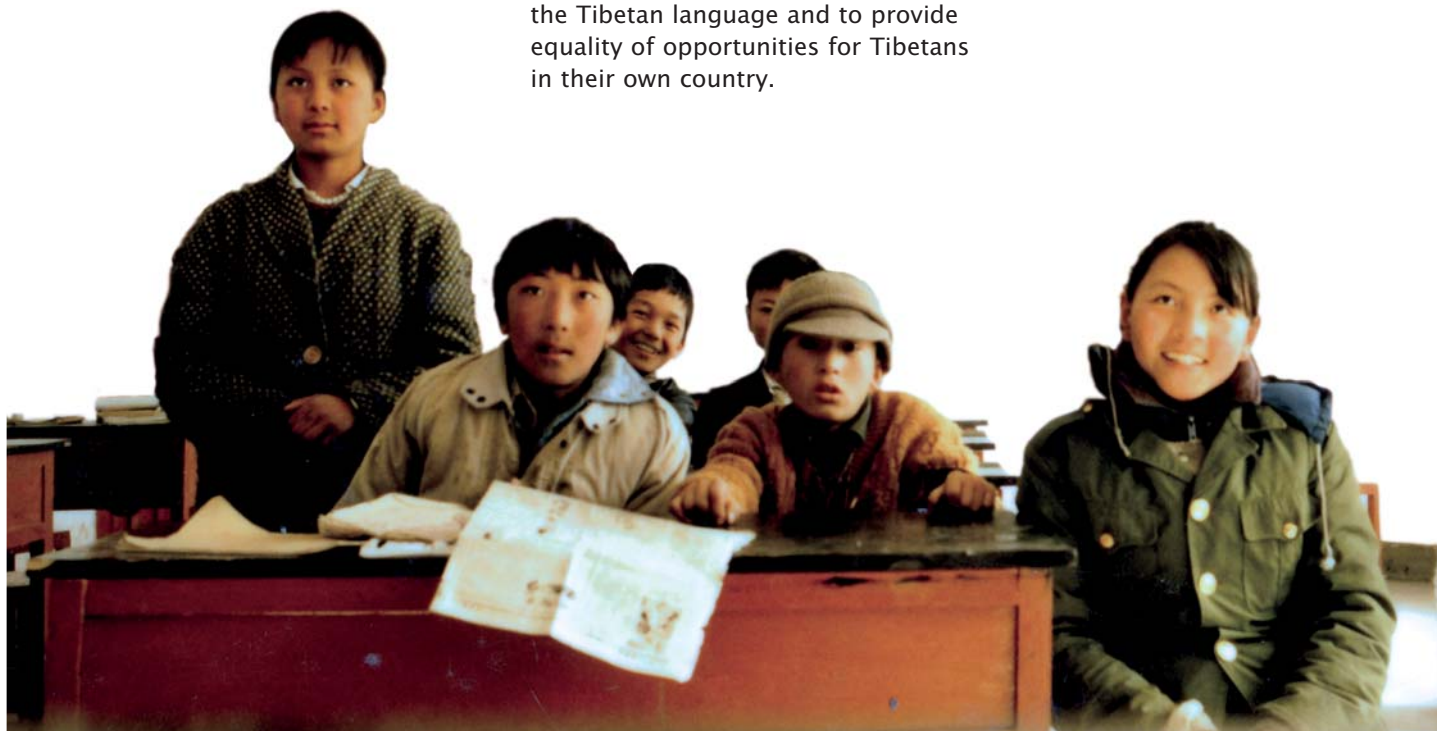
At Tibet University in Lhasa the only courses taught in Tibetan are in the Tibetan language department. All other courses at the university are taught in Chinese. Yes, it is possible that a student who takes a degree in Tibetan language could get a job as a teacher of Tibetan language, but he or she would have no prospects of advancement against Chinese-educated rivals. And when all parents have chosen to educate their children in Chinese from primary school, what need will there be for Tibetan language teachers?

