



# Bay Area Friends of Tibet

## N E W S L E T T E R

Winter 1994 • Volume 5, Number 1

## Gendun Rinchen, Human Rights Advocate, Released

LHASA — Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten, two Tibetan human rights advocates arrested in Lhasa in May, 1993 by Chinese authorities and charged with “stealing state secrets” and engaging in “separatist activities,” were unexpectedly released in early January. The releases came soon after the U.S. State Department’s draft report on world human rights reportedly criticized China’s record.

It is not known if the two men have been released on bail pending a trial or whether all charges against them have been dropped. If convicted, the arrests could receive the death penalty in China.

The men, who had been held for eight months in solitary confinement in Situ Detention Center in the northeastern suburbs of Lhasa, were apparently not ill-treated or subjected to torture as was feared. They are reported to be in reasonable health, although Gendun Rinchen is said to have noticeably lost weight.

Rinchen and Yonten were arrested as they prepared to deliver information about Chinese human rights abuses in Tibet to a delegation of European diplomats. The names of Tibetans previously arrested for their political

(Continued on page 3)

## America’s Largest Tibet-Support Demonstration at APEC Conference

SEATTLE — The largest pro-Tibet rally ever held in the Western Hemisphere took place on November 20, 1993 as more than 600 people from throughout North America marched through downtown Seattle. It was the highlight of five straight days of demonstrations that included nine separate vigils and protests.

The events coincided with Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s visit to Seattle for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leadership conference and his one-on-one meeting with President Clinton on November 19. During that private meeting, Clinton and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher specifically raised concerns about human rights in Tibet, urging China to begin negotiations with the Tibetan government in exile and His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Shouts of “China Out of Tibet” and “What do we want? Free Tibet” were heard inside the building where the leaders met, according to the Associated Press. At a November 18 demonstration, a long white carpet was rolled out in front of the Chinese delegation’s headquarters on the day of Jiang’s arrival. The words “Tibet: 1.2 million dead” were painted on it in red lettering.

“This ‘blood stained’ message is the kind of red-carpet welcome China deserves,” said Kunzang Yuthok, executive director of the Seattle-based Tibetan Rights Campaign (TRC). “Jiang is unwelcome wherever human rights are valued,” she added.

Clinton said he told Jiang again that concrete progress on human rights was needed in order for Beijing to gain renewal of its Most Favored

(Continued on page 2)

## 10th Annual Tibet Day Celebration

Bay Area Friends of Tibet will hold its 10th annual Tibet Day celebration on Sunday, March 6. BAFoT coordinators and volunteers have begun preparing for this special all-day event honoring the struggle for Tibetan freedom and the splendor of Tibetan culture. Once again, the festival will be held at Fort Mason Center. (For more information, please see Tibet Calendar on page 7.)

A colorful bazaar filled with handmade Tibetan arts and crafts will be set up by local vendors. In addition, there will be books for sale and exhibits for those who are interested in Tibetan culture and religious heritage. Visitors will be able to enjoy authentic Tibetan food (delicious momos and more) throughout the day.

Entertainment will be provided by Pacifica-based Chaksam-Pa Tibetan Dance and Opera Company. Special guests will present films, videos, slide shows and lectures to inform visitors about Tibetan history and culture.

Tibet Day is BAFoT’s principal fundraising event of the year. Donations of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children (under 12) will be accepted at the door, and a raffle and auction will be held during the day to raise additional funds. The proceeds will benefit Tibetan relief programs and Bay Area Friends of Tibet.

— Elizabeth Tam



## Dalai Lama To Speak in Berkeley

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will deliver a public talk at UC Berkeley’s Greek Theater on the afternoon of April 20. The event is co-sponsored by the UC Berkeley Chancellor’s office and the Graduate Theological Union. (Please see Tibet Calendar on page 7 for more information.)

## Inside . . .

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# Executive Director's Message

This past year has been an exciting and crucial one for Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was received by President Clinton and Vice-President Gore; Clinton conditioned the renewal of Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status for China partially on improvements in Tibet; China lost its bid for the 2000 Olympics; Clinton requested, in a face-to-face meeting, that Chinese President Jiang Zemin meet and negotiate with the Dalai Lama; the protest of the opening of the Splendid China theme park in Florida received major press coverage; and political prisoners Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten were recently released. Tibet support groups worldwide played a significant role in influencing the outcome of these landmark events for Tibet.

The next three-and-a-half-months will reveal the outcome of the most critical issue for Tibet in 1994: Will President Clinton renew China's MFN trade status in June? Although China is making gestures towards compliance during these final months of judgment, Bay Area Friends of Tibet will join an intense international effort to influence the MFN debate as it unfolds. This issue urgently requires the participation of every BAFoT

member. Letters need to be written to representatives and senators. (See "Urgent Action," page 8.) Until China begins negotiating with the Dalai Lama concerning a return visit to Lhasa and until China releases young nuns and other prisoners tortured and unaccounted for in prisons throughout Tibet, BAFoT will oppose the renewal of MFN.

