



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

Winter 1993 • Volume 4, Number 1

Tibet Support Groups Set 1993 Agenda at Conference of the Americas

by D'Arcy Richardson

Placing conditions on China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status to end Chinese population transfer into Tibet will be the top priority of the US Tibet support movement for the next several months. Lodi Gyari, president of the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), gave the word to an enthusiastic crowd of supporters gathered in Washington, DC for the Tibet Conference of the Americas. Over 300 participants (including 100 Tibetans) from seven countries met on January 30 and 31 to exchange ideas, share information, and plot a coordinated strategy for the coming year. Four BA FoT board members attended the conference, along with Eco-Tibet representative John Isom, who organized the environmental portion of the conference (see related story on page 3).

The tone for the conference was set by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who sent a message that "the main responsibility of the Tibetans and our friends is to keep the political issue of Tibet alive internationally." He urged conference participants to search for

practical ways to aid the six million Tibetans under occupation, especially in areas of health, education, and social and environmental conditions "without compromising our basic stand" that Tibet must be returned to Tibetans.

The ambitious agenda for the conference included plenary sessions, speeches, panel discussions, and workshops on the entire range of issues currently facing Tibet and its support movement. Over the two-day session, attendees were addressed by such notables as Professor Samdhong Rinpoche of the Tibetan Government's Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Chinese dissident Shen Tong, and Canadian Parliamentarian Warren Allmand.

Saturday's panel sessions on Tibet and the UN, economic development issues, cultural preservation, environmental challenges, US government policy, and geopolitical considerations in Tibet's future provided the

background for workshop discussions on Sunday, in which participants set goals for the coming year.

Throughout the conference, participants expressed a heightened sense of urgency due to recent developments in Tibet. Discussion centered around China's formal declaration of the Tibet Autonomous Region as a "special economic zone" in which further incentives are being offered to Chinese and other foreign investors to locate in Tibet. Activists monitoring Chinese population transfer believe that the economic designation is already having a devastating effect on Tibetans. A recent survey of a town in eastern Tibet showed that out of 765 businesses, only 60 were Tibetan-owned, with the rest owned by Chinese. The disparity in the quality of life for Tibetans versus Chinese settlers appears to be widening rapidly as a result of the new incentives.

Based on these concerns, the US Tibet support movement has agreed to focus on the halt of the population transfer as a necessary component of

Inside...	Page
Eco-Tibet Activism Comes of Age	3
News Updates	4
Tibetan Authors Speak	5
Resettlement Project Update	7
Events Calendar	8

(continued on page 2)

continued from page 1

any move by Congress to condition China's MFN status. Political strategists predict that because of the change of administrations in Washington, this year could provide the last opportunity to win the MFN fight. Even so, they cautioned against too much reliance on support from President Clinton, citing pre-election trade discussions in Beijing between the PRC and a high-ranking cabinet member as a sign that support may not be forthcoming. Conference attendees began the MFN effort on Monday, meeting with Members of Congress after a morning of political briefings.

Several major agreements were forged from lively debate among conference participants. Groups

committed to establishing rapid communications among groups from all over the world as another top priority. John Maier of the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet (ICLT), along with Peter Wood from the Institute of Global Communications (IGC), outlined a strategy to develop a computer link by for all Tibets support groups and the Government-in-Exile.

In addition to improving internal communications, the group committed to an increased effort to gain media attention for Tibet as a key component to raising awareness and support. At the closing session, participants filled boxes with over \$2,300 in donations to hire a media consultant to advise the national movement through the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington.

Bay Area Friends of Tibet Newsletter

A Quarterly Publication of Bay Area Friends of Tibet
347 Dolores Street, Suite 206
San Francisco CA 94110
(415)241-9197

Vol. 4, No. 1 - Winter 1993

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Special Thanks: Jane Heaven, Tamdin Dorji, Samten Choeden, Lhakpa Dolma, Chimi Wangchuk, Tenpa Jamyang, Karen Kennedy, Nancy Ableser, Matthew Silva

What You Can Do

Write or call Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi to let her know you support conditioning Most Favored Nation status on the halt of Chinese population transfer into Tibet. Representative Pelosi will be drafting the bill that will be voted on by the House. Voice your opinion AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Although the vote may not come until June or later, the legislation is being written NOW!

