



འཕེལ་བྱེད་ལྟུང་གི་སྒྲུབ་ལུགས།
Rangzen Voice

International Tibet Independence Movement

Official Newsletter of ITIM

Winter/2004

This is a very auspicious year for ITIM as this is the 10th anniversary of its inception. The founding members of ITIM were Thubten Jigme Norbu (Taktser Rinpoche), Larry Gerstein, Sandy Benson, Jeff and Kathy Moebus, Joan Sparks, and Tsetan Wangchuk. On March 17, 1995, at the conclusion of a seven-day, 65 mile "March for Tibet's Independence" from Bloomington to Indianapolis, Indiana, Rinpoche and Gerstein announced the creation of ITIM. Their vision, at that time, was that ITIM would spearhead a world-wide, extensive movement to return Tibet back to the Tibetans, thereby ending the illegal and brutal occupation of China. Prior to this, Rinpoche (Oldest Brother of His Holiness The Dalai Lama), Gerstein, and Laura Jennings led the Indiana Tibet Committee; an organization focused on offering educational activities and campaigns about Tibet in the State of Indiana.

In 1997, ITIM officially became a corporation in Indiana, and in 2000, the U.S. Government recognized ITIM as a 501c(3) not for profit, educational organization. ITIM still operates as a grassroots, volunteer organization of thousands of supporters from all around the world. Since the beginning, ITIM has coordinated numerous international, national, and local projects and campaigns including Monk and Nun tours, and walks and bike rides for Tibet's Independence totaling 312 days and 2,975 miles (4,786.6 kilometers)!

Along with being known for its walks and bike rides, ITIM has led the effort since 1995 to help release Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, The Panchen Lama. Over the years, ITIM has organized many postcard, petition, and email cam-

ITIM's 10th Anniversary

Larry Gerstein



Taktser Rinpoche at the 2002 Students For A Free Tibet Action Camp in Needmore, Indiana.

paings on behalf of the missing Panchen Lama. In fact, more than 525,000 ITIM postcards have been sent urging China to release this important spiritual leader.

Consistent with its original mission, ITIM continues to aggressively pursue independence for Tibet through nonviolence. ITIM has also actively supported and assisted various Tibetan organizations, Tibet support groups, and Tibetans throughout the world.

When looking back on the last ten years, it is extremely humbling to realize how many projects were successfully implemented and how much was

accomplished by dedicated and talented volunteers operating on a shoestring of a budget. It is truly amazing and inspiring, especially when considering that most not for profits disband within three years of their inception. ITIM has never had an "official" office space. In fact, over the years, local supporters of the organization have met in two different Churches, two coffee houses, a bookstore, a grocery store, a clubhouse, and in individual homes. While our supporters' abilities have varied, there has never been a lack of determination, vision, and passion for the cause of Tibet. More importantly, we have always effectively fulfilled our working

(Continued on page three)

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1995 - 2005
TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Rangzen Voice

ITIM is a grassroots, volunteer, not for profit (501c3), educational organization co-founded on March 17, 1995 by Thubten Jigme Norbu and Larry Gerstein to achieve Tibet's independence through nonviolence.

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Florida, Tibet and His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Tenzin Namgyal (Tenam)

When I was walking in Florida through the ankle-deep road covered with rainwater, pavement scattered with branches of palm trees covered with rain, and storms punctuated with brief sunshine, I never expected a miracle, much less autonomy for Tibet (let alone complete independence for Tibet)! More than a fifty-five mile walk is simply a way of attracting people's attention, a way of creating awareness, and asking for support to regain our lost freedom. It might appear stupid, self-torturing, and hardly garnering Chinese attention, but what are the alternatives? Almost every time Tibet asks for help, there is no response from the United Nations and nations around the world.

Since Tibet was illegally occupied, more than 1.3 millions Tibetans have been killed, thousands of Monasteries destroyed, natural resources have been recklessly ransacked, & millions of Han Chinese have poured into Tibet. The UN was the first object of refuge for Tibetan leaders. In 1950, His Holiness The Dalai Lama appealed to the UN for help.

