

# Tibet

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INTERNATIONAL  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR TIBET

# Earthquake in Tibet





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# From the Board of Directors

## TIBET PRESS WATCH

The International Campaign for Tibet works to promote human rights and democratic freedoms for the people of Tibet.

Founded in 1988, ICT is a non-profit membership organization with offices in Washington, D.C., Amsterdam, Berlin and Brussels, and field offices in Dharamsala and Kathmandu.

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We're delighted to announce the appointment of Mary Beth Markey, formerly our Vice President for International Advocacy, as ICT's new President. The Board of Directors has been through a comprehensive search for the next president of the International Campaign for Tibet, and we've been inspired by the extraordinary quality of the applicants. At the end of the process, we know we've made the ideal choice by turning to one of our own.

For fourteen years, Mary Beth has focused on U.S. government relations and international advocacy at ICT and holds within her mind and spirit a realistic understanding of how international support can help and should help in the mission to support His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the people of Tibet. Her history in governmental circles, including a tenure working under then Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-RI) on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, means she's well versed with respect to U.S. policy and capabilities. Not only are her credentials excellent, but Mary Beth is a dedicated, capable leader. Outside of ICT, Mary Beth is held in high esteem by others in the international Tibet movement and the Tibetan exile community. Moreover, Mary Beth's heart connection to this issue is obvious to those who have worked with her.

As Mary Beth formally assumes the reins, we know we're in excellent hands. She is only the fourth president in ICT history; succeeding Tenzin N. Tethong (one of ICT's founders), ICT Executive Chair Lodi Gyari, and past president and current board member John Ackerly. We know that with Mary Beth's appointment, we enter a new and exciting phase in our organization's history, and invite you to share in our pride.

The work we do together is essential to inspiring international support for Tibet — and until human rights and democratic freedoms are no longer being brutally suppressed and Tibetans are allowed to practice their ancient religious and cultural heritage, our role as advocates remains critical.

We thank Mary Beth for serving as our president — and thank you for standing with us, and with the people of Tibet.



Mary Beth Markey at the Tibetan Children's Village School in Dharamsala, India.

# Tibet Press Coverage

## *News from around the World*

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama meets with a U.S. President, China is an unseen but clearly-felt presence in the room. This fact is understandable as both parties are engaged and invested in China's cooperation on fundamental issues.

The Obama Administration has from the outset made its interest clear in a cooperative, comprehensive and positive U.S.-Chinese relationship, and both the President and Secretary of State made visits to Beijing an early priority. Of course, the Dalai Lama continues to seek genuine autonomy for Tibetans within the People's Republic of China, and his envoys have had nine rounds of dialogue with Chinese officials. It is rather ironic then that China appears to have removed itself from the realm

of cooperation, at least on Tibet, and has taken a seemingly more intractable position than ever. The Chinese political leadership has elevated Tibet to a so-called "core concern" of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which signals that they want it off the table as an issue for discussions with world leaders.

Nonetheless, the Dalai Lama's discussions with President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton in February went well. The Dalai Lama himself said "the administration is fully supportive of our middle way approach: very clear, very specific." Far from stepping away, the President and Secretary of State have demonstrated that Tibet remains on the table.

## **The Dalai Lama's Well-Traveled Road: Democracy** by Carl Gershman

The Washington Post, February 16, 2010

Now that the White House has announced that President Obama will receive the Dalai Lama, it is important that he be welcomed not only as a moral and religious leader respected throughout the world but also as a fellow democrat who shares America's deepest values.

This is not an aspect of the Dalai Lama that is well understood, especially by those who see him as the spiritual leader of a traditional people. Yet he is a devoted democrat who has defended the universality of the democratic idea against the "Asian values" argument of various autocrats and who has tried, even before he fled Tibet in 1959, to modernize Tibet's system of government.

The Dalai Lama has given the world a model of how to pursue democracy and live according to its values. By refusing to relinquish the principle of nonviolence despite the terrible violence that has been inflicted on Tibetans, he has preserved

the moral integrity of the Tibetan struggle and the possibility for an eventual reconciliation with China. By demonstrating moral courage and self-assurance in the face of China's brute force and abusive insults, he has given hope against hope not just to his own people but to oppressed people everywhere.



Photo © Pete Souza



Photo © Sonam Zeksang

His Holiness the Dalai Lama with NED President Carl Gershman and NED Vice Chairman Dr. Judy Shelton.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) presented His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the Democracy Service Medal in recognition of the Tibetan spiritual leader's commitment to advancing the principles of democracy and human dignity on February 19, 2010 in the Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress. The Dalai Lama addressed an audience of approximately 500 at his only public appearance during his Washington visit.