There are, in theory, government policies on minority language protection in autonomous areas, but these are seldom, if ever, implemented. The government in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) does nothing to protect or promote the Tibetan language.

It is all very well for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to have a Mother Language Day every February (see page 6), but how can this protect the Tibetan language?

A law must be passed – and enforced – making Tibetan the official language of the TAR. This is the only way to protect the Tibetan language and to provide equality of opportunities for Tibetans in their own country.

“Not only would an ancient language vanish, so too would the obligation of the Chinese authorities to protect the minority rights of the Tibetan people.”



Team Tibet denied participation in Beijing Olympics

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has rejected an application from a 30-strong squad of exiled Tibetans to field a team at the Beijing Games. The application was rejected on 10 December in Lausanne where the IOC was meeting. A senior IOC official explained that, due to amendments made to the Olympic Charter in 1996, only those countries that are recognised as an independent state by the international community are eligible to form a National Olympic

Committee (NOC) and to send a team to the Games.

Wangpo Tethong, President of the Tibetan National Olympic Committee, vowed that the NOC would use the law to prove that the 1996 amendments were illegal and that Tibet should have the right, as Palestine and Taiwan have under IOC approval granted before the 1996 changes, to compete under a neutral Olympic flag.

Tethong accused the IOC of caving in to pressure from China whilst

claiming that one senior IOC official had urged him after the IOC rejection of the Tibetan application to “keep pressuring the IOC and find new ways” to compete in Beijing. Tethong also stated that the Tibetan NOC would push their application to participate in the 2012 London Olympics.

Despite its rejection, Team Tibet has succeeded in heightening the scrutiny placed on the IOC and China by both the media and other political bodies. At a meeting in November 2007 of the European Parliament’s Human Rights Sub-Committee Team Tibet athletes highlighted the IOC’s double standards. Pointing to the IOC’s banning of South African athletes during the apartheid era, the Tibetan athletes argued that the IOC could not now claim it was unable to interfere in China’s human rights situation.

Edward McMillan-Scott MEP said “it is time for the IOC to make a political statement” on China whilst Mr Schmitt, MEP and IOC member, stated that the IOC “cannot close its ears” to these demands any longer.

In December 2007 the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on the IOC “to publish its own assessment of China’s compliance with the undertakings given in 2001 before the Games were awarded to Beijing”.



Forked tongue: Tibetan language at risk

In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) named 21 February International Mother Language Day, saying: “Linguistic and cultural diversity represent universal values that strengthen the unity and cohesion of societies”.

Recognising the need to protect spoken and written Tibetan (which astonishingly does not appear on UNESCO’s website as an Asian language), a proposed law was drawn up by Tibetan scholars, under the supervision of the 10th Panchen Lama and Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, in 1987.

The proposals of the scholars were largely ignored when, in 2002, a mother language law was passed in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) “to encourage the use of the Tibetan language”. The many rights supposedly guaranteed by the mother language law (revised in 2007) include the rights to be tried in Tibetan, to hold government meetings in Tibetan and the right (as was already common practice) to be offered classes in Tibetan for the first nine years of

compulsory education. Like the Chinese laws guaranteeing freedom of religion and elections, the mother language law is not worth the paper upon which it is written.

In order to draw attention to the very real fears of Tibetans that the survival of their language is threatened, Free Tibet Campaign (in collaboration with Tibet Watch) has prepared a briefing for release on Mother Language Day. *Forked Tongue: Chinese threats to the Tibetan language* exposes the difficulties faced by Tibetans who want to live their lives speaking their own, distinct language.

As Tsering Dorje points out in his moving account of life as a Tibetan teacher (page 4), no matter how much Tibetans may want to protect their language, parents know there are few prospects for young Tibetans who are not fluent in Chinese. Mothers and fathers are the same the world over – they want the best future for their children. This impossible situation leads some Tibetans to send their children on the perilous journey into exile.

“Prince Charles snubs China over Beijing Olympics”*

Late last year the *Daily Telegraph* reported that China’s new ambassador to the United Kingdom, Madam Fu Ying, was making it “her aim to persuade Prince Charles to make his first visit to China and, if at all possible, to attend the Beijing Olympics next year”.

