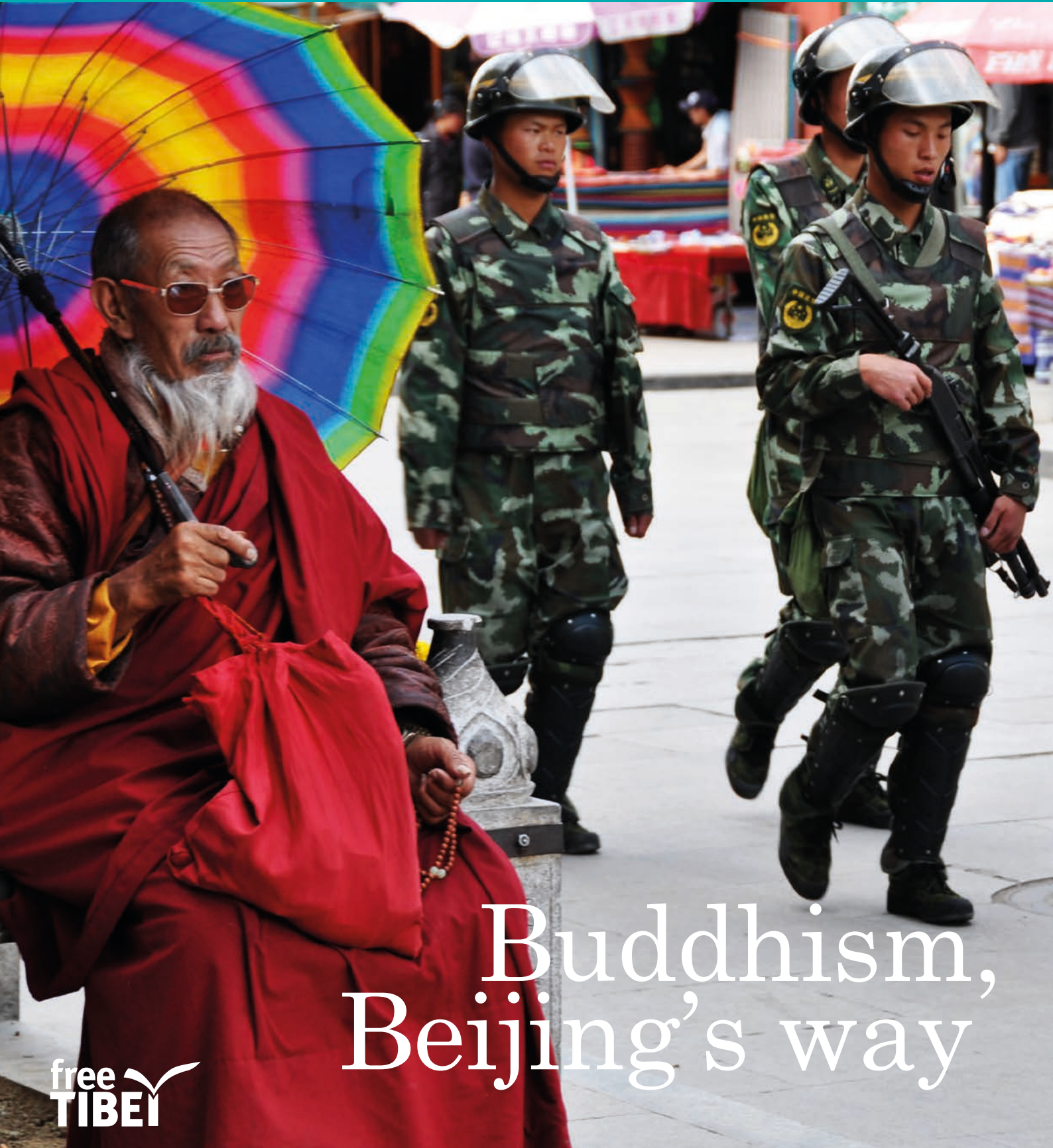


# FREE TIBET

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[www.freetibet.org](http://www.freetibet.org)



## Buddhism, Beijing's way

free  
TIBET

• China in our classrooms • Olympic fears mount • Summer Shindig •



Free Tibet Director  
Eleanor Byrne-  
Rosengren

## Dear friends

The biggest news of the last few months is obviously the earthquakes which have rocked Nepal and neighbouring countries, including Tibet. I found the first few days very difficult – trying to stay focussed while waiting for people in Kathmandu to check in and let me know they were safe. On behalf of Free Tibet, our thoughts are with all those who have been affected by the two earthquakes.