# Talking about Tibet

## An Open Dialogue between Chinese Citizens and the Dalai Lama

New York Review of Books Blog, May 2010



Wang Lixiong at the 2009 ICT Light of Truth Award ceremony.

Photo © Sonam Zeksang

**The following exchange was organized by Wang Lixiong, a Chinese intellectual known for his writing on Tibet and for theorizing about how China might generate its own kind of democracy in the Internet age.**

Wang opened a Twitter page onto which Chinese Web users could pose questions and vote for the questions they preferred. By the deadline, 282 questions had been submitted and 12,045 votes for questions had been cast. Wang said that he was “very pleased” with this response and that the questions that rose to the top of the pile were indeed, in his view, a good representation of the actual concerns on the minds of Chinese citizens. The dialogue was reprinted in the New York Review of Books Blog and these were among the questions and responses:

**Question:** I want to ask you about the religious leadership of Tibet in the future.

**Dalai Lama:** In 1969 I issued a formal declaration that the question of whether the Dalai Lama system should continue is a question for the Tibetan people to decide. In 1992 I issued another declaration, making clear that as soon as Tibet might gain formal autonomy, I would hold no official position in a Tibetan government and that all Tibetan affairs would continue to be handled by officials serving in their posts inside Tibet. Then, in 2001 the Tibetan government in exile adopted a system to elect leaders to five-year terms of office by popular vote of the Tibetan community in exile. In view of these developments, I have come to feel that the Dalai Lama system is no longer very important. I am going to continue to do my best in my role as long as my health holds up, but as for the Dalai Lama system, I have to say that the Chinese government cares more about this than I do (laughs).

**Question:** I would like to ask Your Holiness about the meetings between the Tibetan government in exile and the Chinese Communists. Why are these meetings always fruitless? What exactly are the questions that have been so intractable over the decades?

**Dalai Lama:** The main problem is that the Chinese government continually insists that there is no Tibet problem, only a Dalai Lama problem. I have made no demands of my own, but am primarily concerned with six million Tibetans and their culture, especially their religion and their natural environment. If a day comes when Chinese leaders acknowledge a “Tibet question” and if they are ready to face it and work for its solution, I will lend my full support, because our goals — to build, develop and unify Tibet — will then be the same. At present the Communists are relying on forcible

**The main problem is that the Chinese government continually insists that there is no Tibet problem, only a Dalai Lama problem.**

methods. They repeatedly stress “stability” in Tibet. My belief is that true stability comes from inner confidence and trust.

**Question:** If the regime were to allow you to return to Tibet, and were to grant self-rule to Tibet, what kind of political system would you like to see in Tibet?

**Dalai Lama:** This question will be for Tibetans inside Tibet, especially intellectuals, in a spirit of “seeking truth from facts,” to decide for themselves. Our Tibetan society in exile, for the past 50 years, has already achieved democratization in its social system.

**Question:** In view of how things stand at present, the chances of a peaceful resolution of the problem of Tibet seem almost zero. May I ask how Your Holiness views the current prospects for Tibet?

**Dalai Lama:** During 60 years of Chinese Communist rule, the eras of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao have all been different. In fact there have been some very major changes. I feel confident that changes in [China’s] nationalities policy will come, and in particular that the Tibet problem can be solved on the basis of mutual interest. Some retired officials and Party members who used to work on Tibetan affairs — as well as some Chinese intellectuals — have begun to point out irrationalities in minority policy and the need for a re-thinking of nationalities policy. This is why I feel there will be changes in the not-so-distant future, and that problems can be solved.



# ICT Responds

## Press Releases from the International Campaign for Tibet

### The Serious Agenda for President Obama and the Dalai Lama

February 10, 2010

Today's meetings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with President Barack Obama, in the late morning, and with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in the early afternoon, underscore that Tibet remains a serious issue of global importance.

President Obama enters the meeting facing the fact that the Chinese government has elevated Tibet to a "core issue" of territorial integrity and sovereignty, launched an effort to align foreign governments with its way of thinking on the status of Tibet, and concluded a rare top-to-bottom review of its Tibet policy with serious repercussions for Tibet's future. His meeting also comes just three weeks after the Dalai Lama's envoys returned from Beijing for the ninth round of dialogue, in which the envoys conveyed further information on their proposal for genuine autonomy for Tibetans, in their continuing effort to resolve the Tibet issue through substantive negotiations.

