



Bay Area Friends of Tibet n e w s l e t t e r

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Clinton Conditions China's Most Favored Nation Trading Status on the Preservation of Tibetan Culture

Washington, DC - On May 28 President Clinton announced that among the conditions placed on the future renewal of China's Most Favored Nation trading status is that significant progress be made in protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage.

The President's report accompanying the Order, which will be released soon, is said to discuss the influx of Chinese into Tibet as a threat to Tibet's heritage.

This historic pronouncement is the first time in decades that the Executive Branch of the U.S. government has formally made Tibet a priority in its bilateral relations with China.

The President's inclusion of Tibet is the result of tough bargaining over the ways in which Congress and the Administration seek to represent the Tibetan issue. There are still differences however. Congress considers Tibet an occupied nation, while the Administration regards Tibet as part of China. However, this is the first time in a major U.S. statement that the phrase "China, including Tibet" is absent.

"President Clinton has taken a bold step forward to saving Tibet by holding China accountable for its repressive policies," said Lodi Gyari, President of the International Campaign for Tibet, who attended the signing ceremony in the White House.

In a very strong statement, Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), the Finance Committee Chairman said that with the announcement, President Clinton "has made history. He has told Congress that the movement of Chinese to Tibet threatens Tibet's unique identity and culture..... He has told China that significant progress must be made in protecting Tibet's unique identity or he will effectively sever trade with China. He has not submerged this issue within others. It stands alone as a separate MFN condition, a stark declaration, for the first time since the invasion of Tibet, that the Chinese subjugation of Tibet is a central issue in our relations."

This elevation of concern for Tibet by the Clinton Administration comes only weeks after the Dalai Lama met with President

Clinton and Vice President Gore as well as with many Members of the House and Senate. The Congress, which in 1991 declared Tibet to be an occupied country, has long given wide bipartisan support for the Tibetan people's non-violent struggle for human rights and self-determination.

The President's Executive Order operates just as Congressional legislation introduced by Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Senator George Mitchell proposed, giving China until June 1994 to meet the conditions.

The President's Executive Order is likely to render Congressional bills to condition MFN obsolete. Representative Nancy Pelosi said yesterday that her proposed bill was now not necessary. While the President's language on Tibet represents unprecedented support for Tibet from the Executive Branch, the proposed Senate bill conditioning MFN had even stronger terms with population transfer as a condition in itself.

The final condition, that China must make significant progress in protecting Tibet's distinctive religious and cultural heritage, is largely in keeping with Dalai Lama's emphasis. Several weeks ago, while in Washington, the Dalai Lama stressed to U.S. policy makers that his foremost goal was the survival of the Tibetan people and culture, and that the greatest threat was the Chinese population influx.

The decision to include a separate condition on Tibet, and its wording, was hotly debated within the Administration. Outside factors which played a role were the recent large-scale demonstrations in Lhasa, the impassioned, yet conciliatory statements of the Dalai Lama, and public support. In recent weeks Beijing made no gestures, such as token releases of Tibetan prisoners, in an attempt to avoid a strong condition on Tibet. Since its assumption of power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party has pursued a policy of



Tibetans and their supporters demonstrating outside the Chinese consulate in San Francisco on June 5. Two Tibetans were arrested in Saturday's demonstration, in which approximately 50 people protested the Chinese government's latest arrests of Tibetans in Lhasa. Photo: Greg Alling

population transfer, rendering native peoples of Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang (East Turkestan) small minorities in their traditional lands. In Eastern Tibet, Tibetans are now a minority, their culture and economy considered by the Chinese government to be "backward and useless." In central Tibet, large-scale influx of Chinese began in 1983 and has accelerated in recent years.

Bay Area Friends of Tibet is proud to announce the hiring of an Executive Director, **Leslie McKim**. Leslie brings with her a strong background in human rights and several years work experience at the Burma Project, USA. She will be in the BAFoT office Monday through Friday, 10:00 - 3:00. **Volunteers are needed** If you have time to spare and can assist in any way, please call Leslie at **415-241-9197**. Thanks to your continued support, BAFoT's efforts will become ever-stronger.