Here is the information you need:

WHAT TO SAY:

1) Thank her for her leadership and past support for the Tibetan cause in Congress.

2) Give specifics about what you want her to do, namely add language to the MFN bill that specifically lists the halt of Chinese population transfer into Tibet as a condition for continuing MFN for China.

3) Be brief and to the point. Don't overload your letter or call with other concerns, questions, or issues.

4) If you are her constituent, let her know that. Include your name and address on your correspondence and ask for a reply from her.

WHERE TO SEND IT:

Representative Nancy Pelosi
240 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
phone: (202)225-4965
fax: (202)225-8259
local office: (415)556-4862

SEND IT NOW!!!!!!!

YOU CAN ALSO TELL THE PRESIDENT:

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

White House Comment Line:
(202)456-1111

Call early and often!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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.

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- \$25 Single Membership
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- \$75 Supporter
- \$150 Sponsor
- \$500 Life Member
- \$ ____ Other

All members receive our newsletter and invitations to special events.

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Address: _____

Phone: W _____
H _____

YES! I would like to volunteer some time to work on BAFoT's projects. Please contact me with more information.

MAIL your check to: BAFoT, 347 Dolores St., Ste. 206, SF, CA 94110

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Photo by Kathi Kennedy

Students from Tibetan Children's Village protesting environmental degradation in Tibet, March 10, Dharamsala.

Eco-Tibet Activism Comes of Age at Tibet Conference

by John Isom

Environmental researchers and activists from North and South America, Europe and Australia gathered during the recent two-day Tibet Conference of the Americas in Washington, DC, to discuss the next steps in bringing the preservation of Tibet's environment into the international spotlight.

The environment and development panels, workshops and meetings represent the next phase of the environmental movement among Tibet support groups (TSG's) and scientists worldwide.

Panel members discussed economic development in subsistence communities in the Himalayas and projects in Tibet; the political implications of work in Tibet under Chinese occupation; and guidelines for future development.

Several significant problems now face Tibet's environment. These include the status of Tibet's rare and unique plants and animals and Eastern Tibet's old-growth forests and the degradation of downstream watersheds due to logging.

The first workshop examined results from a questionnaire distributed by Eco-Tibet California to TSGs around the world. Much of the discussion focused on four fundamental issues that would resurface throughout the day: the ethics of doing research and environmental projects in occupied Tibet with the assistance of the Chinese; the need to inform researchers about the political, cultural and economic contexts in which they do their work; the need to begin training Tibetans to participate in environmental research projects; and the need to begin coordinating information about Tibet's environment in order to meet the needs of TSGs and researchers. Eco-Tibet California will be facilitating an electronic information clearinghouse to address information needs.

The second workshop addressed a proposal to evaluate environmental conditions in Tibet using first-hand observation of human, animal, and plant populations, while ensuring that environmental research is consistent with stated objectives in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Five Point Peace Plan, and the cultural practices and beliefs of Tibetans.

The afternoon economic development workshop addressed issues in occupied Tibet. Discussion focused on how current projects marginalize Tibetans, promote further Chinese control over Tibetans, and abet the presence and continued transfer of ethnic Chinese into Tibet.

Tibetan participants were adamant about the dangers of population transfer, stressing the need for small-scale human resource projects targeted to benefit Tibetans. Education, health care, and small business development were identified as potential areas for future projects.

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

The success of these workshops and panels marks the end of a year of local, regional and international action on behalf of Tibet's environment. This work has included several exciting local initiatives by TSGs, attendance at the Rio Earth Summit by the two members of the Central Tibetan Administration and Eco-Tibet members from three continents, and the release of the comprehensive report *Tibet: Environment and Development Issues 1992*, detailing the forty years of occupation, resource extraction, and development in Tibet. An international symposium on Tibet's environment is slated for May of this year, sponsored by Eco-Tibet France.

For information on Eco-Tibet, call John Isom at the BAFoT office, (415) 241-9197.