### Tibetans Celebrate Dalai Lama Meeting with President Obama Despite Crackdown

February 19, 2010

In a second day of celebration, on February 18, Tibetans defied intense security by chanting prayers and setting off fireworks in the Amdo area of Tibet, where the Dalai Lama was born, marking his meeting with President Obama that day. The Tibetan source said that while security appeared to be stepped up in an area already under crackdown, there were no detentions. He said: "The purpose of the

ceremony was to mark the meeting between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and President Barack Obama in the hopes that it will bring a productive outcome for Tibet's future. We are very happy about the meeting and we are praying and making offerings to ensure there is justice and truth for this cause."

### Hundreds Killed in Earthquake in Kyegudo, Eastern Tibet: Emergency Appeals Launched

April 14, 2010

Hundreds have been killed in the Tibetan area of Yushu when a series of strong earthquakes measured at magnitude 6.9 hit the region this morning. Reports in the state media say that at least 400 people have been killed and thousands of others injured, and it is not known how many are still buried in the rubble. Aid workers in contact with the region say that the death toll is certain to rise, with one official saying that in the last few hours it has exceeded a thousand, although this is currently impossible to confirm.

At least 80% of the buildings are said to be flattened in Jyeku, which has a population of at least 100,000 people according to the state news agency Xinhua, including Tibetans and Chinese migrant workers. Local officials said there is no power or water, there are reports that a hospital is damaged, and at least one school has collapsed, trapping its students. Many local people have fled to the mountains, and desperate attempts are ongoing to drain water from a local reservoir where a large fissure appeared in the wall of a hydropower station dam.

### Envoy Urges Chinese Response to Dalai Lama's Wish to Visit Earthquake Victims; Rebuts Chinese Charges of Exploitation

May 12, 2010

Lodi Gyaltsen Gyari, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has urged the Chinese central government to respond positively to the Dalai Lama's request to visit the earthquake hit Tibetan area of Kyegudo, and he has strongly criticized Chinese allegations of exploitation by the Tibetan government in exile in relation to the earthquake.

Speaking today on Voice of America, Lodi Gyari said: "If the Chinese leaders are able to make the far-sighted decision to allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Kyegudo, then it will create unprecedented good will among Tibetans everywhere, especially Tibetans most affected by the earthquake."



Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and ICT Executive Chairman

To read the full text of these press releases, please visit [savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org).

# From the ICT Blog

The following are excerpts from blog postings;  
to read the full posts, please visit [weblog.savetibet.org](http://weblog.savetibet.org)

## Spiritual Sustenance of Tibetan Earthquake Victims and Chinese Insensitivity

Posted by Bhuchung K. Tsering,  
April 16, 2010

The devastating earthquake in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture on April 14, 2010, whose impacts are still being



Bhuchung K.  
Tsering

analyzed as I write, has highlighted the humane aspect of the Tibetan issue.

While material assistance will help those injured and affected physically, for the rising number of Tibetans and others who have

lost their lives, spiritual sustenance plays a hugely important role. As was witnessed by media representatives at the site, the people wait for the appropriate spiritual rituals to be undertaken before the bodies of those who have died are disposed of.

In this regard, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has not only come out with a written message offering his prayers, but a video recording of his reference to the tragedy has been posted on his website. Many affected people in Yushu and their relatives in Tibet and China have learned of His Holiness's prayers and have expressed profound spiritual relief. If the Chinese Government is really concerned about the overall welfare of the Tibetans affected by the earthquake, it should be logical for them to let the Tibetans in Yushu know that the Dalai Lama has prayed for the dead and the injured.

Unfortunately, to the Chinese propaganda machinery devoted to Tibet, it looks like they are in a situation of poli-

tics as usual. At a time when all Tibetans and a majority of the Chinese people (I want to believe) are expressing solidarity and sympathy with the families of Tibetans who have died in the devastating earthquake in Yushu, the Chinese media have shown their insensitivity by coming out with articles about the "Dalai Clique" and criticizing the one spiritual leader who can provide the needed spiritual succor to the affected Tibetans.