BAFoT has been busy as ever with numerous events. A presentation by Tim Ward, author of *The Great Dragon's Fleas*, raised \$300 for Tibetan refugees. We were graced by the presence of the Ganden Jangtse monks, whose performance at the Asian Art Museum raised more than \$1,000 for their monastery in India. BAFoT and the Tibetan Nuns Project sponsored the Bay Area premiere of the new Ellen Bruno documentary, *Satya - A Prayer for the Enemy* at the Asian Art Museum. The sold-out event earned approximately \$3,000 for nuns in Tibet, as well as funds for BAFoT. A final note of good news: BAFoT's annual Christmas appeal brought in \$3,700 towards our continuing work for Tibet. Thanks to all who contributed!

- Leslie Kean (formerly McKim)

## Thank You, Volunteers

Many thanks to BAFoT's hard-working volunteers who have staffed events and information tables and helped in the office: Julie Blatner, Jana and Chris Bradshaw, Iris Heusler, Henry Kwan, Lorraine Lasser, Lucie Levine, Laura Livoti, Katherine Marckhoff, Susan Sopcak, Bob Spence, Hart Sprager, Matt Thayer, Ilene Wolff, and Sharon Zarkin. Special thanks to Larry Chiang who served as tabling coordinator, Carol Brighton and Bonnie McCalla for organizing the Gendun Rinchen candlelight vigil, Nancy Ableser for managing the tutoring program for Tibetans; Diane Winslow for her many hours of work on BAFoT's membership database; and again Bonnie McCalla for coordinating tabling. We are also fortunate to have a new office intern, Elizabeth Tam, a graduate of San Francisco State.

BAFoT invites you to join one of its newly formed committees: Chinese Products Boycott; Eco-Tibet; Educational Materials; Events; Fundraising; Media; Membership; Publications/Newsletter; Speakers Bureau; Tabling and Urgent Action. Call the office for more details.

**Resettled Tibetans are looking to develop skills and to find career-oriented employment. We urge friends to keep an eye open for suitable jobs that pay a minimum of \$6.50 per hour. We also need tutors in English, computer skills, and driving. Those with job leads, please contact Gyalden Yuthok, (510) 559-9756. If you would like to tutor, please call Nancy Ableser, (415) 285-8673.**

## Bay Area Friends of Tibet NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of  
Bay Area Friends of Tibet  
Volume 5, No. 1  
Winter 1994

### Editorial Collective

Greg Alling  
Leslie Kean  
Justin Lowe  
Christine Schneider  
Elizabeth Tam  
Chimi Thonden  
Diane Winslow

*The Editorial Collective seeks more volunteers. The Newsletter accepts, at its discretion, Tibet-related advertisements which do not necessarily represent the views of BAFoT. Please contact Leslie at BAFoT for information.*

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## Seattle Demonstration

(Continued from page 1)

Nation (MFN) trading status. Clinton's statement is the first time that a U.S. president has personally called on the Chinese to negotiate on Tibet. Wire services reports quoted Christopher saying, "I think it would be a big step forward if they begin a dialogue with the Dalai Lama. The human rights conditions in Tibet itself are very serious, very adverse."

In the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama wrote "The APEC summit leaders must work for an interdependence beneficial to all nations and peoples that transcends material needs by supporting Asia's democratic aspirations. First, we must recognize that interdependence in the Asian Pacific region must be based on all political entities respecting the right of individuals to develop spiritually, socially, materially and culturally." He added, "The United States has a special responsibility to Tibet because it is China's largest trading partner and is thus massively contributing to a government that is repressing Tibet."

With 50 Tibetan flags, four Drepung monks and a Jesuit priest leading the way, the November 20 march from Pioneer Square to the Pike Place Market was a colorful spectacle as the crowd stretched out three- and four-abreast down four city blocks. There were approximately 250 Tibetans (most wearing traditional clothes) and as many as 350 non-Tibetan supporters. "China continues to use forced abortion and sterilization, political torture and murder, slave labor, racial and cultural discrimination, religious persecution, and imprisonment in concentration camps in its attempts to solve the Tibetan problem it created when it invaded 44 years ago. China's plan is simple: eliminate the Tibetan people and culture," TRC director Yuthok said. "It's time to stand up for Tibet."

*BAFoT was a co-sponsor of the APEC activities and was represented in Seattle by volunteer Bonnie McCalla.*

Sources: Dan Hodel/Tibetan Rights Campaign, ICT, Wire Services

## Advocates Released

(Continued from page 1)

beliefs and descriptions of prison conditions were contained in the information.