Yes, three UN resolutions were introduced in 1959, 1961 & 1965, but none of the resolutions mentioned even the name of the perpetrator! In 1995, six Tibetans conducted a 13-day hunger strike in front of the UN headquarters in New York. And in 1998, six Tibetans undertook a hunger strike until death in New Delhi, India hoping that the UN would respond to their three demands: 1) The UN must reopen discussions as to the status of Tibet, as per the UN resolutions of 1959, 1961 and 1965; 2) The UN must send an independent human rights monitor into Tibet to report on the true situation there; and 3) The UN must conduct a plebiscite of Tibetans in order to ascertain their wishes for the future of Tibet and guarantee self-determination. After an intervention of Indian police to stop these hunger strikers, Thubten Ngodup, a fifty-three-year-old Tibetan man, chose to self-immolate to awake the intentional sleeping of the United Nations. What was the UN response?...Nothing!

The People's Republic of China is a signatory member of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The futility & inadequacy of the UN will no doubt set a precedent for future victims of human rights and it demonstrates its inability to translate its own principles into prac-

tices. To the eyes of Tibetans and ethnic minorities under The PRC, the United Nations became more undemocratic when China was granted Security Council Membership, giving them the power to veto any resolution on Tibet before it comes to a vote.

These were the thoughts lingering in my mind when I was walking. The Floridians we met on our walk were very kind and showed great concern for our cause. We were offered rain jackets, water bottles, food, fruits, mail for His Holiness The Dalai Lama, honking horns for support, and very courageous comments. Their support represented much more than the gifts they offered us.

This "March for Tibet's Independence" was deliberately set to coincide with His Holiness's visit to South Florida & near where His Holiness was giving His teaching. ITIM implemented the same strategy as part of its "Peace Ride for Tibet's Independence" from Washington DC to Toronto when His Holiness gave the Kalachakra teaching there. It is our desperate approach to widely disseminate information about the Tibetan cause and struggle through familiarity with His Holiness, expecting more media and press coverage. And it does work!

When we march with the word independence, some Tibetans & supporters believe we are opposing His Holiness's Middle Way concept. As a participant in several ITIM activities, I never had such feelings nor did I experience the same from other participants. The greatest achievement of all the Walks and Bike Rides is educating people about Tibet: why, when, and how Tibet was invaded, the systematic destruction of the Tibetan identity, culture, tradition, religion, language and so on, and informing people about the current human rights violations inside Tibet and the survival of the Tibetan government in exile and the Tibetan diaspora around the world. And we absolutely know that His Holiness fully comprehends the objective and purpose of our walks. Therefore, the only words we were blessed to hear from Him at the end of the Florida walk were "Thank You! Thank You!" We were absolutely satisfied with our short walk for Tibet in Florida.



Indy to Windy “March for Tibet’s Independence”

The “March for Tibet’s Independence” from Indianapolis to Chicago began on November 30 on a cold, very rainy day. Twenty-two dedicated Tibetans and three others started the 200+ mile walk. Of this group, four Tibetans initially served as the core walkers including Mr. Pasang la from Minnesota, Mr. Ngawang Norbu la from Boston, Mr. Tenzin Jamyang la from Chicago, and Mr. Jigme Norbu la from Indiana. Two days later, Doug Herman joined the group as the onsite coordinator.

Throughout this walk many others joined for a few hours, days, or weekend. Even though the walkers’ endured physical pain, they remained strong thinking about the suffering of Tibetans inside Tibet. During this 11-day walk, the group made numerous powerful & highly emotional presentations at Churches, High Schools, and Universities. The High School students were extremely responsive to our message about Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, The Panchen Lama, and Independence for Tibet.

Consistent with our previous experiences, the Unitarian Churches, on many occasions, offered us lodging along the route. Local media coverage was fantastic as was coverage by the various Tibetan Radio Services, assuring that the Tibetans inside of Tibet heard about the walk, and hopefully, felt inspired by their Tibetan brothers and sisters in exile.