## Media Monopoly — With Chinese Characteristics

Posted by ICT Guest Blogger  
Oystein Alme, April 30, 2010

*Oystein Alme (born 1960) is the Norwegian director of the Foundation Voice of Tibet.*

A week has passed since the terrible quake hit the Kyegudo area in Tibet with thousands of casualties. This morning Associated Press (AP) has spread the news across the world that our radio station, Voice of Tibet, has established a call-in service to convey messages of condolence to Tibet through separate programs beamed on short wave radio. The AP story urged the PRC authorities not to jam or interfere with these transmissions, as they would only contain messages of condolences.

Hoping, at least for the 'condolence' program, it will reach out without interference from China — at least for today. After all today is the 'national day of mourning' throughout China, so at least for today... And there it is, with a loud and clear signal. Excited voices can be heard: "Wow! This they can definitely hear also inside Tibet..."

BANG! Powerful audio breaks through, in Chinese, taking center stage on short wave frequency 15.550 mHz, dominat-

ing the condolence messages. Although registered internationally for Voice of Tibet's exclusive use between 7 and 9 pm Tibet time, it is China Radio International's audio now attempting to rule our frequency. It is called jamming and is part of China's "Great Wall of Censorship," spending the people's money to make sure they cannot listen.

## Kyegu 'Dhondup Lungpa'

Posted by Tencho Gyatso, May 3, 2010

For us Tibetans, the Yushu earthquake represents more than just numbers and deaths. It represents the devastation of one of the last towns in Tibet that the Chinese have yet to infiltrate and change. Much of the world, including the Chinese themselves, reacted with surprise when they heard that the population is mostly Tibetan (Yushu is 97% Tibetan). Yushu is just too remote and isolated for most Chinese to want to go there but now my fear is that Beijing's promises of repair and restoration will take this



Tencho Gyatso

beautiful Tibetan land away from the Tibetans.

The majority of Tibetans are simple folks; they ask for nothing much but they would like to live their lives as Tibetans. But they are now caught up in something beyond their control — the politics of greed and power are threatening to shift their ground again even as they mourn their losses. And in the midst of this, I wonder what kind of a new Kyegu will emerge from these ruins? Will there be some resemblance of the charming Tibetan town that was Kyegu, or will it become another faceless pre-fab Chinese town built on the ruins of a Tibetan gem?

# Earthquake in Yushu: Tragedy in the Heart of Tibet

**On April 14, a 6.9 earthquake struck and leveled the town of Kyegudo in Yushu prefecture.**

Official reports indicate that 2,698 people died in the earthquake and an estimated 270 remain missing. An estimated 12,128 were injured (1,424 severely) according to recent reports. However, the death toll is still uncertain as many families delivered bodies directly to monks for cremation and they may not have been counted in official statistics.

Official estimates note that 85% of the buildings in Kyegudo have collapsed. An estimated 15,000 homes were destroyed and 100,000 people needed shelter, food and basic supplies immediately. Core supplies (tent, blankets and food) have been provided to residents of Kyegudo by the Chinese government relief teams. However, supplies are now running low, tents are falling apart (weather is rough in Kyegudo), and many people in outlying areas have not received aid at all.

A government office has been set up in Kyegudo to receive and disburse funds for relief and reconstruction in Yushu. This government office is receiving funding from monasteries (abroad and throughout Tibetan areas), Chinese groups and Tibetan donors. Many monasteries and Tibetans are making

contributions. The government prefers that local organizations not receive funds directly from abroad.

Compounding the immediate needs are the rumors in Kyegudo that people will not receive compensation for their homes and will have to move off their land. It is unclear if this has been formally decided and will be implemented or if people have been told that this is what they can expect. We've also received reports that residents are being told that their land does not belong to them and housing complexes or apartments will be built for them elsewhere.

Tibetans in the old part of Kyegudo have already started to rebuild their homes. However, rumors have spread that they may be forced to leave their land and their neighborhoods may be designated as an area for tourist development by Chinese authorities. Unregistered Tibetans, primarily nomads, were not officially eligible for aid (including emergency food, supplies, or tents) unless they had a government-issued ID card and a residence.



The earthquake's impact on Tibetan religious culture, imperiled prior to April 14th due to China's political and strategic objectives in the region, is devastating. Kyegudo's landscape is scattered with remote hermitages, ancient monasteries and religious settlements. The destruction of monasteries, like the 1300-year old Thrangu, and the death of monks further deepens Tibetans' sense of dispossession and loss. Religious faith and devotion to the exiled Dalai Lama are fundamental to Tibetans' sense of identity, despite the political strictures imposed by the Chinese government that have become ever more stifling of late.