NEWS

Excerpts on Tibetan issues from the world press.

Tibetans Permitted to Specify "Tibet" as Birthplace

With the help of Congressman Barney Frank and 16 other Members of Congress, Tibetans will now be able to list Tibet as their place of birth on Social Security application forms.

Complaints from Tibetans who were forced to use China as their place-of-birth designation were taken to Rep. Frank by Ed Bednar, Director of the U.S. Resettlement Project. While the new designation is encouraging for Tibetans and their supporters, the Department of State still does not consider Tibet an independent political entity, and will not allow Tibetan immigrants to specify "Tibet" as their place of birth on passports.

Thais Side With Dalai Lama

Bangkok, Feb 10-- Thailand Wednesday rebuffed a warning from Beijing that it should stop next week's visit by Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, saying it had nothing to do with China's internal situation.

"We obviously have to make the Chinese government understand that the Dalai Lama is coming here on a very specific mission--to campaign for the release of (Burma's) Aung San Suu Kyi," spokesman Abhisit Vejjajiva said.

Abhisit was responding to a blunt warning issued in Beijing in which a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman called the Dalai Lama "not purely a religious figure" and said Bangkok should change its mind and stop the visit.

"We hope that the country concerned (Thailand) will solve this problem properly--that is, refuse the visit by the Dalai Lama," the Beijing spokesman said, adding that the Tibetan spiritual leader had long been "engaging in politics aimed at splitting the motherland."

Thailand bowed to Chinese pressure in 1987 and again in 1990 to cancel visits by the Tibetan spiritual leader who has lived in exile in India since 1959.

The Dalai Lama joins six other Nobel laureates to campaign for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, 47, who is spending her fourth year under house arrest in Rangoon, where all but family members and servants are barred from visiting. --*Rising Nepal*

Communist Party Chief Calls for Purge in Tibet

The New York Times reported on February 13 that the newly appointed Communist Party leader of Tibet is

calling for a purge of officials who do not take a tough enough stance against the Dalai Lama and his followers, according to a confidential speech smuggled out of Tibet.

"We must absolutely clean up those places where a small number of separatists have long been active," Chen Kuiyan declared in a speech delivered at a recent meeting of party officials in Lhasa. "We must sweep out those hostile elements hidden among us...If we retreat, then separatism will spread like a malignant tumor."

There have been other indications that China is taking a tougher line in Tibet. The leadership recently dismissed the Mayor of Lhasa, an ethnic Tibetan named Loga who seemed quite popular but who apparently was not tough enough on demonstrators.

Chinese Will Release Two Dissidents

In an apparent move to placate US concerns about human rights conditions, the Chinese government recently announced that it will free two prominent political prisoners before completion of their sentences.

Wang Xizhe, 44-year-old pioneer of China's democracy movement, would be the first dissident imprisoned after the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement to be released early. Gao Shan, a 36-year-old former government official imprisoned after the Tiananmen crackdown, has already been released after serving three and a half years of a four-year sentence.

The move by Beijing may signal broader amnesty for political prisoners, in an effort to improve relations with the Clinton Administration. - *New York Times*

Tibetan Scholars Featured On KPFA Radio

Tibetan authors Jamyang Norbu and Lhasang Tsering recently toured the US to rally support for their new Dharamsala, India-based organization, the Amnye Machen Institute. In this interview by Flashpoints contributor Stephen Soong and associate producer Greg Saatkamp, the authors discuss their views of the difficulties facing Tibet, the unbroken spirit prevailing in the country, and the gap their institute fills in the struggle for independence. The following is an edited version of the interview, which aired on KPFA in November.

Flashpoints: Could you give us an update on the status of the independence movement, both inside Tibet and among the exile community?

Lhasang Tsering: The best hope for Tibetan independence is the fact that people inside Tibet, despite so many years of suffering and oppression, have not lost the will to be free. They have not lost faith and confidence in the leadership of the Dalai Lama, and the exiled government he heads in Dharamsala. For many years after the invasion, there was actual guerilla activity by Tibetans. This came to an end in 1974. At the moment, the resistance is a passive one. There is a wall of silence, since Tibetans refuse to communicate with the Chinese authorities. Though we are overwhelmed by a large number of troops, exact numbers are disputed. Estimates range from 350 thousand to half a million. There is an increasing number of Chinese immigrants who are coming into Tibet. We must resist this, because it poses the ultimate danger of Tibetans being assimilated and absorbed. We may disappear as a people.