The last day of the walk was extremely successful. At this time, the expanded group of 10 core walkers was joined by 60 additional individuals all of whom were focused on walking the last 12 miles to China’s Consulate in Chicago. Through the streets of Chicago, the group walked in one line with signs highly visible to the passing motorists. At first, we were escorted by 2 police officers on bicycle, but by the end of the day, 9 officers on bicycle and 8 on foot escorted the group through the busy streets. A light rain accompanied the walkers as well. Many motorists and pedestrians offered their support by showing the peace sign or honking their horn.

At the Water Tower in Chicago, the 70 walkers were warmly welcomed by an even larger number of Tibetans including the leaders of the Tibetan community of Chicago. After some brief welcoming remarks, the entire group began their final steps to China’s Consulate. Approximately 300 individuals of all ages participated in this final segment of



Photo by Doug Herman for ITIM

Core walkers in the Indy to Windy March for Tibet’s Independence, December 2004.

the walk. Of this group, about 290 were Tibetans from Minnesota, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky. SFTers from Indiana University, Berea College, Indiana University-Fort Wayne, and Chicago were also in attendance along with Monks from the Tibetan Cultural Center in Bloomington and the Indiana Buddhist Center in Greenwood, Indiana. This combination of Tibetans and supporters was quite unusual for a Tibet activity in North America. More often than not, supporters outnumber Tibetans. On this occasion, however, Tibetans overwhelmingly outnumbered supporters, affirming the leadership role of the Tibetans and the support role for the others.

At the Consulate, the demonstration began with prayers, remarks by the leader of the Tibetan Association of Chicago, Tsering Chonjor, & then a riveting brief speech in Tibetan by Ngawang Norbu on behalf of Taktser Rinpoche thanking all the walkers for their dedication & passion to secure an independent Tibet. After this, Jigme Norbu (son of Taktser Rinpoche) shared some powerful thoughts about the importance of the younger generation of Tibetans continuing the Rangzen struggle, & he introduced each of the 9 other core walkers who shared some remarks & received a katak from the Tibetan Association of Chicago. Larry Gerstein shared some comments about the historic gathering in North America of more Tibetans for a Tibet action & he also acknowledged the significance of the multigenerational participation of Tibetans in ITIM’s walks & a bike ride for Tibet’s Independence in 2004. Next, a

Tibetan from Chicago read in Chinese a powerful statement demanding the release of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche & The Panchen Lama, and reminding China that Tibet belongs to the Tibetans and that Tibetans will never settle for anything less. As a result of a prearranged agreement with the U.S. State Department and the Chicago police, Jigme Norbu and Larry Gerstein handed this statement to a State Department representative who met them half way across the street between the Consulate and the location of the demonstrators. This statement was then given to the Consulate.

Following this, Ms. Bunkun Wang representing the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI)-USA shared a statement of solidarity with the Tibet independence movement. Consistent with the long tradition of WUFI, Ms. Wang then offered ITIM a large colorful banner reading, “CHINA OUT OF TIBET.” Lindsey Rieger, the SFT Midwest Regional Representative then offered some poignant remarks about Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and The Panchen Lama. Lastly, the group sang the Tibetan National Anthem. Throughout the entire demonstration, the participants loudly and passionately chanted slogans. By the conclusion of the event, all of the attendees were soaked by the rain, but they remained firm in their desire for Rangzen, and their demands of China that it release Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and The Panchen Lama.

Thanks for your support!

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Fog Lifting

By Douglas F. Herman

It started out just as the last Walk, well for me at least. I was down & feeling stripped of who I am. Life in New York City can do that to you sometimes, just floating about watching everyone else have defining moments in their existence, and me, just bearing witness. I got on a plane heading for Indy, knowing I was already joining a work in progress and immediately upon arrival I would need to be sharp, but I was anything than what was needed. I felt like this on my way to the Florida Walk, sort of defeated that things I had set out to do hadn't been accomplished yet, that my place in life was undefined, and the more time I wasted the further away from reaching my goals I would be. But then I got off the plane, was picked up by one of the unsung hero's of this Tibet movement, had a meal, cup of tea and a conversation. Something shifted.