Since a wave of protests against Chinese rule swept across Tibet in March, 2008, there has been an intensified military buildup across the plateau. But when the earthquake happened, troops in Yushu were forced to shift their focus from the requirement to suppress dissent and unrest (termed protecting "stability") to a massive relief and rescue operation.





Chinese military officials said nearly all of the 12,000 soldiers who rushed to the quake area struggled with altitude sickness and many had trouble communicating with Tibetan survivors. Tibetan monks accustomed to living in high-altitude areas didn't have those problems and played a significant role in rescue efforts.



Premier Wen Jiabao has already said that the central government would again help with rebuilding the monasteries following the April 14th earthquake, but it remains to be seen what degree of involvement and "ownership" of the rebuilding process will be granted to the local population.



A lama named as Longzhi was quoted by the *South China Morning Post* as saying: "There is so much we could do. Even with rescue work, since we are from places of high altitude, we could help with rescue work immediately. Instead, in most places where there were soldiers we were not allowed to help. We could only help dig in places where there were no government rescue workers yet."





So many have died in Kyegudo as a result of the earthquake that traditional “sky burials” for each individual were not possible. Instead, Tibetans who died were cremated with hundreds of monks gathering to dispose of the corpses and carry out religious funeral rituals.



Kyegudo is a centuries-old center of Tibetan cultural and religious traditions, and a hub of ancient trading and pilgrimage routes fanning out across Tibet and beyond. The area is home to over 100 monasteries and temples, including Thrangu Monastery, flattened in the April 14 earthquake with significant loss of life among the monastic community.



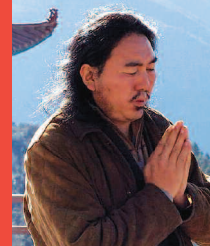
Environmental concerns are likely to be a significant factor in rebuilding Kyegudo and other communities impacted by the earthquake. The Yangtze, Mekong and Yellow Rivers all rise within Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai, but following decades of questionable agricultural policies the area has seen rapid desertification.



# Earthquake in Yushu

## The International Response

Focus on a  
**POLITICAL PRISONER:**  
**Karma Samdrup**



**The plight of Tibetans in Yushu touched compassionate people around the world, and the International Campaign for Tibet was honored to accept the disaster relief contributions and offers of support that allowed us to fund direct relief efforts as well as shine the spotlight of international attention on the Tibetan question and China's response during the earthquake.**

In the months since the earthquake, the generosity of ICT's members and supporters has allowed us to fund the purchase of urgently-needed supplies including food, medicine, blankets and tents. Most recently we helped purchase 16 large tents that can make it through the difficult winter months. This donation was leveraged by another organization to fund the purchase of 166 tents altogether. We have also helped to fund the complete reconstruction of a Tibetan kindergarten, which must also function as an orphanage. Many thanks to all who have so generously contributed to our relief efforts.

## Compassionate Response from ICT Supporters

At New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, the students of the Chinese National Honor Society raised \$350 to help the victims of the Yushu earthquake. The letter they sent with their contribution impressed us all, and we shared it with the Special Envoy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Mr. Lodi Gyari. He remarked that the donation showed a purity of heart and spirit.

Sixth-graders at the Concord Middle School in Concord, Massachusetts, decided to "rent" ties to their fellow students for an Ugly Tie Day. By charging a rental fee of 50¢ per tie, the sixth grade raised enough to send ICT a check for \$57.50. We applaud the generosity (and innovation) of these students, and complement their school and their families for raising compassionate and thoughtful children.

A group of students from Casa Tibet México who run a non-profit named "Dulce Samsara" baked brownies, cookies and cakes to benefit of the earthquake victims in Tibet. Other students and members of Casa Tibet México pooled their resources to make a significant contribution. And the Buddhismus Stiftung Diamantweg also gave through Casa Tibet Mexico.

## Tibetans Lose Interest in Playing by China's Rules; Even Prominent Figures are Taking a Stand, and Beijing is Striking Back

International Herald Tribune, June 24, 2010

Karma Samdrup and his two younger brothers were the kind of Tibetans that made the Chinese Communist Party proud. Vaunted environmentalists, they were admired pillars of their community who steered clear of politics. Even better, Mr. Samdrup had become a gloriously rich philanthropist and planned to donate part of his immense Tibetan art collection to a state-run museum.

On Tuesday, however, Mr. Samdrup, 42, frail and gaunt from six months in police custody, was marched into a courtroom to face accusations of "tomb robbing," a charge that had been originally dropped 12 years ago by the police. [His lawyer] accused prosecutors of torturing his client, who he said lost 44 pounds as a result of near-daily beatings.