China had faced international pressure for months to release the prisoners. Worldwide demonstrations were held for Rinchen and Yonten in December, and human rights organizations and European governments had made special appeals. Tibetans in Tibet had also made an unprecedented appeal to the United Nations, via 22 separate petitions.

The release came 10 days before Secretary of State Warren Christopher was to renew demands that Beijing improve human rights in special talks in Paris, the State Department said. "The release of Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten is definitely a step in the right direction on the part of the Chinese authorities," said State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelley. "This is the type of... concrete thing we're looking for.... We call upon the Chinese government to release all individuals in Tibet, and elsewhere in China, who are imprisoned for the peaceful expression of their views or of other political or religious views," Shelley said.

While these releases are welcome, hundreds of other political prisoners remain jailed in Tibet, often in harsh conditions, and arbitrary arrests and other human rights violations continue. President Clinton has threatened not to renew Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade benefits for China without significant overall improvement in human rights.

Kalon Tashi Wangdi, Minister, Department of Information and International Relations of the Tibetan Government in Exile in India, said of the release, "It is merely a public relations exercise to reduce mounting international pressure to improve conditions in Tibet. The move comes just before the session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, and is to enable China to retain her Most Favored Nation status with the United States."

- Tibet Information Network

## Jiang Zemin's San Francisco Visit Draws Big Protest

By Greg Alling

One hundred Tibetans and 150 supporters joined in a demonstration against Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to San Francisco on November 17. The protesters shouted for Tibetan independence and the cessation of U.S. trade with China, while top American business leaders dined with Jiang inside the Chinese consulate at Geary and Laguna streets.

Police barricades lined the streets for three blocks in every direction and the demonstrators were forced to the farthest corner away from the consulate. Two hundred police in riot gear surrounded the consulate, blocking protesters from the sight of dinner guests with a strategically placed bus, and faced the peaceful demonstrators in lines three deep.

Local television and press coverage of Jiang's visit featured the demonstration and interviews with BAFoT supporters. Congress-woman Nancy Pelosi greeted Jiang that morning with an op-ed column in the San Francisco Chronicle: "Unfortunately, there have been no signs of improvement in human rights in China and Tibet, and in many respects conditions have deteriorated."

Jiang, known for stating that Americans only care about making money, told the press, "The two countries [the U.S. and China] should increase trust, reduce trouble, develop cooperation and refrain from confrontation."

Also demonstrating against Jiang's visit were 20 pro-democracy Chinese dissidents, whose scant numbers suggested dwindling support in the Bay Area for students massacred during the June 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising. In contrast, 75 percent of the local Tibetan community turned out to protest the continued occupation of their country.

## Senate Authorizes "Radio Free Asia"

Washington, DC — Ignoring Chinese objections, the Senate voted Tuesday to authorize a new "Radio Free Asia" service to broadcast to China and other countries. The legislation, contained in a State Department bill, stated that the new radio service would act as "a forum for a variety of opinions and voices within Asian nations whose people do not fully enjoy freedom of expression."

It would also provide news and commentary about events in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, North Korea, Tibet and Vietnam.

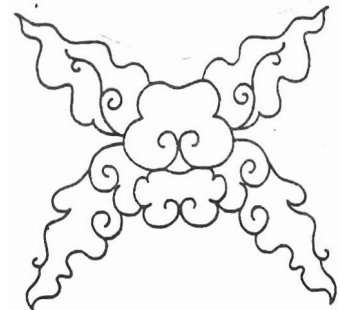
The bill would set up an International Broadcasting Bureau within the United States Information Agency that would include an office providing grants to Radio Free Asia.

Under the legislation, Radio Free Asia will be reviewed after three years to determine whether it is cost-effective, if it is received by a large enough audience to warrant its continuation and if it serves U.S. interests. Although the bill set ceilings for spending, a separate appropriations bill will be required to fund the radio station.

- Reuter

### BAFoT's Wish List

- A new photocopier
- 386-PC computers for donation to new Tibetans
- A large picture frame for a handwritten Tibetan proclamation



### Are You a BAFoT Member?

BAFoT operates through the generous contributions of its members. If you are not a member, please join today. Send to: Bay Area Friends of Tibet, 347 Dolores Street, Suite 206, San Francisco, CA 94110 / (415) 241-9197 / fax (415) 626-0865

- Annual membership \$25   
Family rate \$40   
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# International News

## U.S. Report Finds No Progress in Tibet

WASHINGTON, DC — In the first human rights report released under a Democratic administration since President Carter, the State Department stuck to tough language on Tibet, consistent with earlier rights reports, accusing China of “tightly controlling” religion in Tibet and torturing Tibetan prisoners of conscience. However, the report added little new material to previous reports and failed to identify new human rights trends.