Gail & I headed off for the road to meet Pala, Jigme, Tenzin, Charlie, and the vehicle that will forever be my Yak. It had been eight months since I laid eyes on her dusted, blemished, pale blue, beaten frame, but the 'Free Tibet' placard was still hanging on from that weathered metallic electrical tape job from the mountains of Pennsylvania. Charlie passed the keys and I did a reach around to open up the busted door like I had done so many times prior in April. We all climbed in and got ready to get back to where they had stopped for a lunch break. Jigme opened up the back and the others followed. Tenzin, who had been sitting in the front because of chronic motion sickness, and had said to me earlier "we've been hearing a lot about you, and are really glad you are with us now." As he exited, I noticed him limping as he cautiously rounded the van to outfit himself with a 'China out of Tibet' sign & I wondered what could have happened already, I mean the route from Indy to Chicago was flatter than Old Europe's vision of the world & the Walk was only two and half days old. After they made their way across the highway and started heading further north away from Lebanon, Indiana, I started cleaning up the van and came across a newspaper clipping from when the PeaceRide for Tibet concluded in Toronto the day The Dalai Lama arrived. The paper was moist and the van still smelled like WD-40 from the bikes...I was home.

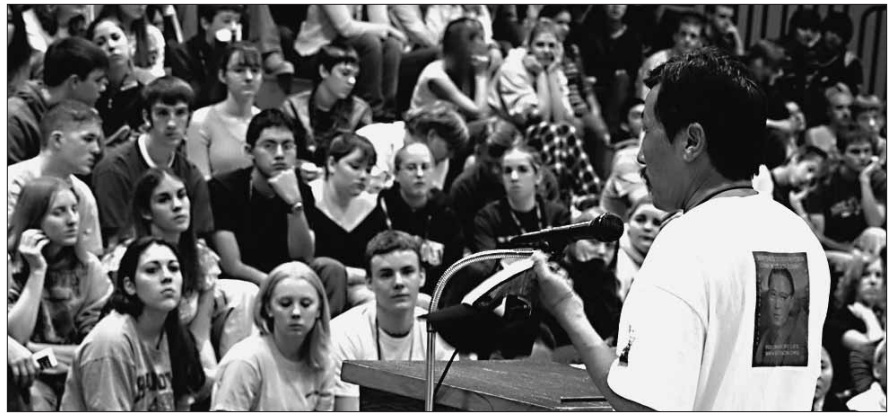


Photo by Doug Herman for ITIM

Ngawang Norbu speaking at Hanover Central High School during the Indy to Windy Walk.

The next week of my life sped by with abandonment, the only thing that kept my head straight was the nightly reports of their God-like progress: Twenty, twenty five, once even thirty miles in one shot, and all the while without complaint there was Tenzin, limping like a man who never knew the proper use of his leg. The reporters were there each time we crossed a town line, and once I thought we were about to be arrested but it turned out to be a local reporter & her photographer husband who drove a truck that resembled a paddy wagon. Each time we passed a razed corn field it felt we were on another planet. Besides the wind, just utter silence. A few days later the two Ama La's from Minnesota joined & brought with them a light I've never seen. Fresh legs to drive this thing home and with them their sons were with me again. Topden, Sherap, & Passang's son Nyima; veterans of the grueling PeaceRide, silently paced behind their parents acting the part of shadow, & all the while my camera snapped & my mind was bent on how invigorated I had become.

When we reached Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana we were expecting the hecklers. We had all heard about the infamous Chinese student body that had been educated 'in-country' about Tibet, and had established a website promoting the Communist Party stance on the situation. As we crept up the hill on to the campus, I remember feeling butterflies in my stomach over the potential clash of opinion, but all we received was kindness from the likes of Dave Raymer- an artist and composer who felt the need to be our benefactor for a day or two, Olga Kildisheva- brand new President of the SFT Chapter at Purdue struggling to provide us with an audience willing to listen, Tony Settineri- who came all the way up from Ball State University for

his first act of advocacy for Tibet, and Cynthia Scruggs- another Lafayette resident who arranged for the ailing and beleaguered group to receive professional massages to release some of the pain. We crossed that time line and knew that Chicago was in striking distance. The pace quickened and the route grew flatter. Others joined in the Walk as the distance we had covered kept increasing in leaps and bounds. Soon we would reach the end, but first the children, the mighty children.