Immigration of Tibetans Nears Completion

The last two of a total of 60 Tibetans are expected to arrive in the Bay Area within weeks. Nationally, all 1,000 immigrants will be in this country by June 21. The final arrivals bring the immigration phase of the Resettlement Project successfully to a close.

Since the last newsletter, Kalsang Tashi Gonsar, Tashi Choden, Tenzin Wangmo, Yeshe Sodpa, Sherab, Tsundue Sangpo, Dekyi Lhamo, Choephel Tsering and Sonam Sangpo have been welcomed to the Bay Area.

Many thanks to our sponsors who have generously opened up their homes and hearts to the newcomers. The sponsors of the most recent Tibetan arrivals are Mark and Tsewang Tatz, Diana Goodman, Tashi Dhondup and Tsering Wangmo, Fred and Julia Shepardson, Sharon Bacon, Lucas Myers, Judy Weitzner, Alan and Laurie Senauke, Margo and Gordon Tyndall, Kendra and Huston Smith, Ellen and Robert Ansel. Your contributions have been invaluable.

Employers have provided jobs and, in most instances, a notarized offer of employment to individuals sight unseen, required of Tibetans for immigration. Our most recent employers are Orchard Supply Hardware, Apple One, Suzan Hahn, DDS and Paul Falvey, DDS., Gitane Painting and Waterproofing, the Nut Tree, Salem Retirement Home, Monterey Market, and Perfect Service Builders. Many thanks for giving supportive work environments, and the means for Tibetan newcomers to support themselves.

As we complete the immigration phase of the Project, we are focusing on restructuring to effectively meet the needs of the new immigrants. It is the intent of the steering committee to gradually turn all major

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decisions regarding resettlement over to the Tibetan community. After fulfilling her commitment to see the Project through the immigration phase, Julia Shepardson will step aside as Project Director effective September 1, 1993. At that time the existing steering committee will dissolve and be replaced by a new structure which will put the Tibetan community in charge. The existing committee heads, the Project Director, and the steering committee will continue as consultants wherever necessary.

The overwhelming concern of the new immigrants is employment, as well as continued assistance in tutoring English as a second language.

Hearty congratulations to members of Bay Area Friends of Tibet and others, too numerous to mention, who have volunteered valuable time, effort and money working on the Resettlement Project in making the immigration of sixty Tibetans a successful reality. It is a testimony to the power of grass roots action. Tibetans and Americans alike have learned and grown a great deal from this experience!

Eco-Tibet California's valiant volunteer John Isom has been busy bringing together the world's Eco-Tibet groups via electronic mail, compiling environmental information, creating informative displays for BAFoT/Eco-Tibet tabling, and creating a map locating nuclear sites in Tibet. Later this year, John will attend an Eco-Tibet France conference funded by the French government. Eco-Tibet activists are compiling an environmental database in Holland. For more information, or if you would like to help, please call John at BAFoT (415) 241-9197.

Tibet Day a Success

BAFoT's yearly humdinger, Tibet Day at San Francisco's Fort Mason, proved to be the most successful fundraiser yet. This year's highlights included award winning photographer Alison Wright's slideshow, BAFoT boardmember and Tibetan art scholar Rick Kohn's talk, and the ever-popular, can't-get-enough-of -'em momos. A beautiful exhibition of Tibetan students' umbrellas graced the main hall with numerous vendors and tablers, and Chaksampa performed in Life On The Water Theater. More of the same awaits at Tibet Day Santa Cruz August 28, and BAFoT is looking to hold Tibet Days in the East Bay and Santa Rosa.



BAFoT has been actively tabling at other events throughout the Bay Area this Spring. Tibetans and BAFoT volunteers staffed booths at Earth Day events in Palo Alto, Berkeley, and Concord; San Francisco's Cherry Blossom Festival; Berkeley's Himalayan Fair; and Oakland Museum's Film Festival. Altogether, the tabling resulted in over 1,000 postcards and letters sent to Representative Nancy Pelosi and President Clinton. The cards urged them to condition China's MFN status by halting population transfer in Tibet, that human rights be improved, and that Tibetans be freed from religious persecution. Many Toycott and Green Party Petitions were filled as well. T-shirts, bumper stickers and books were hot selling items as well. Call BAFoT if you need a new FREE TIBET tee or bumper sticker!