Meanwhile, our new campaign on China’s Confucius Classrooms in our schools has already started challenging China’s propaganda push. Before it began, there had not been a single critical article published in English about Confucius Classrooms. Now, national and local newspapers across the UK have run stories highlighting our concerns and describing the Confucius Classroom programme as controversial. The aim of the campaign is not to close classrooms down but to ensure pupils learn the truth about China and Tibet and to create a vital public debate about China’s role in UK education. It’s been very heartening to see this happening so successfully.

We’re looking forward to lots of outreach work over the summer. We’ll be taking our Jailed Musicians campaign to Glastonbury

and a few other music festivals. We are also hosting a Summer Shindig for all our supporters which will feature a screening of Bringing Tibet Home and an auction with some fantastic art pieces. If you can come along it’ll be a great opportunity to bring a friend and get them involved in the cause.

As I write this, I’m also preparing to speak at an event marking 20 years since Ghedun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama (Tibet’s second highest spiritual leader), was kidnapped by China as a boy. As you can read in this magazine, China has recently been cracking down on monks and nuns and Tibetan Buddhism itself. But as Tibetans and supporters come together across the world to mark the anniversary, each gathering is not only an act of remembrance but an act of resistance – a message to China that even decades of oppression will not diminish the Tibetan spirit.

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Our vision is a free Tibet in which Tibetans are able to determine their own future and the human rights of all are respected.

Free Tibet campaigns for an end to China’s occupation of Tibet and for international recognition of Tibetans’ right to freedom. We mobilise active support for the Tibetan cause, champion human rights and challenge those whose actions help sustain the occupation.

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Back cover photo: © Jim McGill



Major new campaign to counter Chinese propaganda in schools.

Free Tibet has launched a major new campaign to make sure children in our schools are taught the truth about China and Tibet. Our Hosting a Dragon campaign is challenging the Chinese government's attempt to gain a foothold in schools throughout the world – to ensure that where China has a presence, Tibet has a presence too.

In 2004, China launched its Confucius Institute programme, placing and funding centres of Chinese-language teaching in foreign educational institutions. Today it has more than 400 Institutes (based in universities) and more than 650 Classrooms (based in schools) across the world. Confucius Institutes have become increasingly controversial. Academics and students have raised concerns that China's money deters the teaching of issues China is sensitive about and even prevents host universities taking other actions China may object to – such as inviting the Dalai Lama to speak. A number of universities have now shut their Confucius Institutes down. Confucius Classrooms have received far less attention.

#### China buys friends

Confucius Classrooms are supported by a Chinese government agency called Hanban, which supplies money, resources and teachers from China to schools. Inside the Classroom, an exclusively positive picture of China is painted and Hanban even arranges and provides money for visits to China, where pupils and staff are taken on stage-managed trips to tourist sites and 'happy' Chinese schools.

In 2009, a senior Chinese official described the Confucius programme as "an important part of China's overseas propaganda set-up". While the Classrooms' main function is to provide Chinese language teaching to school pupils, the project also aims to promote teaching

about China in other subjects and to foster "mutual understanding" and "friendship" abroad. The director and chairperson of Hanban are both very senior members of the Chinese Communist Party.

For financially challenged schools, it seems an offer too good to be true – but China's apparent generosity may lead those students encountering the Classrooms to believe that China is a benign nation seeking worldwide understanding, instead of a country ruled with an iron fist by a government which rejects democracy and human rights – and which continues to occupy and brutally repress Tibet.

#### Rolling out the welcome mat

An investigation by Free Tibet has found that Hanban is providing up to US\$10,000 per year each to the 95 schools hosting Classrooms in the United Kingdom – but only after it has approved their plans and reports. We have learned that there are now approximately 100 Hanban teachers in the UK. Each is recruited and politically-vetted in Beijing and their salaries are paid by Hanban. In an interview with the BBC last year, Hanban's director made clear that she expects them to respond to any questions from students with answers that the Communist Party would approve of.