In the rain & ripping wind we arrived before 8am in Cedar Lake. Hanover Central High hosted us & an entire gymnasium of students gathered to hear the story of a nation left to defend itself with conviction alone. We all spoke. Two hours later that same group was as strong in numbers as they were in compassion, & when they sensed we were finished with our talk they all stood and began chanting as one... "Free Tibet, Free Tibet!!!" It can't be described... the feeling inside. Merrillville High was next, only this time we had a mere hour to complete the same task. Seems as if we were successful as Robert Hopkins and Katy Quick joined us for the entire day of the Walk that brought us within twenty miles of the lake.

The following day was my last. Even though the Walk would conclude two days later in downtown with throngs of Tibetans from all over the Midwest, I sadly would not be a witness as my Brother certainly picked an auspicious day to get married. I'll never forget this one, not that the others will fade for some unknown reason, but this one was special. Maybe it signified something more to me, I can't place it even now that it's nearly February, but I know that since I got off that plane I haven't slowed down.

Reflections on Tibet and Taiwan

Bob I. Yang, Chairman, World United Formosans for Independence-U.S.A.

In 1996, I learned of a project launched by ITIM. This was the "Boycott Chinese Goods" initiative. At the time, Peter Chang was the Chairman of the World United Formosans for Independence-USA (WUFI-U.S.A.) and I, the President of the Formosan Association for Human Rights (FAHR), WUFI-U.S.A. and FAHR voted overwhelmingly to support ITIM in this endeavor. I was to organize a day of action in Kansas City. This was the first time Larry Gerstein and I interacted – a fact that is probably too trivial for him to remember. I ordered a hundred "Boycott Made in China" bumper stickers from him. On Saturday, June 29, 1996, Taiwanese Americans in Kansas City, Kansas City Friends of Tibet and the local AFL-CIO staged a demonstration at a busy intersection leading to Wal-Mart, Kohl and Just for Feet stores. Professor Gerstein's "Boycott Made in China" bumper stickers were freely distributed to shoppers. To this day, I meticulously avoid purchasing any Chinese made products. Once it took me nearly a year to find a pair of leather work gloves not made in China.

Actually the collaboration between Tibetan & Taiwanese peoples in the U.S. dates back to much earlier years. My personal close involvement began only in 1996. In spring that year, China conducted military maneuvers, including the launching of missiles, just off the coast of Taiwan. This was a blatant attempt to intimidate the voters in Taiwan from electing a pro-independence President. Early in March, the Tibetans, who had their many grievances against China, and Taiwanese Americans in Chicago teamed up for a joint demonstration against China. Many Kansas City Taiwanese Americans, by car & by plane, journeyed to Chicago to participate in this momentous event. I rode in a van all night and arrived in Chicago early enough to settle down for a placard making session. Several of the placards featured the demand, "Independence for Tibet." When we showed up at the staging area at the Water Towers with armloads of placards, we found Tibetans there without placards or banners of any kind. Their demonstration paraphernalia had yet to arrive. Under those circumstances, the "Independence for Tibet" placards we just made quickly migrated to our Tibetan friends. Also, my Chicago colleagues told me the Chinese flag the Tibetans burned that

day in front of China's consulate was contributed by WUFI-U.S.A. The Chicago demonstration was a resounding success. I came to realize simple offerings, such as placards and flags, can help forge a strong friendship. I also discovered that "China out of Tibet" is a slogan favored by many a Tibetan.