His real crime, say friends and relatives, was trying to save his brothers from labor camp and torture — their punishment for accusing a local police chief of hunting protected animals in a Tibetan nature preserve.

Exile groups and rights advocates say the prosecution of Mr. Samdrup and his brothers is part of a growing assault on prominent Tibetans, a campaign that has sent a chill through a community that once thought itself immune to the heavy hand of Beijing.

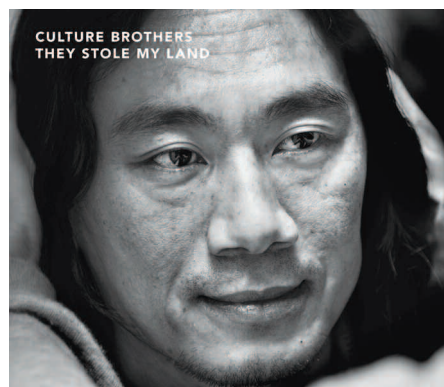
## ICT Responds

"Karma Samdrup and his family are pillars of the local community, engaged in conservation work with an international award-winning environmental organization. At a time of significant environmental challenges — from melting glaciers and water use issues to the poaching of endangered animal species — efforts of individuals like these three brothers are essential for China's future, as well as Tibet's. There is clearly an urgent need for the Chinese government to recalibrate what — and who — it considers to be a threat to state security," said Kate Saunders, ICT Communications Director.



Kate Saunders

# Member Spotlight



## Culture Brothers

“Culture Brothers” is Karma Lama, a musician living in Anchorage, Alaska. Karma was born in the Tibetan refugee camp in Shimla, India, after his Tibetan parents had to flee the brutal Chinese occupation.

As an infant, he was invited to enter the Swayambhunath monastery (the famous Monkey Temple) in Kathmandu, Nepal. His family moved from India to Kathmandu, to the Monkey Temple hill, and when he was 7 he joined the monastery. There he focused on studying music and he learned to play the drum and the rag-dun (a 15-foot long horn) for the religious ceremonies celebrated each day (generally for 3 hours a day) every day of the year.

As a young man, he left the monastery. Later he moved to the mountains of Alaska, where he and his wife organized a concert and invited Ngawang Sangdrol, one of the “singing nuns” of Tibet. “I was shocked and touched; I couldn’t believe that people can do things like this. I spent some time with her, asked more questions, traveled with her as she told her story. I want the world to know what happened to her.” So Karma Lama made a Culture Brothers album with Ngawang Sangdrol, and is donating one dollar to ICT for every album sold.

For more information, please visit [culturebrothers.com](http://culturebrothers.com).

## Algienne Amrita and the OM Fund

Algienne Amrita has been an ICT supporter since 2001. Recently, with the help of ICT and of John Ackerly (then ICT president and current ICT Board member), Algienne founded the Ohana Maitreya (or OM) Fund to raise support for Tibetan Buddhist nunneries in India. We recently had a chance to talk with Algienne about her involvement with Tibet, Buddhist nunneries, and ICT.

*How did you first become involved with the Tibet issue and ICT in particular?*

I developed an interest in Asian cultures and Eastern mysticism at quite an early age, and I have traveled many times to India. In the year 2000 I began a series of journeys to the Himalayas. I saw firsthand the efforts to preserve Buddhist culture in the Tibetan exile community in northern India, and I became involved in several building projects towards that end. It was around that time that I met John Ackerly and others from ICT, and I began to educate myself about the roots of the Tibetan situation. Through my friends in the Buddhist monastic community and at ICT, this issue became very personal for me.

*What do you tell people who are unfamiliar with Tibet and all of the many issues that are a part of the Tibetan peoples’ struggle?*

When people ask me why the issue of Tibet is so important, I point out that Tibet really is the roof of the world and our roof is leaking. The glaciers are melting rapidly on the Himalayan plateau. As the headwaters of the great rivers of Asia originate in Tibet, degradation of the environment there is affecting billions of people. I also try to educate about the unique qualities of the Tibetan language.



Algienne Amrita pictured with some of the nuns supported by the work of the OM Fund. So far the OM Fund has distributed over \$100,000 for the construction of housing and educational facilities for Buddhist nuns living in India.

The practice of Tibetan Buddhism is based on the power of sacred, primordial sound and its ability to transform. This is a treasure the world can ill afford to lose.