The State Department’s 1993 report indicates that with regard to Tibet, there has been no progress on human rights. Moreover, there is no indication that China has taken steps to protect Tibet’s unique cultural and religious heritage, as called for in the president’s Most Favored Nation order.

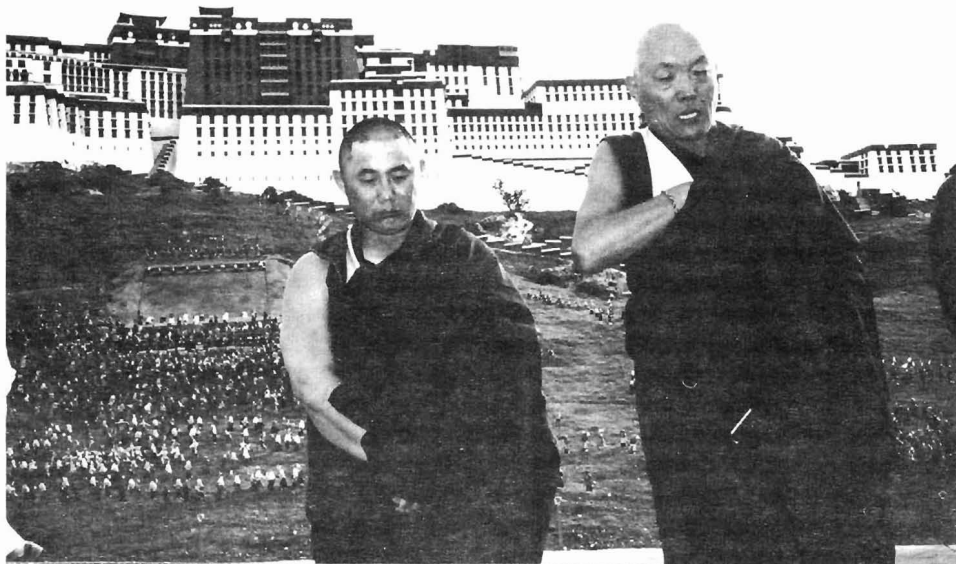
At times the report seemed uninformed, even though the U.S. consulate in Chengdu has increased its monitoring of Tibet. For example, the report chose to highlight torture by police and prison officials in Tibet. However, an increase in political prisoners, rather than an increase in torture, characterized human rights violations in Tibet in 1993, according to reports received by the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT).

“Although the report remained firm on Tibet, it often missed the point, and does not reflect the new spirit of support for human rights that President Clinton has enunciated,” said Lodi Gyari, president of ICT.

The sharp increase in Tibetan political prisoners in 1993 apparently escaped notice by the State Department. In Lhasa alone, there are now over 400 prisoners of conscience, a more than 30 percent increase over 1992. In mid-1993, the list of confirmed prisoners stood at 335. One year ago, there were only 240 confirmed prisoners of conscience.

The report found that China “tightly controls” Tibetan Buddhism and that relations between secular authorities and Buddhists “continued to be tense.” This conclusion is consistent with the reports from the past four years. Two years ago, the 1991 report added significant detail, acknowledging systematic government regulation of religious activity in Tibet, “from burning incense to holding ceremonies.” While such regulation continues, the past two reports have dropped this important language.

Other significant issues not mentioned in the 1993 report are the continuing repression of Tibetan Buddhist nuns and the suppression of the celebration of the Monlam “Great Prayer” festival at the Jokhang temple, traditionally the most important celebration site. Monlam is Tibet’s most sacred religious festival. -ICT



Monks mourned near a replica of the Potala Palace at the opening of Splendid China, a new Florida theme park that is partly owned by the Chinese government. (Photo: ICT)

## Splendid China Draws Protest

KISSIMMEE, FL — Chodak Samphel edged toward the miniature replica of the Potala Palace, set on a high mound at the newly-opened Splendid China theme park.

The 30-year-old Tibetan monk, dressed in traditional maroon robes, stopped, then slowly strode around the display, where a thousand figurines reenacted a springtime scene that took place 200 years ago in his ancestor’s homeland. He wept uncontrollably, shielding his face as cameras clicked and protesters chanted “Free Tibet!”

Samphel, along with three other Tibetan Buddhist monks, and more than 50 other supporters had come to protest the Dec. 18 public opening of the attraction, a \$100-million joint venture between American Eastern International Corp. of Los Angeles and China Travel Services Ltd. of Hong Kong, a Chinese government venture.

Splendid China, patterned after the original Splendid China attraction in Shenzhen, China, features 60 replicas of historic sites and landmarks, including Lhasa’s Potala Palace.