The Prince of Wales has long shown friendship towards both the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people in general. Free Tibet Campaign was therefore confident the Prince would avoid handing the Chinese government the propaganda victory of his attending the Beijing Olympics.

We wrote to Prince Charles and received an immediate reply from Clarence House. We were assured, in a letter which reiterated his “close interest in Tibet”, that Prince Charles would not be attending the Beijing Olympics. We informed the *Daily Telegraph* of the Prince’s decision and its ensuing front-page report received huge worldwide media attention, ensuring that China’s appalling human rights record in Tibet was under the spotlight once again.

It is now too late to question whether China should ever have been awarded the 2008 Olympics. The games will go ahead. Young athletes who have been training and dreaming for years should be allowed to compete. (Unfortunately this does not include Team Tibet whose application to participate under their own flag was turned down by the International Olympic Committee. See page 6.)

The athletes have no choice. Their participation in the Beijing games does not represent approval of China’s policy of repression of Tibetans and its own people.

However, public figures invited to attend the games as spectators do have a choice. They can, like Prince Charles, take a stand on China’s brutal occupation of Tibet. Or they



Ex political prisoners Passang Lhamo (left) and Chuye Kunsang meet Prince Charles at Clarence House, March 2002

DECHEN PEMBA

can accept China’s invitation and, by attending the games, give their tacit endorsement to the deterioration of the human rights situation in Tibet since Beijing was awarded the Games in 2001.

In the coming months Free Tibet Campaign will be contacting high profile public figures in the UK and internationally, asking them to support Tibet and human rights throughout China by turning their backs on these Games of Shame.

Prince Charles should be commended. If you would like to do so, you can send him a message via his website, www.princeofwales.gov.uk, or write to him at Clarence House, London, SW1A 1BA.

*Daily Telegraph, 28 January 2008

Olympic torch relay

The Olympic flame will be lit on 24 March in Olympia before a two-month trip around the world. As part of the international tour the torch will arrive in London on 6 April where it will mark the start of a year-long celebration of Chinese culture. London Mayor Ken Livingstone claims the celebration will be the “biggest ever”.

China has invested huge symbolic importance in the torch relay, which it has called a “journey of harmony and friendship”, and which will “spread the ideas of peace”. China is determined that the international torch relay will bring its key Olympics message, that China has transformed itself into a modern and open society based on ethnic harmony, to as many cities as possible. And by announcing that the Olympic Torch is to be carried by Chinese climbers to the summit of

Mt Everest (which straddles the Tibet-Nepal border) China has signalled its intention to use the ensuing media coverage to underscore its spurious sovereignty claims to Tibet.

To counter China’s transparent use of the torch relay for its own propaganda purposes, UK-based Tibet groups are organising an alternative torch relay. The Tibetan Freedom Torch will follow the official torch as it passes through London and Paris before moving on to San Francisco.

Exiled Tibetans will travel from all over Europe to follow the Freedom Torch to spread their message that the official torch should not be used to project a misleading picture of China as a country of ethnic harmony. The torch will also highlight Tibetan hopes to compete under their own flag at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Action

Support the Tibetan torch relay

The Tibetan Freedom Torch will be lit in London on 6 April at the Tibetan Freedom Parade before being carried by Team Tibet athletes and four of the Drapchi nuns to Paris, the next leg of the Olympic torch relay.

- Come to China’s official torch relay – and line the streets with free Tibet flags and banners.
- Join the Tibetan Freedom Parade on 6 April in the afternoon. Line-up, location and time will be announced nearer the time. For information please check our website www.freetibet.org or call the office on 020 7324 4605.

Dalai Lama receives US Congressional Gold Medal

In a high-profile public ceremony on 17 October at the US Capitol in Washington, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the top US civilian honour. The honour was presented by President Bush, the first time a sitting US President had appeared in public with the Dalai Lama. Bush hailed the Dalai Lama as a “universal symbol of peace and tolerance”.