*Tell us about the OM Fund — what is it and why did you decide to create it?*

I can only say that the idea for the OM Fund came from Spirit. On the third morning of waking from a dream about a fund for Buddhist nuns, I telephoned John Ackerly, and he agreed to help me. I had made a commitment to the nuns of the Kagyu lineage that I would find the money for construction of the shedra (school of Buddhist studies) for nuns at Tilokpur. I soon learned that facilities are desperately needed for nuns of all lineages.

Ohana Maitreya is dedicated to the memory of my friend Barbara Jarvis. Barbara introduced me to many books and teachings of Buddhism. The Fund’s mission is the construction of housing and educational facilities for Buddhist nuns living in India. It is a women’s issue, a Buddhist issue, and a Tibetan issue.

The nuns of Tibetan Buddhism have an essential role to play in the preservation of a priceless legacy that can benefit all sentient beings. Donations of any amount will help us to continue this important work and are urgently requested.

For more info about the OM Fund, visit [omfund.org](http://omfund.org).



# Book Review:

## Murder in the High Himalaya

*Loyalty, Tragedy, and Escape from Tibet* by Jonathan Green

Cho Oyu Mountain lies 19 miles east of Mount Everest on the border between Tibet and Nepal. To the elite mountaineering community, it's known as the sixth highest mountain in the world. To Tibetans, Cho Oyu represents a gateway to freedom through a secret glacial path: the Nangpa La.

On September 30, 2006, gunfire echoed in the thin air near Advance Base Camp on Cho Oyu and climbers preparing to summit watched in horror as Chinese border guards fired at a group of Tibetans fleeing to India, via Nepal.

*Murder in the High Himalaya* is the unforgettable account of the brutal killing of Kelsang Namtso — a seventeen-year-old Tibetan nun fleeing with the group to Dharamsala to escape religious persecution. Kelsang's death is a painful example of Tibet's oppression by China, but this time a human rights atrocity was witnessed and documented by dozens of Western climbers. Their moral dilemma was

plain — would they tell the world what they had seen, risking their chance to climb in China again, or would they pass on by? At the center of the story is an American climber, struck with a crisis of conscience, who gambled with his career to speak out and a young, Tibetan girl who has sacrificed her right to return to Tibet by bearing witness to the murder of her best friend to the western media. Both risked their futures to expose the abuses of China in Tibet and paid the price.

For the last three years, award-winning investigative reporter Jonathan Green, traveled the remote parts of the Himalaya researching this amazing story. He introduces us to the disparate band of adventurers and survivors who were at the “rooftop of the world” that fateful morning, as he seeks an answer for one woman's life. In this probing investigation, an affecting portrait of modern Tibet emerges — raising enduring questions about morality, and how far one will go to achieve freedom.

## From the Author

About writing *Murder in the High Himalaya*



Jonathan Green

Before I took my leave, the Dalai Lama offered me words of advice. He told me what he told everyone else he had met who had been connected to the Nangpa La incident. “Just be honest and tell the truth.” It seemed strange advice at the time. Why wouldn't I?

My quest to discover the truth about Kelsang's death began with two magazine articles and has ended with the publication of *Murder in the High Himalaya*. What I found along the way challenged and constantly surprised me. It was a journey, a few times, I never thought I would complete. I almost quit when I ran out of money or time after time people refused to help or sit for interviews. I met walls of silence, almost everywhere I searched: climbers, NGO's, respected experts on Tibet.

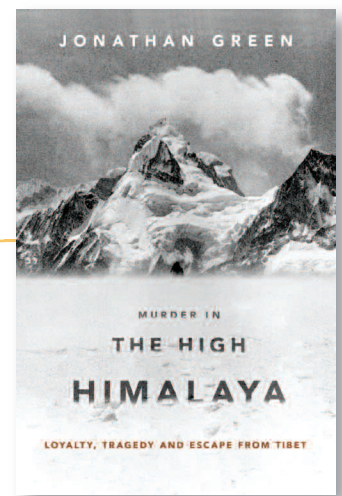
Yet, at the same time, I had something immeasurably valuable. I had the support of Dolma Palkyi [best friend of the murdered nun] and the others in the Nangpa La group who bravely and selflessly gave of their time so that the world would understand about Kelsang Namtso's death.

Dolma has matured into a remarkable young woman in the time I have known her. Our friendship has deepened and I've come to understand that Dolma is no victim. She's a heroine. And today she speaks with self-assuredness, passion and clarity.