In the ensuing years, Tibetans and Taiwanese in the U.S. have continued to cooperate with each other. We are often at the receiving end of this mutually beneficial relationship. For instance, in 1998, FAHR received word from the Tibet government in exile that His Holiness The Dalai Lama had not acceded to the China's position that Taiwan is a province of China. This followed a FAHR inquiry imploring His Holiness not to consent to this preposterous Chinese claim on Taiwan. I also recall one demonstration in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C. where Tibetans graciously shared the venue with Taiwanese Americans. The Tibetans had reserved the use of the park that day. We feel honored whenever we have a chance to show our support for Tibetans. In early April, 2004, WUFI-U.S.A. members joined the hunger strikers of the Tibetan Youth Congress at the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza of the United Nations. Later that month, WUFI-U.S.A. was proud to participate in the Tibetan demonstration at China's embassy in Washington, D.C. to kick off the "Peace Ride for Tibet's Independence." On December 10, 2004, a number of my WUFI-U.S.A. colleagues in Chicago had the distinct pleasure of joining ITIM on the last day of its 11-day "March for Tibet's Independence." In concluding this march at China's Consulate, ITIM kindly offered WUFI-U.S.A. an opportunity to express our admiration and support for the Tibetan people. As a matter of tradition and as a token of our solidarity with ITIM, WUFI-U.S.A. presented ITIM with a 2-foot by 10-foot banner advocating, "CHINA OUT OF TIBET." This banner is made in Taiwan. The transfer of this seemingly simple article symbolizes the joining of hands of Tibetans & Taiwanese. Tibet & Taiwan may be far apart geographically. However, the people of Tibet & Taiwan share the very same important goal. We both wish to be free from Chinese threat and oppression. It is imperative that we join forces in order to turn back China's imperialistic designs on its neighbors. Long live, Tibet!



**Help Release
The Panchen Lama**
www.rangzen.org

**Missing 10 years: Free
The Panchen Lama Now!**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of His Holiness The Dalai Lama recognizing Gendhun Choekyi Nyima as The Panchen Lama. On May 14, 1995, His Holiness announced from India that the then 6-year Gendhun Choekyi Nyima was the true reincarnation of the previous Panchen Lama. At this time, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima lived in a rural area in the Lhari District in Kham, Tibet. While His Holiness' announcement normally would have generated much joy, three days after being recognized, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, His family, and the Abbott, Chadrel Rinpoche and His Secretary, who both led the search party for this incarnate were taken by The People's Republic of China (PRC) to Beijing. Since then, these persons have been political prisoners of The PRC. As of today, no one has seen or talked to them, including officials from the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and various governments from around the world. On April 25, 2005, The Panchen Lama will be sixteen years old having spent over half of His life as a prisoner.

ITIM has been aggressively organizing campaigns for the release of all the individuals mentioned since they were initially abducted. Currently, each month ITIM sponsors an email campaign targeting different PRC Embassies around the world. This terrible violation of human rights must end. During this 10th year of captivity, we urge you to regularly participate in our monthly email campaign. Visit www.rangzen.org for details. We need your active involvement to help release all of these political prisoners.

ITIM Financial Report 2004

Revenue	\$38,959
Expenses	\$42,972
Net Loss	\$4,013
Note.	\$5,278 was donated to Tibetan Organizations and Tibetans.

Free Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

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Ten years: So much time, yet so little

Lorriane Hitz-Bradley

Taktser Rinpoche is the heart & soul of ITIM, & Larry Gerstein the great force bringing Rinpoche's vision to fruition. I was, and am, in awe of Rinpoche. His presence always comforted me and gave me hope. He has endured so much, & yet He perseveres.

When I first went to the TCC, I heard about the mysterious Larry; everyone spoke of him in somewhat awed tones. The first time I met him, he was sitting in the sun next to the TCC, smoking a clove cigarette, wearing tiny round sunglasses, long hair in a ponytail. He seemed impenetrably cool and distant. Little did I know that I had just met the "other brother I never knew I had," and behind that cool façade was a very dedicated, selfless person.

I remember being honored to be in the presence of the ITIM people. It felt like we were tiny ants, throwing ourselves against a great wall. But as I think about it now, ants can carry many times their own weight, and grain by grain carry the wall away. So, in those times when it felt as if we might never make a difference, we at least were acting where others were not.

They called me "sangha protector." At first I was aghast – I did not have the experience, the "standing," to accept such a title. But I was always the one that cautioned the group, even in its energetic rush forward, that the health & safety of the entity had to remain our focus. As much as I loved the idea of a picture of "Mickey Mao," proposed as a tool to promote our "Boycott Chinese Goods" program, I also knew that Disney wasn't likely to be so charmed. Squashed like a bug couldn't begin to describe what would have happened to ITIM if we had published that picture.