Free Tibet has also learned that the decision to open the Classrooms and accept China's money is very rarely discussed by councils or school governors – despite China's government being unelected and guilty of widespread repression and human rights abuse.

Indeed, our Freedom of Information requests to more than 150 schools and local councils across the UK have found only one example of reservations about the programme – a governor in Northern Ireland who raised concerns about the "propaganda risks".

*Continued...*



# HOSTING A DRAGON



## The Hosting a Dragon campaign

Free Tibet supports the teaching of Chinese. More contact between the people of China and those who live in the free world will help Tibet. But it is essential that school students also learn the truth about China and Tibet. We have contacted all 95 schools in the UK which host Confucius Classrooms, and the councils responsible for them, to warn of the risks the Classrooms pose and to seek guarantees that pupils are not receiving a biased education. We have also taken our findings to the media. Before our campaign began, there were no news articles raising concerns about the Confucius Classroom programme: now a vital debate has begun in national, international, education and local media, including many which are unlikely to have ever written about Tibet before.

We are also helping schools directly. We have started distributing a resource pack to them that teaches young people what they will never learn in a Confucius Classroom. The pack provides links to independent and dissident websites and information on human rights in both Chinese and English, as well as information regarding issues such as Tibet, Hong Kong and Tiananmen Square. Almost

all of these websites are censored or banned in China. We are also supplying a fully-referenced PowerPoint presentation about Tibet, opening the eyes of teachers and pupils alike to China's crimes and the Tibetan people's courageous and peaceful resistance.

Lastly, we are also sending a Tibet flag to every Confucius Classroom school and asking them to display it. Tibet will need the support of these young people in the future – we cannot let China win the battle for their hearts and minds.

## Action

You can read about the campaign, locate classrooms and find our resource pack at [www.freetibet.org/confucius](http://www.freetibet.org/confucius). You can also email Hanban directly and, if you're in the UK, send a message to the education ministers in Westminster, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast.

## Could China win the Olympics again?

Free Tibet is at the forefront of the global campaign calling on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to reject China's bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games. With China's capital one of only two candidate cities under consideration, there is a high risk that the honour of being the first city to host both Summer and Winter Games will go to Beijing.

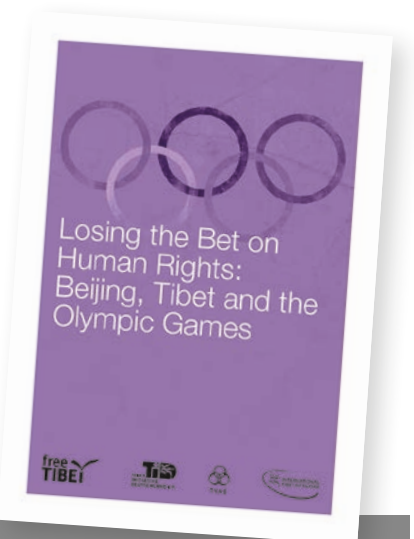
### Human rights and the Olympics

Free Tibet has co-authored a report with the International Tibet Network that exposes how, instead of helping human rights as the IOC claimed, the awarding of the 2008 Games was followed by increased repression in China, culminating in the brutal suppression of the uprising in Tibet in 2008. The report states:

"Since 2008, China has become more aggressive and unrelenting in

its attitude to human rights in Tibet and less willing to engage in dialogue regarding a lasting resolution. Without rigorous and robust policies in place to address human rights abuses ... for Beijing, the Games will be an effective endorsement of its failure to improve human rights since 2008, not an incentive for future improvements."

More than 175 Tibet groups back the report and the call to the IOC to reject China's bid – the campaign has already secured international media coverage. Copies of the report are being sent to members of the IOC by their national Tibet groups and the campaign will develop as the IOC's final decision nears in July. In a highly unusual step, Chinese state media have attacked the campaign directly – a sure sign of Beijing's sensitivity. Read the report at [www.freetibet.org/olympics](http://www.freetibet.org/olympics)



## Action

The global campaign surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics received enormous media coverage and focused the world's attention on Tibet. A worldwide petition calling on the IOC to reject China's bid will launch in June. Please check [www.freetibet.org](http://www.freetibet.org) for more information and urge all your friends and family to sign the petition.