China’s reaction was immediate. Chinese government spokesperson, Liu Jianchao, said: “China is strongly resentful of this and resolutely opposes it”.

The award ceremony came amidst a flurry of meetings between the Dalai Lama and major world leaders. In June he met the then Australian Prime Minister, John Howard. This meeting was followed by talks with the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, in September. China reacted with predictable fury, cancelling a scheduled bilateral meeting with the German government whilst describing the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s meeting with the Dalai Lama after the US award as “disgusting conduct”.

The succession of high-profile meetings provided the strongest indication yet that China’s policy of attempting to limit the influence of the Dalai Lama has failed and that world leaders are no longer prepared to back down in the face of China’s diplomatic pressure.

Questioned on the wisdom of upsetting China, Angela Merkel commented:

“As the chancellor of Germany, I will decide on whom to meet and where. I can’t give up my own principles for a trade relationship with China.”

The Dalai Lama is due to visit the UK in May this year (see page 3).

China puts down Dalai Lama celebrations

Chinese authorities clashed with monks from Lhasa’s Drepung monastery for four days following the award of the US Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama.

The clashes, reported by the Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao, started on 17 October after monks put white paint on the walls of the Dalai Lama’s residence at Drepung in a sign that they were celebrating the award. The monks then held a special prayer meeting. At this point the Chinese authorities from a police station nearby entered the monastery, sparking the clashes. Eyewitnesses confirmed that military personnel were also involved.

Following the clashes, the newspaper reported that 3,000 troops surrounded the monastery, refusing the 1,000 monks permission to leave.

Free Tibet Campaign learned that the authorities had also cracked down on Tibetans celebrating the award in the Amdo region of Tibet [Chinese provinces: Gansu/Qinghai]. After speaking by telephone to eyewitnesses, a highly trusted Tibetan source in India revealed that people in Labrang had been buying firecrackers with which to celebrate the award. On the night of 17 October an eyewitness reported seeing four truckloads of soldiers outside Tso monastery. Eyewitnesses in Labrang reported that on 18 October six people were arrested following clashes between the military and young monks.

The monks were angered after the military stepped in to stop them letting off firecrackers. Free Tibet Campaign’s reports of the disturbances were widely reported, including in the *Guardian*.

Free Tibet Campaign was also able to guide ITV’s China correspondent to eyewitnesses of the award celebrations and the ensuing Chinese crackdown as well as helping ITV obtain video footage of the celebrations. The footage was shown on a major ITV undercover report from Tibet which also featured an exclusive interview with the Dalai Lama. It was the first footage from Tibet, filmed without official approval, to have been broadcast recently. ITV’s report has been uploaded to YouTube and can be seen at: www.freetibet.org/press/pr180108.html



President Bush, the Dalai Lama, Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the National Anthem at the White House ceremony to award His Holiness the Congressional Gold Medal

SONAM ZOKSANG/ICT

China tricks Tibetans

China's increasingly vitriolic denunciations of the Dalai Lama have been matched by attempts to portray Tibetans as opposed to the Dalai Lama and his return to Tibet. As the Olympics approach China is determined that an impression of Tibetan acceptance of Chinese rule is projected to the outside world.

Any demonstrations inside Tibet of Tibetan loyalty to the Dalai Lama (see page 6) have been cracked down on whilst China has attempted to find ways of tricking Tibetans into indicating that they oppose the return of the Dalai Lama.

Most recently the authorities have employed trick questions and financial inducements.

Free Tibet Campaign has received reports from credible sources in

Lithang in the Tibetan region of Kham (Chinese provinces Sichuan and Yunnan) that a public meeting was called in December 2007 to provide propaganda photos for the Chinese authorities.

Citizens were asked to raise their hands if they opposed the return to Tibet of the Dalai Lama. No one raised a hand. According to the sources they were then asked to raise their hands if they did not have a weapon at home. It is illegal to possess a weapon in Tibet, and unsurprisingly everyone raised a hand. A photo was taken at this point by the Chinese authorities.