Outside Tibet the freedom movement has improved, especially after widespread news reports of Tibetan

pro-independence demonstrations inside Tibet in the fall of 1987 and March 88-89. Also due to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama, which was the only thing we could celebrate in the last forty years that has raised the level of interest and attention on Tibet. The Tibetan people everywhere were revitalized, and more people have come to join as sympathizers and supporters. The network of people who previously knew about Tibet are now actively doing something about it. For the first time there has been—starting with the US Congress, the German government and the Australian parliament, the Dutch parliament—a number of parliaments passing resolutions in support of the Dalai Lama's peaceful efforts to gain independence for Tibet. In the last few years even heads of state, including Bush, have made a gesture of meeting with the Dalai Lama, though they are noncommittal. They have not yet found the courage to speak the truth. Yet I think it is a beginning, and we see many signs of improvement in the world situation, both inside and outside Tibet.

Jamyang Norbu: Although we don't hear of it in the media, there have been many cases this year of small groups of Tibetans demonstrating. And of course there is no chance [for them], because on every rooftop in the city, there are police not only armed with automatic weapons, but with M-16's and heavy artillery. But the population is keeping its spirit up. They feel they will get independence. Rationally they cannot explain it, but this hope has helped the movement directly, because there are now far fewer informers among the Tibetans, not because of the threat of retaliation, but simply because people are collaborating with the Chinese less. Tibetans are coming out publicly, unafraid to say what they feel against Chinese authorities. The mood may be grim inside Tibet, but there's a degree of hope, which is reflected outside in the exile communities. We are a stubborn people, and I think the Chinese know that either

they will have to wipe us out totally from the face of the earth, or we will be there for many centuries bugging them.

Flashpoints: The destruction of 6,000 or more monasteries and religious sites, and the murder of over a million people....How should we understand the failure of the West to relay this story to Western people?

J.N.: I think there are a number of reasons. The United States takes a lead in the world on a lot of issues, but on the Tibetan issue Americans have always felt that China was their turf, in the way the British always considered India to be their spot. And with missionaries—even with good people in this country—there has always been an emotional attachment to China. And with intellectuals it was even more so; Sinologists in many ways stand accused of behaving in the most unacademic, stupid and self-serving ways in their dealings with communist China. It is not only a question of Tibet; China itself is going through the most tremendous upheavals in its entire history. More people have been killed by the communist party since it took power than all the Chinese killed by all Western nations combined, even by the Japanese in WWII.

These murderers—these killers—have in many ways received a facelift by this country and by the West because of the efforts of Western experts, politicians and left-wing organizations. With newspapers, like the *New York Times*, which came out in the '60s with anti-Tibetan articles written by a twit of an editor named Seymour Topping. In those days this was especially difficult to hear because we were isolated, yet each day we opened a newspaper we found abuse hurled at us. It was not only the *New York Times*, but *Le Monde* and many European papers. Even now there are apologists for China, people who say "Well, we really shouldn't annoy them, lets keep MFN in place," or "At least it helps the Chinese keep a

few jobs." But the Chinese are looking for freedom as well. Just getting a television set or a better job is no consolation when your husband is in jail, or when your son has been run over by a tank. I think in many ways this attitude of apologizing for China is demeaning not only to Tibetans, but to the Chinese. And on it goes. Especially now, after the Party Congress, there are a lot of

When a person comes to you with gnashing teeth and a knife in his hand--you either prepare to fight or you run away...

near-congratulatory articles coming out about how wonderful it's going to be in China.

Flashpoints: Beyond educating people in other countries about what's really happening in Tibet and China, what are the primary strategies of your movement?