# Raffle



# Tibetan religion in the crosshairs

Beijing's blunt message: we're in charge.

Communist China has always seen Tibetans' devotion to the Dalai Lama and their adherence to Tibetan Buddhism as a challenge to its rule. It has also been acutely aware of the role of monks and nuns as guardians of Tibetan culture and, frequently, leaders of Tibetan resistance. Early 2015 has seen emphatic, disturbing and sometimes absurd reminders that controlling Tibetan religion remains a cornerstone of Beijing's Tibet policy.

Just a few days after authorities in Rebkong issued a list of potentially illegal activities including many religious practices, China sent a blunt message that its power over Tibetan Buddhism is backed by force. Pictures emerged in March of a massive military display at Kumbum Monastery in Amdo (very close to the birthplace of the Dalai Lama).

Devotees who had travelled from across Tibet to attend the Monlam prayer festival at Kumbum were greeted by armoured vehicles and massed ranks of heavily armed security personnel. On

social media, one Tibetan wrote "I was so afraid that I forgot to pray".

Following this act of intimidation, Chen Quanguo, Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), wrote in state media that monks and nuns would face further "assessment activities" to ensure that they would be "patriotic and law-abiding". He also promised to see red flags flying on "model harmonious monasteries". In another article, he had written of "letting" monks and nuns "feel the party's benevolence, listen to the party's words and follow the party's path".

In reality, recent months have seen a wave of arrests of monks across Tibet, including at least eleven from Tsanden monastery in Sog County. Some detentions have followed solo protests, in other cases the reasons are unknown. Jigme Gyatso from Dethang monastery faces the serious charge of "splitting the nation".

A number of other monks have been released after serving long sentences. Thinley Gyatso

Above: Intimidation at Kumbum Monastery, March 2015.



Left to right:  
Kumbum Monastery;  
Chen Quanguo;  
Thinley Gyatso.  
Below: Ludub Tendar.



was greeted by a banner saying “Unjust laws imposed on just people” while Ludub Tendar wore a t-shirt saying “I am Tibetan; peace and non-violence; right to information; right to expression; right to reason”.

China’s government also launched a broadside against the Dalai Lama’s long-stated position that he may be the last of his line – he has also said that if he does reincarnate, he is unlikely to be born in Tibet under Chinese rule. Accusing him of blasphemy, the Chinese-appointed governor of the TAR claimed that only Beijing has the power to decide who will lead Tibetan Buddhism after his death. His comments led Lobsang Sangay, leader of the Central Tibetan Administration, to compare China choosing the Dalai Lama to Fidel Castro choosing the pope.

According to Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is reincarnated and senior lamas identify each new Dalai Lama following traditional Buddhist practice. The Communist Party has long claimed the right to approve or veto such reincarnations, even at their lowest level. In 1995, Communist China rejected the Tibetan choice



of Panchen Lama (the second most senior religious leader for Tibetans), abducted Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the six-year-old boy who had been identified, and replaced him with its own candidate, who almost all Tibetans reject.

Any subsequent Dalai Lama will be identified as a child and will be unable to fulfil his or her spiritual responsibilities or match the current Dalai Lama’s global popularity and respect for many years. Although China sees choosing the next Dalai Lama as being a way to cement its hold on Tibet, Tibetans will certainly reject any state-appointed successor, just as they reject all of Beijing’s attempts to deny their right to practise their religion as they choose.

## Action

Free Tibet will be launching a campaign in support of imprisoned monks and nuns soon. Watch our website for more details and support Tibet’s Jailed Musicians now by signing our petition at [www.freetibet.org/](http://www.freetibet.org/) singers



# Celebrate the memory of a loved one

Donating in memory of someone special is a touching way to honour their life while at the same time supporting a cause that was important to them. However small or large the gift, all in memory donations we receive help us campaign for the right of Tibetans to determine their own future.

## Fly a personalised prayer flag in Dharamsala

Imagine the memory of your loved one living on in Dharamsala – the home of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile community. A prayer flag, embroidered with your personal sentence of remembrance and delivered to India, is a special way to sustain the memory of a loved one and honour a cause close to their heart.