Tibetan sources claim that the authorities sent the photo to selected media, claiming that people were raising their hands in response to the Dalai Lama question.

Runggye Adak sentenced

The Tibetan nomad, Runggye Adak, who made an impassioned public appeal for the return of the Dalai Lama at the annual Lithang horse festival in August 2007, was sentenced on 20 November at Kardze Intermediate Court in Sichuan Province (Tibetan area of Kham). Adak had also appealed for the release of the Panchen Lama and Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche. He was sentenced together with his nephew, Adak Lopoe, and two other Tibetans. The arrests in August sparked large protests by Tibetan nomads in Lithang.

Runggye Adak received a relatively lenient sentence of eight years' imprisonment for "inciting to split the country" and for "severely disrupting public order". Normally such convictions carry far longer sentences, but the high profile given to this case due to our campaigning was almost certainly a factor in the comparative leniency of the sentence.

The three Tibetans connected to Adak were sentenced on charges of "endangering national security" by attempting to provide pictures and information to "foreign organisations".

Adak Lopoe, Runggye Adak's nephew and a respected senior monk

from Lithang monastery, received the longest sentence, 10 years, for "colluding with foreign separatist force to split the country and distributing political pamphlets".

Kunkhyen, a Tibetan art teacher was sentenced to nine years on charges of "carrying out splittist activities" and a fourth Tibetan, Jarib Lothok, received a three-year sentence for allegedly helping to send photos of the aftermath of the protest abroad.

The severity of these sentences are intended to deter Tibetans from attempting to disseminate information on Chinese crackdowns in Tibet to foreign journalists. Runggye Adak's wife and Adak Lopoe's mother are appealing against the verdict.

Free Tibet Campaign would like to thank supporters who have sent letters and action postcards on these cases. Free Tibet Campaign delivered thousands of postcards to Lord Malloch Brown, the British government minister responsible for China. The names of the "Lithang 4" were also forwarded to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as cases to be brought up during the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue which took place in January.

- **In November 2007 plans were announced for the building of a new district** in Lhasa to accommodate the city's rapidly growing population. The Liuwu New District will be located on the southern bank of the Lhasa River, cover 42 square km and provide accommodation for 110,000 local residents. The district will be 70% the size of the existing urban area and is due to be completed by 2009. The new district is where the station for the Gormo-Lhasa Railway is located. Source: Xinhua.
- **By the end of the year more than four million tourists** arrived in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), an increase of over 60% over the same period for 2006. Source: Xinhua.
- **The Gormo-Lhasa Railway has carried troops to Tibet** for the first time. A November 2007 Xinhua report quoted an unnamed source from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) saying that the "railway will become a main option" for transporting troops to Tibet. The report did not say how many troops were transported. Source: Xinhua.
- **Seven Tibetan boys were detained** in Gannan prefecture in Gansu province on 7 September after graffiti calling for the return of the Dalai Lama was found in the village police station and school. All were aged between 14 and 15 and came from nomad families. One boy was reportedly beaten, and was bleeding when seen by relatives. Two were released on 24 September after payment of Yuan 4,000 each (US\$532). The other boys have since been released. Source: Human Rights Watch.
- **One of Tibet's longest-serving political prisoners**, Ngawang Phulchung, was released from Chushul Prison after 18 years imprisonment on 21 October. He had been one of the key leaders of the peaceful pro-independence demonstrations of 1987. On release his condition was said to be frail and to have deteriorated due to years of torture in prison. Source: TCHRD.

Supporters



Andrew King (left) and Marc Pooler from Hull University Human Rights Action Group

Thanks to you

Day for Tibet on 28 October 2007 saw many of our supporters and local groups raising funds and awareness for Tibet with events across the country. These activities are vital to the campaign for a free Tibet as they are a great way of bringing in new supporters and also help to finance the movement. This year, despite the terrible weather, the Reigate group took part in a Trek for Tibet, and the Bromley group also set out to battle the elements with a sponsored walk raising an impressive £1,500

between them! But there were also less physically demanding events on offer as groups including the Grampian group and Hull University Human Rights Action group held screenings of Tibetan films *The Forbidden Team* and *Cry of the Snow Lion*.