The demonstrators said that life in Tibet and other “minority” regions of China is misrepresented by Splendid China and that the ravages of occupation are glossed over. They claimed that the park is also a propaganda tool of the communist government of China. The protesters called for removal of the Tibet and Mongolia Displays.

“It’s a Chinese attempt to beautify what is ugly in China,” said Thubten Samphel of the Office of Tibet in New York City. “We feel that the tourists should be educated about China.”

“The [replicated] Potala Palace represents the bad things the Chinese are doing in Tibet,” said monk Ngawang Chojo, 59, who lived in a monastery at the real Potala Palace. “This is an attempt to destroy our history.”

John Ackerly, director of the International Campaign for Tibet, said unsuccessful attempts were made to talk with park officials before the opening-day demonstration.

“You are welcome to do every thing that a normal visitor does,” Haven Riviere, the park’s operations director, told protesters. “We’re not here to make a political statement; we’re here to portray the people of China.”

Outside the park entrance, protesters passed out literature and waved signs at motorists that read “Destruction is not Splendid” and “China out of Tibet”. A sheriff’s deputy watched from a parked car.

Inside, Chojo, Samphel and fellow monks Tsering Namgyal and Jampa Rinpoche turned their backs to the miniature palace and prayed.

*The International Campaign for Tibet is encouraging Florida schools not to send students to Splendid China on field trips. To find out about more actions you can take, call ICT at (202) 628-4123.*

# Tibetan Nuns Arrested in Lhasa

By Elizabeth Tam

Since at least the late 1980s, Buddhist nuns in Tibet have staged courageous, nonviolent demonstrations demanding human rights improvements, religious freedom and Tibetan independence. Hundreds of nuns, who are not allowed to live, work, or study in accordance with their doctrines of spiritual commitment, have been forced from their country to neighboring India and Nepal. Others have stayed to practice and protest under Chinese restrictions and many have been imprisoned and tortured for their activities.

As late as June 14, 1993, Chinese authorities in Lhasa arrested 12 nuns for being involved in a pro-independence demonstration, although no witnessed reports of such an incident have surfaced. Some sources indicated that the nuns from Gari (also known as Garu) nunnery, located three miles north of the capital, were arrested before they began any kind of protest. They were sentenced by Chinese courts to up to seven years of imprisonment for an act that nobody seems to have seen and may, in fact, never have happened.

## Prisoners' Release Follows Tibetan Appeal

Prior to Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten's release, more than 100 people inside Tibet, including members of the Communist Party and government officials, sent 22 separate signed petitions asking the United Nations to arrange the release of Gendun Rinchen.

This may be the first time that so many Tibetans have directly appealed to the UN to help release a named prisoner. The 110 signatories would have faced severe punishment from the Chinese government if the documents had been intercepted.

"If Gendun Rinchen dies in prison, all the Tibetan people will join together in an uprising against the Chinese: he is seen as a representative of all the people of Tibet," said one petition.

Many of the petitions used similar language and were clearly carefully coordinated, suggesting a formidable achievement by the Tibetan underground movement.

The most significant petition is from three men in a town outside Lhasa who stated openly that they were writing to the UN as members of the Communist Party. "Gendun Rinchen was arrested and wrongfully accused by the Chinese government," said the party members. Their petition hints at disarray within the ranks of the Tibetan branch of the Communist Party.

- Tibet Information Network

The nuns' trial date is not known, but must have been within the past five months. The Chinese authorities have not issued any public statements regarding the nuns' convictions. According to unofficial sources in Lhasa, nine of the nuns from Gari apparently joined in the June 14 incident. They have been tried and given sentences of between two to four years.

All 12 of the Gari nuns are incarcerated in Lhasa's Drapchi prison, which is reputed to hold the most serious offenders. Their imprisonment brings the total number of nuns held there to 49, 32 of whom are believed to be from Gari.

Among the arrested nuns is a 15-year-old girl named Gyaltzen Pelsang. According to Chinese law, she is too young to be legally imprisoned. The ages of the other nuns range from 18 to 25 years.

Two other Gari nuns were arrested after they started a brief pro-independence demonstration in the center of Lhasa on June 4. Their sentences are unknown.

After the June 14 arrests, Chinese authorities in Lhasa sent a 'work team' (composed of Communist Party officials) to the nunnery to begin a 3-month series of "political re-

education" sessions. These sessions, involving all 90 Gari nuns, are intended to force them to adhere to the principles of Mao's Communism. Others who have refused to submit to Chinese domination have only been able to keep their religious vows by becoming refugees. Risking their lives, they continue to flee from their homeland in search of freedom and to spread the truth of their struggle. Given the apparent injustice of the Gari nuns' arrests, other Buddhist nuns will likely continue to lead protests in Tibet.

