

20th Anniversary of Tiananmen Commemorated on May 31 in San Francisco
Draft by Giovanni Vassallo



On May 31 afternoon 4:30 to 5:00 PM, about one hundred people gathered at Portsmouth Square, Chinatown, San Francisco, California, USA to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing, China. Fengsuo Zhou presided at the ceremony to offer flowers to the Goddess statue. Congde Feng, Jingwa (poet), Sam Gao, and middle school girl student (playing the violin) expressed their condolence to heroes of Chinese democratic movement. The speakers, most from the Chinese Democratic Education Foundation (CDEF) spoke, often tearfully and passionately, about the legacy of the Pro-Democracy Movement, which one survivor maintained placed human rights and democracy as issues threatening Chinese diplomacy. One of the reasons that May 31 was chosen as the date to observe the anniversary was that much of the CDEF membership was traveling to Washington DC for a June 4 commemoration.



(Fengsuo and Feng)



(Banner: "Remember June 4th",
Dechen Tsering on right gave passionate speech)

Some speakers and others who had gathered participated in the ceremony, offering flowers and khatas before the Goddess of Democracy to honor those who were killed on June 4th, and one of the serendipitous highlights of the ceremony, was the invitation to Dechen Tsering, President of the Tibetan Association of Northern California (TANC), in solidarity with the Chinese peoples' struggle for democracy in China. Her impassioned public support of the Chinese Pro-Democracy Movement, left some to believe that the moment was historic to unify the struggle for human rights and democracy, not just between the Tibetans and Chinese in the U.S., but as Dechen Tsering said, among all peoples, Uyghers, Chinese and Tibetans in China.



(Flowers at the feet of the Goddess of Democracy)



(Giovanni Vassallo offer flower and khata symbolizing best wishes)

Later, from 5:00 to 8:30 PM, a public forum was held at Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall (836 Stockton Street San Francisco CA 94108). About 100-150 people attended the meeting. at Chinatown's Sun Yat-Sen Hall in a meeting hall filled with numerous pictures from the June 4th 1989 events and massacre that had unfolded in Beijing. A slide show ran continuously also showing many of the atrocities committed around that time by the Chinese government. Dr. Congde Feng was one of the panelist who spoke on the panel to an audience of about seventy five people including Chinese, Tibetans and Americans. Dr. Congde Feng has backgrounds in information technology, religious studies and Chinese history. A student leader of the 1989 movement, he is a professional Internet database developer. During the student

movement, he was Chair of the Autonomous Federation of Students in Beijing. Fengsuo Zhou, Ms. Zhang Xianling (over phone from Beijing), Emily Wu (poet), Runnan Wan (over phone), Muchen Lin, Liu Feiyue (over phone from Hubei), Lester Lee, John Gao (pastor), Jingling Tang (over phone from Guangzhou), Congde Feng, Baosheng Guo and Jing Zhao made speeches.

Qian Wu, Dechen Tsering, Ann Xiong, Giovanni Vassallo, and others spoke from the floor too.

Some pictures of the event can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/200906/jingwa/6_1.shtml and a report by the CDEF event <http://news.boxun.com/news/qb/intl/2009/06/200906020102.shtml>.

The panel discussion event was organized by Humanitarian China (www.h-china.org) and Chinese Democracy Education Foundation (www.cdef.org).

This is the first time TANC and Bay Area Friends of Tibet (BAFoT) had been represented at such events around the Tiananmen Square Massacre Anniversary. Dechen Tsering had the opportunity to again share Tibetan solidarity with the Chinese struggle for Democracy and commemorate the Chinese students who died for democracy, justice, and human rights, as Tibetans have for the past 50 years. Giovanni Vassallo, president of BAFoT also expressed solidarity with the Chinese democracy movement and offered condolences for the lives lost. He also informed the audience of a new Chinese Tibetan Friendship Group that was coming together in the Bay Area and invited others to join it. Some individuals in that new friendship group, along with Amnesty International, plan to hold an 8 PM candlelight vigil on the evening of June 4 to again commemorate the 20th Anniversary and honor the lives sacrificed.



(Giovanni Vassallo speaking at panel discussion)



(Dechen Tsering at panel discussion)