Other supporters got in on the act this year with a variety of original events with a Tibetan theme. These included a food tasting day in Nottingham, a concert in Yorkshire and overtone chanting in Bristol. Members also set up stalls at local events in order to get the word out about the situation in Tibet and collected hundreds of action cards. All in all, supporter's events on and around Day for Tibet raised over £2,500 for Free Tibet Campaign, which can be used for more campaigning in the build-up to the Beijing Olympics. We would like to thank all our groups and supporters who organised and took part in these events – well done; we hope you had fun while you were doing it!

Comic relief for Free Tibet

"One of the best nights out I've had in a long time!" That's what one audience member said about Yakety Yak, Free Tibet Campaign's stand-up comedy event at London's Shaw Theatre in November.

The benefit show featured some of the country's finest comic talents – John Hegley, 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks' host Simon Amstell, Ava Vidal, Greg Burns, Ed Petrie, Shazia Mirza, Robin Ince and Susan Murray.

Listed as Critic's Choice in London weekly magazine *Time Out*, Yakety Yak was hailed: "Another impressive list of comedians give up their time to help the people of Tibet through the healing power of laughter ... What a resplendent line-up for this benefit gig, with every comic on the bill capable of bringing the house down."

A small portion of the evening was allotted to campaigning for political prisoner Runggye Adak. Press Officer Matt Whitticase gave a moving talk and urged the audience to sign the action postcard addressed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A special raffle was drawn on the night and won by two friends who had split the cost of a single raffle ticket. The two lucky ladies will be

whisked away on a seven-day tour of Nepal, courtesy of Himalayan Adventures.

New Statesman columnist and celebrity comedienne Shazia Mirza shares her reasons for performing at Yakety Yak: "The Free Tibet gig was a really fun evening and the audience was great. I did it because Tibet is a really important cause, and needs more publicity and supporters. More people need to be aware about the Chinese occupation and how people are suffering because of it. Hopefully great nights like this will continue to help in some way."