In an effort to aid Tibetan nuns in exile, Bay Area Friends of Tibet and the Tibetan Nuns Project presented "Satya—A Prayer for the Enemy," a new documentary film by award-winning filmmaker Ellen Bruno on Saturday, January 15. Her film portrays the Tibetan nuns and their continuing struggle for survival and freedom.

*A petition asking for the release of prisoners has been prepared by the Tibetan Nun's Project and the International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet. If you would like to volunteer to collect signatures, please contact: Rinchen Project, c/o International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet, 347 Dolores Street, Suite 206, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 252-5967.*



## Tibetan Aid Project Presents From the Roof of the World: Refugees of Tibet



From the Roof of the World



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## A Profile of Ventul Rinpoche

By Chimi Thonden

At the mere age of 8 months, young Norbhu was found to be the eighth reincarnation of Ventul Rinpoche. Born in Eastern Tibet, raised in India and now an immigrant to the Bay Area through the Tibetan Resettlement Project, Ventul Rinpoche jokes that he has lived three lives in this lifetime. Judging from the ease with which he switches from perfect classical Tibetan to impeccable British English, one is inclined to believe him.

When Ventul Rinpoche thinks back on his life, he admits it seems unusual, especially considering how it started — in a small town called Pomda, where as a Rinpoche (reincarnated lama) he was revered like a king. In 1956, his father had a very clear dream in which a lama asked to stay in his house. Being a devout Buddhist, his father replied “of course.” Later, when his father recounted his dream, his friends immediately told him that he had described the features of the seventh Ventul Rinpoche, who had passed away four years earlier.

Ventul’s father had never seen the seventh Ventul Rinpoche. He thought little of the dream until one day a flower mysteriously grew in his family’s courtyard in the dead of winter. Ventul’s mother was in the advanced stages of pregnancy and people pointed to signs of an auspicious birth. In the pre-dawn hours just before Ventul’s birth, a strange yellow light appeared over the nearby mountains, yet another sign.

Word of his birth and the unusual events preceding it reached Pomda Monastery, where the seventh Rinpoche’s chanzu (caretaker) waited for his master’s reincarnation. The caretaker remembered how the seventh Rinpoche said just before he died that he wanted to live in Pomda. The caretaker decided to go meet the by-then 8-month-old baby. He and senior monks put the baby through a series of tests in which he identified the personal belongings (prayer books and rosaries) of the seventh Ventul Rinpoche. The baby then reached for the caretaker’s pocket. Thinking that the child wanted money, the caretaker pulled out his wallet and gave him money. The child threw the money aside and reached again for the caretaker’s pocket, whereupon the man remembered he had the seventh Rinpoche’s dorje (vajra), which he kept for protection. He pulled the dorje from his pocket and handed it to the child, who clung to it with delight. The caretaker cried, knowing that indeed this was his master in a new body.

Ventul was quickly moved to Lhasa in 1958 with his family and enrolled in Drepung Monastery. In 1959, after the Tibetan national uprising against the Chinese occupation, Ventul along with his family and some Drepung monks, followed the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile in India. Tough times ensued for Ventul, his family and thousands of Tibetans who suddenly found themselves poor refugees in a strange land whose warm climate was threatening their health. Ventul Rinpoche’s father died in 1960, a major event that made him realize that his religious life would not support his mother and sister financially. An English tutor in India told him “You aren’t in Tibet anymore. You will need a degree.” Ventul followed that advice and after 14 years of Tibetan studies (which included religion, literature, history and thangka painting), he studied for and passed the Indian high school equivalency test. He went on to Kalimpong College, where he studied English and eventually obtained a

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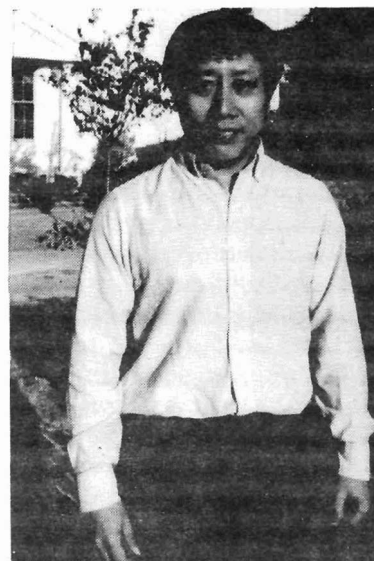
**Ventul smiles broadly  
when he relates his  
interest in studying  
Buddhist philosophy in the  
poetry of Yeats.**

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Masters in English from the University of North Bengal.