At the Earth Day events, volunteers educated fairgoers on deforestation, nuclear waste dumping, large-scale dams and soil erosion in Tibet and how these issues relate to MFN trade status with China. At the Concord Pavilion, 20,000 attendees were greeted by our Tibet Support Groups' 9-by-14 foot banner strategically placed at the Pavilion's entrance.

Are You a BAFoT Member Yet?

BAFoT operates through the generous contributions of our members. If you support Tibet, help us continue our work on behalf of the Tibetan people by becoming a member today.

- \$500 Life Member
 - \$150 Sponsor
 - \$75 Supporter
 - \$25 Annual Membership
 - \$40 Family Rate
 - \$15 Student/ Low Income
- I enclose a donation of \$_____ to support Tibetan culture and human rights.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Please mail your tax-deductible donation to: BAFoT, 347

Dolores Street, Suite 206, San Francisco, CA 94110 ph: 415-241-9197 fax: 415-626-0865

China's Boom Spurs Migration Into Tibet

LHASA, June 6, Reuters --A deafening fusillade scares the scavenging toddlers and dogs off the rubbish skips, and a whiff of gunpowder mingles with the juniper smoke from ritual temple fires. It isn't gunfire this time-- though in Lhasa it would not be unusual-- but a volley of Chinese firecrackers lit to mark the opening of yet another restaurant-cum-karaoke bar by businessmen from the place Tibetans call a foreign country.

The city of Buddhist shrines and monasteries is undergoing an "invasion" of majority Han Chinese migrants, armed not with Kalashnikovs but cash, liquor and cheap fashions. Tibetans fear it will succeed in killing their culture and hopes of independence, where Maoist terror and martial law failed in the past.

China's economic transformation is helping suck newly rich entrepreneurs, cooks, hairdressers, shopkeepers and laborers to a city where the rewards, by the standards back home, can be as high as the altitude.

"I can sell goods here for twice the price that I get in Sichuan", said one newly-arrived trader. "Everyone has so much money to spend." He means the mostly Han Chinese soldiers, police and other government employees pad big bonuses by Beijing to work in Tibet. The rebellious Tibetan people they control say the benefits of the boom pass them by.

A demonstration by up to 2,000 Tibetans in late May began as a rally against inflation after prices of state-supplied fuel oil and other basic goods rose in the kind of economic reform being carried out all over China. Tibetans said the price rises fell harder on them than on the Han Chinese migrants, cushioned by subsidies from state employers or just richer through their business success.

Marchers also demanded a halt to prostitution-- mostly by Tibetan women for Han clients-- and drunkenness among Tibetan youths in Chinese-run bars. By the time police crushed the protest with tear gas and arrests, it had turned into a rally for independence and the exiled Dalai Lama.

Tibetan market traders abandoned their stalls in a sympathy protest for one week after the demonstration, but their "strike" had little effect. Rival traders, many of them Han Chinese, set up shop on the empty street corners. "The Chinese are good at business, because all they think about is money. All Tibetans think about is religion," said one resident, adding the number of Tibetan-run shops in Lhasa was shrinking even as the total of private businesses increased.

Others said rising rents were forcing out native traders, who were usually replaced by Han or Moslem Hui people from northwest China. One key to making money in the city is access to supplies of scarce goods, through the kind of contacts in China's interior 1,500 km (900 miles) away, which Tibetans lack.

The population figures supplied by Beijing and exiled Tibetan groups vary widely and are riddled with pitfalls. Chinese officials told a visiting European Community delegation that non-Tibetans made up a mere three per cent of the 2.25 million population, but that figure appears to leave out troops or the many Chinese without residence permits. Pro-independence groups say Han Chinese outnumber Tibetans in Lhasa, and in the historic territory of Tibet, constituting a "cultural genocide". But they are usually referring to a region including areas of neighboring provinces far more populous than the "Tibet Autonomous Region". Each side dismisses the other's figures as lies.