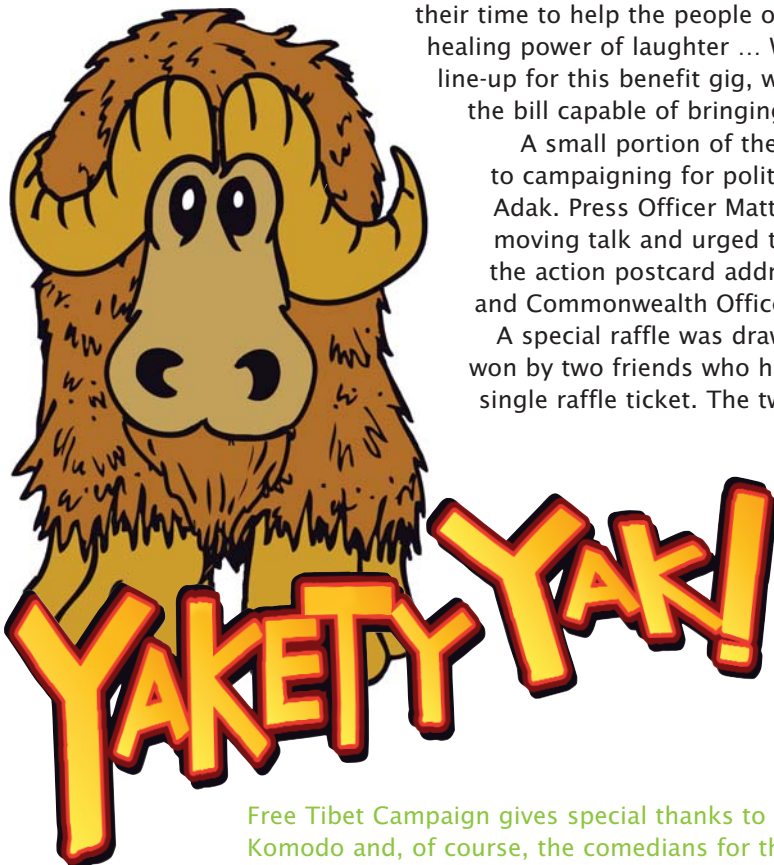


Simon Amstell



John Hegley

BOTH PHOTOS: MICHAEL FOUTOULAKIS



Free Tibet Campaign gives special thanks to Vintage Roots, Pink Lotus, Himalayan Adventures, Komodo and, of course, the comedians for their contributions which helped make Yakety Yak possible.

Marking Uprising Day 2008



10 March 2008 marks the 49th anniversary of the date on which tens of thousands of Tibetans in Lhasa were killed when they rose up in protest against the Chinese occupation in 1959. In marking this date, Tibet supporters highlight the non-violent campaign for Tibetan freedom which has continued ever since and commemorate the bravery of those who died.

This year Free Tibet Campaign will be marking the day by organising the annual march in London on 8 March as usual. We would also like to encourage our supporters and local groups around the country to mark the date by organising events to bring more awareness and more supporters to the cause! Groups and members can set up stalls and distribute leaflets or screen a Tibet film to open people's eyes to the history of the Tibetan issue.

If you are interested in taking part in any event we can provide you with hand-outs, flags, collection tins, DVDs and whatever support and advice you need. Any events will be advertised on our website and mailing lists to bring new supporters along. Contact Gabriel at gabriel@freetibet.org.

Charitable giving for Tibet Watch

Using www.justgiving.com is a great way to raise large amounts of sponsorship money for charities without having to canvass people to sign forms. You can use the website to help raise funds for Tibet Watch, which works closely with Free Tibet Campaign to gather evidence on human rights abuses in Tibet.

It's simple: plan any kind of sponsored event, go to justgiving.com and pick Tibet Watch as your chosen charity. You can then design your own fundraising page and let people across the world sign up to support you. Not only can you raise thousands, but Tibet Watch can benefit by claiming Gift Aid too.

Free Tibet's Fundraising and Campaigns Managers, Janet Fereday and Anne Holmes, will be raising money for Tibet Watch by taking part in a sponsored free-fall in March to mark Uprising Day. Why not join them and help them meet their fundraising target of £5,000? Or for the less brave hearted you can sponsor them on their just giving page www.justgiving.com/freefallforuprising

Appeals update

Thank you so much for all your generous donations to our recent appeals – your ongoing support is absolutely essential for us to be able to continue campaigning effectively.

In the autumn we asked for your support to help pressure the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Runggye Adak's case. Thanks to you we were able to deliver nearly 3,000 protest postcards to the FCO and Press Officer Matt Whitticase was able to attend an important press conference in Beijing ensuring Adak's story reached the world's media.

Although Adak was sentenced to eight years for "inciting to split the country" (see page 9), we have no doubt that the sentence would have been much harsher without international public pressure and media coverage; similar cases have received up to 15 years, or even life imprisonment. Matt was also able to make some important contacts with key journalists resulting in mass coverage of several Tibet stories, including an exclusive ITV news story on the crackdown following the Dalai Lama's Gold Medal award. We expect to see Tibet in the news a lot more in coming months, so thank you once again.

Diary

Saturday 8 March

LONDON Uprising Day
Meet outside the Chinese Embassy 49-51, Portland Place, London W1B 1JL at 10.30am. Marchers will walk through Central London for a rally at Palace Street, Westminster, then join in traditional Tibetan celebrations at Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1. For further details, contact terry@freetibet.org

Sunday 6 April

LONDON Olympic torch relay
Celebrate the alternative Tibetan Freedom Torch at this rally in London. Featuring live music, inspiring speeches and special celebrity guests. Details unconfirmed at time of going to press. Contact the Free Tibet office on 020 7324 4605 or check our website for the latest information.