In 1987, Ventul found a professorship teaching Tibetan studies at his alma mater in Kalimpong. He smiles broadly when he relates his interest in studying Buddhist philosophy in the poetry of Yeats. Rinpoche also writes Tibetan poetry. In Kalimpong, Ventul became involved in a literary movement which attempts to simplify Tibetan literary structure, making it more accessible to young Tibetans. He and some colleagues were able to make changes in University of North Bengal’s curriculum by pushing the university to offer Tibetan as a concentration. An ardent supporter of Tibetan culture, his goal is to instill this love in Tibetans as well as non-Tibetans.

Having come to the United States a year ago, Ventul hopes for an opportunity to fulfill this ambition. He currently works at Stanford University Medical School as a computer librarian in a genetics research laboratory. However, his life in the U.S. did not start out so easily. His first job, working on an assembly line at Alza Corp (a pharmaceutical company



*Ventul at home in Menlo Park. (Photo: Chimi Thonden)*

in Vacaville), resulted in a month lay-off after only four days. He struggled for months, until a Tibetan language student got him a job as a cook at the Coffee Tree in Vacaville. A few months later, some friends told him about his current job at Stanford. He enjoys learning about computers and says he has discovered the American value of hard work.

Ventul thinks Tibetans here can learn a lot about the functions of democracy and the value of time and punctuality. On the flip side, Ventul believes Americans can learn from Tibetans about compassion for people. He says, “Sometimes I think Americans care more about their pets than fellow human beings.”

Ventul Rinpoche came to the U.S. partly due to his personal mission to help reinstitute his two monasteries in Tibet. Before the Chinese occupation, Pomda Monastery had 300 monks and Zogang monastery had 700 monks. Both monasteries were completely destroyed by the Chinese army and have only recently been rebuilt by local Tibetans. “There are young monks who want to study, but there aren’t any good teachers. All of the old masters are dead.”

Ventul’s plan is to bring some monks from his monasteries over to India so that they can study under Tibetan masters there. When the monks return to Tibet, they will be able to share their knowledge with other monks. He believes that in America he will be in a better position to help his monasteries.

More importantly, he feels that in America he has a better opportunity to create awareness of Tibetans’ sufferings under the Chinese occupation and to work towards the preservation of Tibetan culture. Eventually, he would like to work for the reconstruction of an independent Tibet.

# BAFoT Events

## March 10th — Tibetan National Uprising Day

On March 10, 1959, hundreds of thousands Tibetans rose in rebellion against Chinese occupation, after which His Holiness the Dalai Lama fled into exile in India. Each year on March 10th, Tibetan communities worldwide commemorate that heroic day by demonstrating in support of their country's independence and remembering the Tibetans who were killed.

The Tibetan community of the Bay Area (formally organized as the Tibetan Association of Northern California) will hold a protest march on March 10, 1994. The protest will officially begin at Market and Powell Streets in San Francisco at 12 noon. At 1:30, protestors will begin marching to the Chinese Consulate at Geary and Laguna Streets. Local Tibetan leaders and Tibet supporters will speak.

Come and show your support for Tibet on this most important day for the Tibetan people.



BAFoT Board Member Lhakpa Dolma at last year's March 10 Demonstration. Tibetan women led much of the 1993 uprising. The Dalai Lama has declared 1994 "The Year of the Tibetan Woman." (Photo: Justin Lowe)

## Benefit Premiere of Bertolucci's *The Little Buddha*

Bernardo Bertolucci, director of *The Last Emperor*, has created what may become one of this century's most powerful portrayals of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. The \$33-million film was shot in Bhutan, Nepal and Seattle. The story concerns an American boy who is thought to be the reincarnation of a Tibetan master. The film stars Chris Isaak, Bridget Fonda, Keanu Reeves and Alex Wiesendanger as the boy. Sogyal Rinpoche, author of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, plays a lama in the film.

*The Little Buddha* will be released in the Bay Area in the Spring. Miramax films has agreed to assist BAFoT and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization with an opening night premiere, which will be held as a benefit for the two organizations. A release date has not been set, but plans are already underway in preparation for the event.



## Tibet Calendar



### Frontline Documentary

**Tuesday, February 22, 9 pm on PBS**  
(check local listings)

Narrated by Orville Schell as he journeys to Tibet, the film examines why the survival of the Tibetan people and culture has become an international issue. Schell secretly interviews Tibetans in Lhasa, including dissidents and monks, and explores Chinese attitudes towards Tibet. He also addresses the issue of how MFN renewal challenges U.S. foreign policy. This may be the best documentary ever on the political and human rights struggles surrounding Tibet.

### Tibet Day

**Sunday, March 6, 10 am - 7 pm**  
**Fort Mason Center, San Francisco**  
Donation: \$5 adults, \$3 children.  
(See page 1 for more information)

### Tibetan National Uprising Day Demonstration March

**Thursday, March 10, San Francisco**  
**Meet at Market & Powell, 12:00 noon**  
March to the Chinese Consulate at 1:30 in the afternoon. Organized by the Tibetan community, this annual march through San Francisco is the most important day for

Tibetans. Concurrent demonstrations will be taking place throughout the world. Please call TANC President Tashi Norbu for details at (510) 644-3775 (see above article).