Alas, I had to resign my position on the ITIM board. I remain on the listserv and help, meager although it might be, whenever I can. I have become a householder, & never have to wonder why the Buddha left that life to pursue enlightenment. But I hold ITIM in my heart. I will always protect it. I am a member of that sangha, now and forever.

These Boots Were Made for Walking

Brent Werner

The smooth stroke of the brush left the leather gleaming and golden. These shoes carried the history & memory of Tibet. These shoes carried the hopes & dreams of a nation. A pure hearted man named Takster Rinpoche

Reflections on 10 years of ITIM

plotted & paced His way to freedom in the shoes I held.

Polishing Rinpoche's shoes was one of the great privileges of my life. This was more than a small act to aid a tired marcher for Tibet's independence. This was my chance to serve, in some small fashion, the cause of liberty & justice on the roof of the world. Far from the romantic myth of Shangri-la, Tibet was now home to the Chinese & their barbarous tortures, forced abortions, & cultural genocide. In their quest for absolute control, the Communists had even resorted to kidnapping innocent boys like Gendhun Choekyi Nyima. Rinpoche had come here to do something about that.

Rinpoche was an inspiration, speaking simply but profoundly of Tibet's historical reality and demanding freedom for His nation. At the same time, He was totally approachable. New to Tibetan culture, I was unsure what to call a High Lama, husband, father, and scholar rolled into one. Rinpoche replied, "Just call me old dog."

Takster Rinpoche's humility, frank manner, and unswerving dedication to Independence and to His Holiness The Dalai Lama, are something that will stay with me all of my life. I will never forget watching Rinpoche prostrate to His Holiness at the opening of the Chamtse Ling Temple in Indiana. Draped in a beautiful blue chuba, Rinpoche's powerful devotion to His Holiness was evident as He pressed His forehead to the earth.

Almost a decade after that first march, I am working hard for my wife and kids, but Tibet is never out of my mind. I figure if Tibetans are willing to give their very lives for freedom, the least we can do is give a bit of our time.

I do what I can for Tibet. If it doesn't seem like much, I consider every word I write is a word forbidden Tibetans in their native home. If I raise the beautiful Tibetan flag, with its glorious snow lions, surely there is a Monk shackled to the ceiling in a Lhasa jail for the same deed. Remembering this motivates me in my small endeavors.

There's just one more pair of shoes I want to polish. I dream of polishing the shoes of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the real Panchen Lama, in a free Tibet. The Chinese might call dreams like these crazy, but we won't let the Communist

cruelty dull our conviction. We will march until Tibet is free, and then we will march to The Potala, to see His Holiness in His rightful throne. That is Rinpoche's dream, and His dream will become our truth.

What I've Learned

Carrie Hill

Congratulations, ITIM! For ten years, you've fought for Tibet's independence & made major strides towards achieving your indispensable goals. The interconnectedness of all things makes it imperative Tibet's freedom is secured.

Admittedly, I knew nothing about Tibet before Larry Gerstein introduced me to the cause in 1996. A naïve graduate student encapsulated by my field of study, I was shocked to learn of the atrocities being afflicted on Tibetans by The PRC. I also was deeply touched by Tibetan Buddhist teachings and cultural practices. And so began my journey as a social activist. It's impossible to describe all the ways ITIM has affected me, but I can distill my experiences into three important lessons:

To be an effective agent of change, you must cultivate tolerance of the intolerant. I once was quick to judge those who were intolerant of others' differences in beliefs or background. ITIM helped me realize that this way of thinking made me no better than those I was judging, and prevents finding peaceful solutions to problems.

Nonviolent protest and advocacy are the best ways to foster change. ITIM has demonstrated this through walking and riding for Tibet's independence, promoting successful email campaigns, and partnering with organizations that share ITIM's philosophy and goals.

Grassroots organizations really can make a difference on a global level. Like all grassroots groups, ITIM started out small and local. But in only ten years, you've become internationally known and respected as an organization tirelessly committed to securing freedom for all Tibetans.