Friday 9 May

LONDON Hidden Treasures from Dolpo. 5.30pm. Talk by Dr Amy Heller regarding recent discoveries of Tibetan manuscripts, paintings and sculptures, organised by the Circle of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies. SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG. For more information, contact cths@soas.ac.uk

22-30 May

LONDON, OXFORD, NOTTINGHAM Dalai Lama in the UK
The Dalai Lama will be visiting the UK between 22-30 May 2008. His Holiness will be giving talks in London, Royal Albert Hall, (22 May) and Oxford, Sheldonian Theatre (30 May) and giving teachings in Nottingham Arena over the Bank Holiday weekend (24-28 May) Tickets will sell out fast, so please book early. For more information and to book tickets go to www.dalailama2008uk.com

Every Wednesday

Vigil for Tibetan Freedom. 6-8pm. Opposite the Chinese Embassy, 49-51 Portland Place, London W1. Contact Tibet Vigil on 020 7813 1922.

Merchandise sale

For a full listing please visit our online shop at www.freetibet.org/merchandise

**MASSIVE REDUCTIONS
ON MANY ITEMS!**
Order now while stocks last!

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Mandala T-shirt

Price: £14 (was £18)

Stylish t-shirt made from 30% organic cotton and 70% sustainable bamboo, leaving you cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Men's M,L,XL; Women's S,M,L.

OM T-shirt

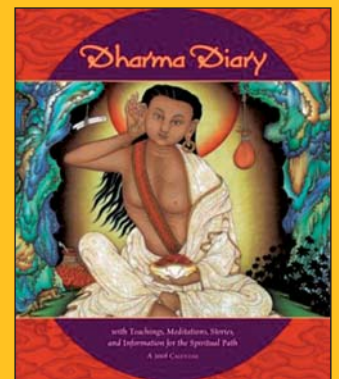
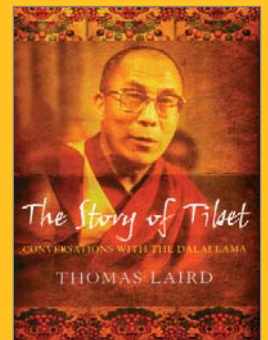
Price: £14 (was £18)

Vibrant design made from 100% organic cotton. Free Tibet Campaign logo on the back. Men's M,L,XL; Women's S,M,L.

The Story of Tibet by Thomas Laird (hardback book)

Price: £10.99 (was £18.99)

The Dalai Lama's personal account of Tibet's ancient history, exploring His Holiness's views on history, science, reincarnation, Buddhism and much more.



Dharma Diary

£8.99

(was £10.99)

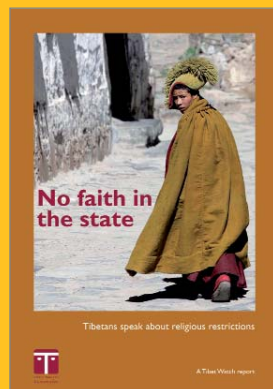
With more than 50 colour images, this diary/calendar is designed to bring Buddhist teachings into everyday life.



2008 Calendar

Price: £8.99 (was £10.99)

A dramatic photograph of Tibet for each month. Photos by Ian Cumming.



No faith in the state

Special price for Free Tibet Campaign members £5.00
Non-members £7.99
A report prepared by research and education charity Tibet Watch about restrictions on religion in Tibet.

Cotton Prayer Flags

Price: £8.99 (was £13.00)

Roll of 25 colourful prayer flags. Made from durable cotton. Size 22x21 cm.



Greeting Cards £2.99 (was £4.99)

Blank inside to suit any occasion. Choose from (above, left to right) Butter candles; Gaden at dawn; or Tsemo Monastery. Pack of 10 cards with envelopes.

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Visit the merchandise page on our website www.freetibet.org/merchandise to view our full range of products and to order online quickly and securely.

Or call **020 7324 4605** and a member of staff will be happy to assist you.

All proceeds help to fund our vital work for a free Tibet