Whatever the true statistics, the numbers of Han Chinese are growing fast, and incoming businessmen have plenty of encouragement from the authorities. "When I'm in Lhasa I stay in guest houses run by the People's Armed Police or the army," says Wang Qing, who makes so much selling liquor, cigarettes and motorbikes in Lhasa that he can afford to commute by the US \$ 100.00 flight across the dramatic Tibetan mountains from Sichuan province four times a week. We Chinese don't look at Tibet like you Westerners, we wouldn't come here on holiday. It's backward and uncomfortable. The only reason to be here is to make money".

At the other end of the economic scale is Zhang, forced by lack of work in his impoverished native village in Shaanxi, northwest China, to come to Lhasa to sell dough twists from a curbside wok to Chinese cycling to work. "We have to fill our belly one way or another," he said. "I've nothing against Tibetans. I sell to anyone who can pay".

But many Tibetans can't. Lhasa now has an army of beggars, including the grotesquely crippled, children and old people, as ragged as any in Asia-- the kind of destitution which China's Communist Party used to boast it had eliminated in the "new Tibet". Now, it seems, tourists must be either hard-hearted, or carry a lot of change.

Tibetan Demonstrators Arrested in Lhasa

BEIJING, May 29, AP -- Police arrested several Tibetans, including three monks, who shouted slogans in the capital of Lhasa, a human rights group said Saturday. The rally followed two days of Tibetan protests against Chinese rule.

The London-based Tibetan Information Network said about nine people took part in the rally Friday. The network, which cited accounts by Western travelers, did not know what the protesters chanted.

The network said the protests began over price hikes and a recent increase in

the number of ethnic Chinese tradesmen in the city, which the Tibetans said robbed them of business.

Tibetans have staged hundreds of pro-independence protests over the past six years. The last major unrest was in 1989, when the government imposed martial law.

On Friday, President Clinton linked China's future trade privileges to an improved human rights record, including protection of Tibet's "distinctive religious and cultural heritage."



Tibet Events Calendar

Sunday, June 27 - An Evening With the Gaden Shartse Monks. Join them in their "Sacred Earth and Body Healing" world tour, as they perform a variety of cultural dances, chants, healing ceremonies and dialectical debate. Proceeds will support the Gaden Shartse Monastery, Stanford Friends of Tibet, and the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet in their ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the situation in Tibet. 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Memorial Auditorium, Stanford University. For more information contact Ed Sobel, 415-856-6229.

Saturday, July 3 - Celebrate His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Birthday. Join Tibetans and friends in an offering ceremony to celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday. Enjoy a potluck picnic (bring dishes and drinks to share; hot coals, ice and paper goods provided) in beautiful Tilden Park at the Laurel picnic site, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. For more information, call Leslie McKim at 415-241-9197.

Tuesday, July 6 - Film, "Compassion in Exile." The film chronicles the 30-year nonviolent struggle against China's occupation of Tibet, and includes interviews with the Dalai Lama and his family. Rare footage from Chinese propaganda films and testimonials from exiled Tibetans. Will air 10 p.m. on PBS on the 6th, and again on station KTEH on the 12th, 10 p.m.

Saturday, Aug 28 - Santa Cruz Tibet Day. Tibetan performances, arts, crafts, food, and lectures will make for an educational day at the annual event. Call Cindy Zikmund for more information: 415-694-4005 or 415-854-7493.



Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi recently emphasized the need for all of us to write letters of support to Clinton regarding the courageous step he took by attaching conditions to MFN trade status for China. Clinton will no doubt be receiving tons of mail from the opposing pro-China business side, so it is very important for him to hear from you! The following is a sample letter you can send; however, it is always best if you can personalize it.

Date:

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I strongly commend your leadership in placing conditions on Most Favored Nation trade status to China. As stated in the Executive Order, China must show "significant progress in protecting Tibet's distinctive cultural and religious and cultural heritage."