L.T.: No major government is prepared to recognize that Tibet was an independent country. When we were invaded, and when we appealed to the United Nations in 1950, there was a wall of silence from the West--a weak-kneed approach motivated not by justice, but by self-interest. Even today, the president knows in substance that China is the most totalitarian regime in the world, under which millions have died. Yet [the US] continues to give support to this regime, against the wishes of the Chinese themselves, against the aspirations of many other people who are under China's colonial occupation. It is our hope that the coverage in various media will generate pressure on politicians to change. And this change should effect government policy and put political and economic pressure on China to change.

Flashpoints: Lhasang Tsering, you have written a policy you call "demographic aggression," meaning China's policy of population assimilation and absorption. Could you talk a little more about this policy, and how effective you think it has been?

L.T.: We believe it is the number one problem for us today. The Tibetan struggle now is not only for freedom; in fact, freedom is a luxury for us. The struggle is for survival. In the past when there was military oppression, it was clear with the Tibetan people how they should deal with the problem. It's like a person coming to you with gnashing teeth and a knife in his hand--you either prepare to fight or you run away. But if you are invited for supper and your wine is poisoned, you have no defense.

The Chinese government would deny [population transfer policies] with the argument that Chinese people don't like high altitude. I went to Tibet in 1980 and traveled all over for three and 1/2 months, and found the choice is not between high and low altitude; the choice is between having a job and being jobless. The choice is between hunger and altitude. Anyone would choose to be on a high altitude with a full stomach. And when Chinese settlers come to Tibet, they have the incentive to come as the privileged class. There are also interest-free loans for those who will open businesses. And further incentives for those who will marry Tibetan girls. With this gradual process, we are going to be eliminated. For the few Tibetans who remain culturally Tibetan, their young children are taken to China for education, and scattered so that they don't even know their parent's names--much more subtle and effective than brutal military aggression. We face the danger that very soon we could go to Lhasa, to the Potala, and wonder at this magnificent building, yet around it there will be no Tibetans.

Flashpoints: The two of you are on tour of the U.S. and other countries promoting an institute for research and publication to inform Tibetans, and raise awareness about the Tibetan struggle. Could you tell us more about its mission?

J.N.: The institution is something that is unique in our history because Tibet was a very traditional country--one could say medieval--before the communist Chinese army occupied it. Even out in exile we've had problems trying to fit our cause into a world view that is modern and changing, because our world view is so traditional, bound very much in its religion. What we are trying to do here is to study the problems of Chinese occupation, and especially population transfer. We also have literacy problems, and women's issues. All these we want to address in a more dynamic, scientific and systematic manner, in a more humanist and liberal point-of-view. We are practicing Buddhists, but we

...But if you are invited for supper and your wine is poisoned, you have no defense.

feel now is the time when we should strike a balance between the old and the new.

We have started this institute with a number of academics in Dharamsala. Many young people in Tibet--writers, artists, poets--are coming out, finding their identity, and are beginning to speak out in their own disciplines of the problems of our nation. We are hoping that working together with people inside and outside Tibet we can, in due course of time, find solutions.

For more information on the Amnye Machen Institute, call the Office of Tibet, (212) 213-5010/-5011.

Resettlement Update...

There are now 50 Tibetans in the Bay Area that have arrived with the Tibetan Resettlement Project; the Tibetan community in the Bay Area has doubled since 1992! Welcome to all the new arrivals...

December: Sonam Gyaltsen, Tenzin Kunsang, Pempa Tsering, Ngawang Damdul, Tsering Yodon, Dhondup Karpo, Chime Lhamo, Tseten Lhamo Khangsar.

January: Karma Tsewang Tenzin, Tsultrim Dolma, Ventul Rinpoche.

February: Dalha Yeshi, Jampa Chozom, Deki Wangmo, Tsering Youdon, Diky Chodon, Kalsang Choedon, Tsering Wangdu, Tenzin Wangmo, Dorjee Youdon, Kalsang Dolma, Cho Gyaltsen, and Jamyang.