I now live in Southern Utah, where snow-capped Pine Mountain towers over our small desert community. When I look upon it, I see it as Southern Utah's own little Himalaya, a symbol of the peace and absolute freedom that Tibetans will have someday.

Thank you, ITIM.

Around ITIM

This has been a busy year for ITIM on the road. We coordinated two walks for Tibet's Independence & one Bike Ride covering in total about 855 miles completed in 29 days. ITIM and all the participants are very grateful for the strong support received from the various Tibetan Associations around North America, the Chapters of the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress, the TSGs, the Unitarian Churches, other Churches, and everyone else who helped make 2004 possible and hugely successful. ITIM will continue to organize walks and bike rides until Rangzen is achieved.

Gedun Rabsal has completed his term as a Board Member. We cannot thank him enough for all he contributed to the organization and movement.

Dorjee, Gachung, Kunsang, & Tenzin moved to Virginia after spending two years in Indianapolis. We will miss you. Thanks for all the good times!

Rangzen Concert A Success

About 240 people attended the first AITIM "Rangzen Concert" in Minnesota on February 19, 2005. Seven highly esteemed Tibetan musicians performed what some viewed as the best live performance they had heard in years. The artists were all former TIPA (Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts) members including Jamyang Chonden (Chicago), Sherap W. Sangpo (Minneapolis), Tenzin Wangdak (Minneapolis), Tenzin Choedon (Madison), Lobsang Choephel (New Mexico), Namgyal Dolma (New York), and Tenzin Ngawang (Minneapolis). The 2 hour concert featured Tibetan traditional and current music. ITIM greatly appreciates each musician for their

involvement and the Tibetans and Tibetan Association of Minnesota for helping to make this event a success. Leading up to the concert and following the concert, this event was covered by the various Tibetan Radio Services. In fact, a few of the musicians performed live on Radio Free Asia. Thus, the people in Tibet learned about this activity to promote independence for Tibet. A portion of the profits was donated to two local families that lost their young adult sons during an altercation that had happened a few weeks prior to the concert.

Why Tibet?

When I am asked this question many things come to mind. Is it because I'm married to a Tibetan, because of the human rights issues, or because of the religion? I would say my interest and curiosity in Tibet started as a teenager after watching documentaries and reading old issues of National Geographic in my parents' house. At that time, the only resources I had available were magazines and anything the local library could get for me.

When I was in High School, I learned more about the human rights issues through Amnesty International. This was during the dark ages of the 1980's when there weren't many support groups. I kept asking myself how could the world community allow abuses such as this? While at university, I took religion classes focused specifically on religions of the Himalayas, and at this time, Dr. Lopez lectured on Lamaism in Tibet. That just made me hungry for more information. So, all these years later, I find myself a Vajrayana Buddhist, married to a Tibetan, and fighting for human rights for people all over the world no matter who they are and where they come from.

-Theresa Dhondup, ITIM Supporter

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Indiana Tibetan Centers

Tibetan Cultural Center
3655 Snoddy Road, Bloomington
www.tibetancc.com
Indiana Buddhist Center
263 North Madison Ave, Greenwood
www.IndianaBuddhist.org

Support Tibetan Owned Indiana Restaurants

Anyetsang's Little Tibet
415 East 4th Street, Bloomington
Café Django
116 North Grant Street, Bloomington
Snow Lion Restaurant
113 South Grant, Bloomington

ITIM Committees and Meetings

The committees listed below meet on a regular basis in Indianapolis and also accomplish their missions through e-mail and phone correspondence. We welcome your participation in the work of these committees, even if you do not live in Indiana. Email rangzen@aol.com for further information about the work of these committees and about becoming a committee member and/or joining ITIM.

Program. Coordinates various educational, religious, and advocacy campaigns and programs including hosting monks and nuns.

Rangzen House. Coordinates vocational and educational training, employment and housing opportunities, and a host of social services for Tibetans who are interested in relocating or have already relocated to Central Indiana.

Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. Coordinates worldwide campaign to assist this Monastery and to secure the release of The Panchen Lama, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima.

General Meetings. ITIM meets 7pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at All Souls Unitarian Church (5805 E. 56th St., Indianapolis).