Next year I hope you will consider the serious situation in Tibet regarding the population transfer of Han Chinese into Tibet. Population transfer is a classic strategy for breaking down resistance to an occupier's rule. It is recognized as such and outlawed by the IV Geneva Convention of 1949.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama remarked, "it was wise to give China a one-year warning, because this gives China a chance to think over the situation."

I look forward to seeing China meet your conditions over the next 12 months.

Sincerely,

Coming to America: The Bush Street Gang

by Greg Alling

"Can we go in here?!"

"You have to buy something if you do."

"Forget it, let's go."

"Look, postcards!" Outside a San Francisco gift store, a group of hesitant Tibetans debated in their native language about whether or not to enter.

"Go in," I urged, "you don't have to buy, just look around." As if given permission, they moved hurriedly through the store, marveling at compact discs and touching shiny materials for quality. Finally, Dalha Yeshe bought a dollar's worth of postcards, then asked how much postage they required; at the post office the day before, blinking machines had whisked their dollars away: "It just yanked the dollar from my hand. After pressing some buttons, out came the stamps from one hole, and change returned in another! What a laugh!" roared Dalha.

Unlike other winners of the "lucky ticket" to America, many of whom have been relocated in suburban areas, Dalha is one of nine Tibetans who came in February to live in a nine-story cement apartment building in the Tenderloin. With a ready camaraderie the Bush Street Gang, as they have jokingly come to be known, has braved not only a gauntlet of bureaucracy--from health clinics to social security and DMV-- but are learning to survive the myriad challenges of life in San Francisco. Waiting for buses in record-breaking rainstorms; dashing between cars in gridlock; BMWs running red lights. And their eyes opened wide to conditions in their own neighborhood, the saucy Polk Gulch area where, as Cho Gyaltzen tactfully put it, "women very friendly."

Looking for Work

Many would be afraid to move half a world away to a foreign country. But the members of the Gang seem tough.

"No, there was no fear at all," everyone replied when asked if they were hesitant about coming. Was moving into a strange neighborhood difficult? What about the violence, poverty and homelessness?

"We're all in the same situation. It's not like in India," they agreed.

Certainly, their primary concern here is employment. They work hard to attain English skills, studying up to six hours a day, five days a week in the hopes it will help them get and keep good jobs.

As their language skills improved, the students began expressing their employment preferences.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

"I want a baby-sitting job," said Dorjee Youdon.

"I want to learn typing," added Tsering Youdon.

"Any kind of job," chimed Dickyi. With a \$1,000 plus debt owed the Tibetan Government-In-Exile for their plane fares, most of the Tibetans agreed with Dickyi, simply hoping to be employed in California's weak economy.

Jamyang, however, had spent the previous afternoon watching sailboats and freighters cruise the Bay, and laughingly proclaimed, "I want to work on a boat."

But after two months of very few offers, the reality of the sort of work they will be doing--at least for a while--is sinking in. Most of the Gang are working at a T-shirt factory south of Market Street.

"The work is easy, but my legs and back are sore," said Kalsang Dolma after her first three days toiling midnight to 8 a.m. "But we'll get used to it," she added.

"Now we're on Indian time again," joked Tsering Wangdu, who also works at the factory.

Some of the Gang have less labor-intensive positions. Tsering Youdon keeps an organic food store on Fillmore in healthy shape, and Dalha and Cho work at a publishing center in Marin.

"Before, I worked at a printing press in Dharamsala, India. Now I am learning modern printing on computers," said Dalha confidently. "Although the starting wages are low, it is a skill which will be very useful when Tibet is free." Already, he has helped create one thousand plastic-backed photographs of the Dalai Lama for American Congressional Representatives to hand out in Tibet.

Making the decision to come to America in the first place was not an easy one. Jampa Chozom agonized much about whether or not to come, since she was the

sole means of her father's support.

"My father told me not to go. But in each person's mind/heart (*semba*, in Tibetan) one wants to improve one's situation. In India, there was very little chance to improve our conditions. In our settlement we had almost no education -- had nothing -- so just getting the chance to make an improvement in my circumstance was nice."

Kalsang also faced a difficult decision in leaving her family, but received



Some of the Bush Street Gang: (l to r) Jampa Chozom, Dorjee Youdon, Dickyi, Kalsang Dolma. Photo: Greg Alling

encouragement from her husband.