...and our heartfelt thanks to their sponsors:

Carol Sundell and Lucas Myers, St. Paul Lutheran Church (Oakland), Margo Brumme, Carol Fields, Stephen Sklar and Sharon Pollack, Fadhill Bradley, Patti and Lyle Larson, Bonnie Mintun and Tim Hoban, Linda and Henry McHenry, Dave Spitzer, Jeanne Herbert, Jan and Russell Potts, Nancy Ableser, Denny Sargent, Fred and Julia Shepardson, Jan Tiura and Joe Brenner, Lisa Tracy. Special thanks to Jeanne and Walter Herbert, who provided housing in San Francisco for the entire ESL group!

Resettled Tibetans are in Critical Need of Jobs

Please help by contacting us if you know of any job opportunities. Tibetans are looking for entry-level positions in all fields.

And the Resettlement Project Needs Your Continuing Support

We are still in need of your contributions to complete the Resettlement Project successfully. All contributions are tax-deductible.

BAFoT
347 Dolores Street, Suite 206
San Francisco, CA 94110
ph: (415) 241-9197

Bay Area Friends of Tibet would like to thank the following contributors for their generous donations:

**Buddhist Churches of America
Advanced Pacific Technologies
Community Language Institute
American Himalayan Foundation**

Thank you for making the Bay Area one of the most successful sites of the nationwide U.S. Tibetan Resettlement Project!

Volunteers Needed for the Resettlement Project...

WE WELCOME HELP FROM OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS. These are the projects we need you for now:

- 1) We need people to help locate entry level jobs for Tibetans. Call Tara Sullivan, employment committee chairwoman, (415) 673-2237.
- 2) Volunteers are needed to teach one-on-one English as a second language. Contact Greg Alling, chairman of the ESL committee, (415) 552-1958.
- 3) You can help our resettlement sponsors during daytime hours by showing new Tibetans how to get around in the States: use public transportation, get to appointments, etc. Call Julia Shepardson, Resettlement Project Director, (415) 851-4261.
- 4) You can be a sponsor yourself by offering to provide room and board for up to three months for a Tibetan immigrant. Call Julia Shepardson, (415) 851-4261.

JOIN THE HUMAN RACE!!!

BAFoT will be fielding its own Team for Tibet in the Human Race Walk-A-Thon on May 8, sponsored by the Volunteer Centers of California. You can raise money for BAfoT by joining us in Golden Gate Park. If you are interested in joining the team or helping coordinate the event, please call the BAfoT office at (415) 241-9197.

Tibet Events Calendar

MARCH

7 *Tibet Day Celebration* Sunday, March 7, Fort Mason, Conference Building A, San Francisco, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. -- Sponsored by Bay Area Friends of Tibet, honoring the struggle for Tibetan independence. Presentations by Dr. Mark Tatz of the Institute of Buddhist Studies on "World View in the West," and by Professor Richard Kohn on the "Art of Tibetan Buddhism." Performances by Chaksam Pa Tibetan Dance and Opera Company at Life on the Water Theater (separate admission). Slideshows, videos and film on Tibet and Buddhist ritual. Tibetan arts and crafts, books and exhibits, food bazaar, auction, and much more. Donation: \$5.00 for adults, \$3.00 children. For more information call (415) 241-9197.

10 *Demonstration protesting the Chinese occupation of Tibet*, Wednesday, March 10, 1-6 p.m., a march from the San Francisco Civic Center to a rally in front of the Chinese Consulate, Geary at Laguna, San Francisco. Please show your support for Tibet by joining this observance of the March 10, 1959 uprising in Lhasa. For more details call (415) 241-9197.

21 *Dinner honoring Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi* for her efforts on behalf of Tibet. Sunday March 21 at Gaylord Restaurant, Ghirardelli Square. Cocktails at 6 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20.00. For more information call ICLT (415) 252-5967.

Special Thanks

BAFoT would like to extend our special thanks to some very special people:

Dave Chapman, who went way above and beyond the call of duty to get the momos ready for Tibet Day.

Carol and friends at Whole Foods Grocery in Berkeley, whose generous assistance in our hour of need saved Tibet Day.

Marian Sasaki, who has put endless hours into keeping the office running smoothly. Best wishes and congratulations on your new job!

A heartfelt thuckjeche (Tibetan thank you) to all of you, and our many other volunteers who make BA FoT tick!

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