### "The Little Buddha"

**Co-Sponsored by BAFoT and  
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples  
Organization (UNPO)**

**In April (Date and place to be announced)**  
Please check with the office, or inquire at Tibet Day, for further information.

### The Dalai Lama in Hawaii and at Stanford

**Hawaii: April 14 - 18**  
For more information, call (808) 944-7643  
**Stanford: April 18 - 21**  
For more information call (415) 723-1762

### Public Talk by the Dalai Lama

**Wednesday afternoon, April 20**  
**Greek Theater, UC Berkeley**  
Tickets are free and can be picked up at the Cal Performances Box Office after March 1.  
For more information, call (510) 642-9988 after March 1 only. Please do not call BAFoT.

**Volunteers are needed for all BAFoT  
sponsored events. Join the fun!**

### Earth Day

**Sunday, April 24, 10 am - 6 pm**  
**Concord Pavilion**

Call (510) 274-3669 for more information.  
BAFoT will be tabling at this event. The festival features hundreds of exhibits, top name entertainers, speakers, crafts, Aztec dancers, a youth stage and much more.

### Himalayan Fair

**Saturday, May 21, 10 am - 7 pm &  
Sunday, May 22, 10 am - 5:30 pm**  
**Live Oak Park, North Berkeley, corner of  
Shattuck and Berryman**

This annual event features food, crafts, clothing, and jewelry from the Himalayan countries including Tibet, Nepal, India, and Bhutan. Performances are featured throughout the day.

### Kalachakra Initiation for World Peace Given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama **December 11 - 19, 1994**

**Barcelona, Spain**  
For receive registration information in spring 1994, please send your name and address to: Kalachakra Organizing Committee '94, Sepulveda, 45-47 08015 Barcelona, Spain.



## URGENT ACTION

# China's MFN Status Up for Renewal

By Greg Alling

Will President Clinton and Congress renew China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status in early June? Will China indeed meet the MFN conditions set by Clinton last spring?

Currently, mixed signals are coming from all sides of the issue. U.S. Ambassador to China Stapleton Roy said in December that China has made "dramatic" steps towards improving the lives of Chinese citizens. The President's economic advisors say that without MFN status for China, America would suffer the most from lost jobs and trade.

However, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said in January, "A number of people have said, 'Look, they're doing so well on the economy, you ought to forget about the human rights record.' That's not my position. It's not the president's position." The administration, hoping to renew MFN and appease business concerns, continues to press human rights issues during high-level trade talks, while the U.S. State Department's 1993 global human rights report blasted China's record.

In response, China has vowed that it is "going to make an effort" to improve its human rights practices.

Soon, human rights issues will square off directly against economic interests in the debate within the administration and Congress. To raise the Tibet issue, readers should contact their congressional representatives. Remind them that the wider human rights issue is Tibet's freedom. Urge them, however, to include full discussion of Tibet in MFN-related proceedings. Emphasize that

China has not met Clinton's condition that the Chinese respect Tibet's distinct cultural and religious heritage.

In spite of pressure on China to improve human rights, widespread oppression in occupied Tibet continues: Lhasa's unique old quarter is being rapidly destroyed and replaced by barracks-style buildings. The population transfer of Chinese into Tibet continues unabated. Last year saw more political arrests (over 300) of Tibetans than in 1992. Tibetan demonstrations have spread from Lhasa to rural regions. China's secret, high-level meeting in March 1993 called for increased Chinese settlement in Tibet and other measures to divide the Tibetan community. Contrary to President Clinton's urging, Beijing refuses to negotiate with the Dalai Lama. The recent release of arrestees Gendun Rinchen and Lobsang Yonten is merely an attempt to garner MFN status, not a substantial change in policy, the Dalai Lama's exile government says. China's economic success continues to be supported by its unchecked pillage of Tibet's natural resources.

BAFoT will be conducting further MFN Urgent Action campaigns as the debate unfolds this spring. Keep in touch with BAFoT or the International Campaign for Tibet at (202) 628-4123 for updated information and direct actions that you can take.

*Write or call your representative and these key members: Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, House Ways & Means Committee, 1102 Longworth, House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 / (202) 225-4061; Chairman Sam Gibbons, International Trade Subcommittee, 1136 Longworth, House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 / (202) 225-3376.*



### Important Reminder to BAFoT Members

Please send in your ballots on the amendment of BAFoT's bylaws as soon as possible. Ballots must be received by March 15, 1994.

Thanks for doing it today.

**BAY AREA FRIENDS OF TIBET**  
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