We will hang your prayer flag on the 'Kora' (pictured), the forested hillside walking route that surrounds the home of the Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj. Tibetan pilgrims walk this path on a daily basis chanting mantras and spinning the many prayer wheels that line the route. Here, your flag with your words of remembrance for your loved one will fly in the Himalayan wind, rain, snow and sun for many years to come.

There is a long tradition of prayer flags in Tibet which despite China's cultural and religious oppression still survives today. Prayer flags come in five colours representing the elements and are decorated with sacred symbols and mantras. Tibetans believe that when the wind blows the flags it carries the blessings, goodwill and compassion embodied in the images and words across the land. In this way, prayer flags are thought to bring benefit to all.

As the years pass, your fluttering prayer flag will fade and fray – they purposely are not hemmed – symbolising the natural passing of all things. But the memory will live on in a photograph of your flag in situ, which we will send you as a fitting reminder of your loved one and their love for Tibet.

**Minimum donation for a Dharamsala prayer flag: £100/\$150/€140.**

To leave a gift in memory, please fill out the form on the cover letter, visit [www.freetibet/inmemory](http://www.freetibet/inmemory) or call us on 020 7324 4605.





# News update...

## Self-immolation protests continue in 2015

Tibetans continue to set themselves on fire to protest China's occupation and policies in Tibet, six years on from the first self-immolation protest.

In March and April, 45-year-olds Norchuk and Nyi Kyab and 47-year-old nun Yeshi Khando carried out self-immolation protests. Norchuk and Nyi Kyab both died. It is unknown whether Yeshi Khando survived. During her protest, she shouted "Let His Holiness return to Tibet!", "Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama!" and "Tibet needs freedom!"



Left to right: Norchuk, Nyi Kyab and Yeshi Khando.

## Nomads under pressure again

Authorities in Tibet claimed in January to be protecting the Tibetan plateau by paying nomads to turn away from their traditional livelihoods.

China has moved millions of nomadic herders from their traditional grasslands to urban settlements, opening their land up for the extraction of resources and ending agricultural practices which have sustained and protected the Tibetan plateau for centuries.

In April, Tibetans from Rinchen Village, a nomadic community in Gansu, eastern Tibet, staged a sit-down protest in front of heavy machinery in opposition to a planned highway across the heart of their grasslands. They argued the new road will destroy their homes, livelihoods and water supply. A number of Tibetans were arrested but later released. At the time of writing, the construction is on hold.



Left:  
Rinchen protest;  
Above:  
Nomad resettlement  
in Rebkong.

## China compares Tibetan 'serf liberation' to the end of American slavery

China has bolstered its ongoing propaganda campaign on Tibet by publishing a white paper, *Tibet's Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide*, claiming that Tibet has been "transformed from a poor and backwards society to one that is advanced in both economy and culture". Published in April, the paper also denounced the Dalai Lama and his Middle Way proposal to grant greater autonomy to Tibet within China. The government appeared to close the door on any possible negotiations.

A delegation from the government of the Tibet Autonomous Region travelled to the US to repeat China's 'positive' message on Tibet. Delegate Shingtsa Tenzinchodrak reportedly claimed that religious freedom was fully protected in Tibet. Following the visit, Chinese state media compared the "freeing" of Tibet in 1959 to the abolition of slavery in the United States.

# ...News update

## Dalai Lama returns to the UK

This July, having spent more than half of his life advocating for Tibetans worldwide, the Dalai Lama turns 80 years old. As ever, he has a busy schedule ahead of him and he will visit the UK briefly at the end of June and then again in September for a more extended period.

In February, China was incensed by the attendance of both the Dalai Lama and President Obama at the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. Although the two did not meet privately, Mr Obama described Tibet's spiritual leader as a "good friend" who inspires the world to "speak up for the freedom and dignity of all human beings".

The Dalai Lama will visit Australia in June and return to the US in July.



JAN MICHAEL IHL/JMI.CO

## Major earthquake in Nepal

At the time of going to press, Chinese media are reporting that 27 Tibetans died in Tibet as a result of the 25 April earthquake centred on Nepal and the second tremor on 12 May. More than 850 people were injured and three remain missing. Nearly 40,000 houses and monasteries were damaged. There are also grave concerns that many Tibetan refugees living in affected areas of Nepal are not registered with the authorities, adding to the difficulties of finding and identifying casualties.