"He told me to go to America because I would learn about myself and my rights as an individual. More importantly it would benefit our children and would benefit Tibet's situation. Now, our economic condition will get better in the long run. We will be able to send our children to better schools in India."

American Dream

Many people working with Tibetans find them special people from an incredibly rich culture. Likewise, Tibetans feel Americans have unique qualities.

"The differences between people here are not like those in India," says Wangdu, "there is a real equality. I haven't seen any 'bullying' by anyone, which is really good."

"Americans treat dogs and cats incredibly well," Kalsang agreed. "Their concern is just like practicing Tibetan Buddhism."

The Bush Street Gang are here as permanent residents, eligible for family reunification after two years. But they see the purpose of coming to America as one which will enable them to work toward freeing Tibet, and their desire to one day return to their homeland remains as strong as ever.

"Probably I will bring my family over one-by-one," Wangdu said. "But when we get freedom, I will go back to Tibet." Indeed, each Gang member echoed "I will go back."

Mass Detentions of Tibetans in Lhasa

According to a report by Tibet Information Network in London and Amnesty International, Chinese authorities in Lhasa are reportedly carrying out mass detentions of Tibetans in order to prevent contact between Tibetans and European Community diplomats visiting the city.

Among the detainees are Gendun Rinchen (age 46), a tour guide from Markham, eastern Tibet; Lobsang Yonten (aka Tsasur Choened), a former monk now living in the Ramoche area; and a woman who has not yet been identified. They were arrested in their homes in the Ramoche area of Lhasa shortly before midnight on Thursday, May 13.

The three are believed to have been planning to contact the EC delegation, according to sources in Lhasa. Under Chinese law, passing such information to foreigners can be regarded as an act of espionage, and can be punishable by death.

There are grave concerns about the physical safety of the detainees while they are in custody.

The exact number detained is estimated to be over 100 by Amnesty International. Tibet Information Network reported dozens of arrests of suspected dissidents whom Chinese authorities believed would disrupt the visit of the EC diplomats. Arrests before and during visits of foreign delegations have been known to have occurred in the past, but it is believed this is the largest round of arrests in memory.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Fax (202-647-7350) or write to Winston Lord. Use the sample letter if you wish, putting the date, your name and return address at the bottom.

Phone your Representatives and Senators. Inform them of your concern for the safety of the detainees. Ask them to phone Mr. Lord and urge him to help secure their release.

Call Kunzang Yuthok, executive director at the Tibetan Rights Campaign, for further questions: 206-547-1015.

Please act quickly. Their lives may be at stake, and help from the West is their only hope.

URGENT ACTION

Mr. Winston Lord
Assistant Secretary of East Asia Affairs
Department of State
2201 C Street NW, Room 6205
Washington DC 20520

Dear Mr. Lord:

I am writing to request your assistance in an urgent matter of grave concern.

According to a report from Amnesty International, over 100 Tibetans have been detained by Chinese authorities. Tibet Information Network in London reports dozens of arrests of suspected dissidents whom Chinese authorities believed might disrupt the visit of European diplomats.

Among those arrested last week are three Tibetans; two men and one woman who are believed to have been planning to provide the EC delegation with information on current human rights conditions in Lhasa. Passing such information to foreigners can be regarded as an act of espionage under Chinese law, and is punishable by death.

Pictured here is Gendun Rinchen, aged 46, who worked as a tour guide in Lhasa, and is well-known among foreigners and Tibetans for his expertise as a guide. As yet, he is the only one among those arrested on whom we have some information.

The seriousness of the allegations leads us to believe the lives of these Tibetans are at risk, either from torture or execution.



I ask that you office intervene on behalf of the Tibetans, and make an immediate and forceful appeal to Chinese authorities to unconditionally release all the detainees, including Gendun Rinchen, and to issue a public statement condemning the wave of arrests.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter, and for your support of fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Tibetan people.

Sincerely,

BAY AREA FRIENDS OF TIBET
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San Francisco CA 94110

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