In February, Tibetans who lost their homes in the 2010 earthquake in Yushu, Tibet, staged protests after being told they would have to pay for new houses built to replace their fallen ones. There were also complaints that the rebuilt Yushu has been given Chinese characteristics in place of its more traditional Tibetan style.

## Free Tibet submits torture report to UN

In February, Free Tibet, Tibet Watch and Gu Chu Sum (the Tibetan association for former political prisoners) worked together to produce a new report on torture in Tibet that was submitted to the United Nations Committee Against Torture in Geneva. China is being reviewed by the UN committee later this year and our report is the first in a series of submissions that we will make in advance of the review. When we last contributed, in 2008, the committee took on board a number of our criticisms and concerns. Their concluding comments, which were published after the review, condemned China's "widespread torture", "excessive

use of force" and "other abuses". We are hopeful that the information we provide this time will give the lie to Beijing's claims of fair and humane treatment of prisoners.

### Vital support

We are very grateful to the late Kevin Higgins who made the work on this report possible with a gift in his will. To find out more about how you can leave a gift in your will to Free Tibet and/or Tibet Watch, please visit [freetibet.org/wills](http://freetibet.org/wills), call us on 020 7324 4605 or write to us at Free Tibet, 28 Charles Square, London, N1 6HT.



## Local groups

### Norwich Tibet Group

We are pleased to introduce the newly-formed Norwich Tibet Group. They held a vigil on 10 March, to commemorate the 56th anniversary of Tibetan Uprising Day. Following a great turnout, the group decided to hold their first meeting and invited Free Tibet's campaigns manager, Alistair, to give a talk on the situation in Tibet, what Free Tibet does and how local groups can help our fight. It was also a great opportunity for supporters to meet one another and for us to thank them for all the good work being carried out.



Norwich Tibet Group's vigil (above) and talk (right).



### Reigate Tibet Support Group

Reigate held a talk on the Story of Tibet given by Dr Nathan W. Hill, Lecturer in Tibetan and Linguistics at SOAS. As usual, we helped them advertise their event.

## Action

If, like Norwich Tibet Group, you would like a Free Tibet staff member to give a talk for your local group, or you are organising an event, then please contact us at [localgroups@freetibet.org](mailto:localgroups@freetibet.org) or give us a call on 020 7324 4605.

## Summer Shindig

Join us for our Summer Shindig on Friday 14 August for an evening of music and film on the theme of 'home'.

We will be screening *Bringing Tibet Home* (2013), an award-winning documentary following the unique journey of New York-based Tibetan artist Tenzing Rigdol as he seeks to implement a daring plan inspired by his dying father's wish to set foot on his native soil.

After the film we will be hosting an auction with some fantastic prizes to help raise vital funds for Free Tibet.

We are holding a special reception for Mi Tse supporters (Life Members) at 6:00pm who will meet the team and enjoy Tibetan nibbles, music and drinks. A general reception for all other supporters is at 6:45pm and the film will start at 7:30pm. We look forward to seeing you!

Mi Tse (Life Members): **Free**

All other supporters and friends: £5

General admission: £8

If you would like to attend, please fill out the form on the cover letter, call Aisha on 020 7324 4615 or email [aisha@freetibet.org](mailto:aisha@freetibet.org). Alternatively, you can visit [www.freetibet.org/summershindig](http://www.freetibet.org/summershindig) to book your tickets online using the code **FTShindig** to redeem your supporter discount.



Mi Tse means 'lifelong' in Tibetan and a single one-off gift of £500 will make you a Mi Tse supporter. By supporting the campaign for life, your support will not only bring you added benefits but will help ensure the campaign for Tibetan freedom endures for as long as it takes. Mi Tse supporters receive copies of Free Tibet publications, invitations to special events, a branded t-shirt and exclusive updates from the Director. Please fill out the form on the cover letter to become a Mi Tse supporter or please get in touch for more details.

**Free Tibet is delighted to welcome new Mi Tse supporters: Bernard Canetti, Andrew Graham and Jonathon Porritt.**