Through Dolma I learned that Tibet's spirit, no matter what it endures, is strong and unquenchable.

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[jonathangreenonline.com](http://jonathangreenonline.com)



*“Green's steely, factually dense analysis of this unlawful conspiracy sheds light on a perennial human-rights crisis.... In clear, concise prose, the author deliberates over China's stranglehold on Tibet, its systematic dismantling of the indigenous culture and the terror tactics employed on families.”*

—Kirkus

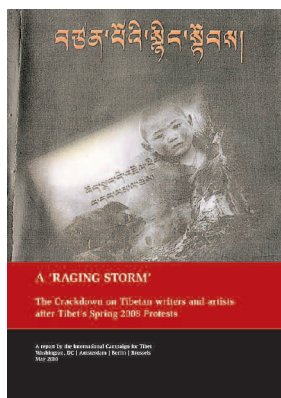
*“A gripping tale of routine murder that would have gone unreported but for the fact that a group of Western climbers were silent witnesses to the killing of a young Tibetan woman attempting to cross the border into India.”*

—The Bookseller



Kelsang Namtso's body as photographed by the late Pavel Kozjec

# Member Corner



## New ICT Report: A Raging Storm

### The Crackdown on Tibetan Writers and Artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests

There has been a vibrant literary and cultural resurgence in Tibet since Spring 2008 when protests against government policy and in support of the Dalai Lama swept across the plateau. Writers (both in print and via the internet) have been at the forefront. Often fluent in Chinese as well as Tibetan, and living in Xining and other areas of Amdo (now part of Qinghai province), they've witnessed and bravely spoken out on what they've seen. Singers and educators have also been involved in this cultural resurgence, which is grounded in a strong sense of Tibetan identity.

In daring to refute China's official narrative of events since March, 2008, this new generation of Tibetans represents a more profound challenge to the ruling Communist Party authorities than before and, as a result, individuals are at greater risk. For the first time since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, singers, artists and writers have been the target of a drive against Tibetan culture in which almost any expression of Tibetan identity not validated by the state can be branded 'splittist.'



## Annual Refugee Report

### Dangerous Crossing: Conditions Impacting the Flight of Tibetan Refugees 2009 Update

In 2009, the situation for Tibetans deteriorated further in Nepal as the Chinese sought to block protests about repression in Tibet. Border security was still tight following the crackdown in Tibet as a result of unrest that swept the plateau from March, 2008, and the numbers of Tibetans escaping into exile were low compared to previous years although higher than in 2008.

A total of 838 Tibetans made the dangerous crossing over the Himalayas into Nepal and onward to India in 2009, only slightly above the 2008 figure of approximately 652. This is well below the 2,500 to 3,500 who crossed annually in recent years. The dramatic decrease in numbers can be attributed to the increased dangers Tibetans in Tibet face as part of the ongoing crackdown that followed the start of protests in 2008 and heightened security along the Tibet-Nepal border.

As the 2009 update went to press we learned of a dangerous situation in Nepal. Sources reported that Tibetan refugees on foot were chased through the Nepali forests by Chinese border guards. More details to follow in the next TPW.



## We Welcome Back One of Our Own...

The International Campaign for Tibet is glad to welcome back Melissa Jimison as our Director of Development. Melissa returns to us after serving on our development team from 2005 to 2008, and reports that she's excited to be leading the great team of professionals who work closely with our members.

"My goal is to develop and grow a more efficient, diversified financial base of support for ICT in support of the Tibetan culture and people. This is no small task in light of the many compelling global issues that vie for philanthropic dollars. I'm here because I — like our supporters — believe that the people of Tibet deserve the human rights and democratic freedoms we work so hard to promote."

## ...And Offer Grateful Thanks for Exceptional Service

Our previous Director of Development, Michael Whybrew, has left us in Melissa's experienced hands. Michael took on the mantle of Development Director in 2007 and reports that he's been empowered and inspired by his time working in support of the Tibetan challenge. We offer him our sincere thanks for his tireless efforts.

**Both reports are available to Members and Supporters of the International Campaign for Tibet. To download your own free copy, visit our website at [savetibet.org](http://savetibet.org).**



# Calling All Supporters: Take Action!

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sets international policy — the priority she puts on certain issues can change the world. Secretary Clinton has long been a friend to Tibet and we have always relied on her to act as a strong advocate and ally.

But as the United States continues to engage with the People's Republic of China on global issues (including finances, global warming, and international relations with North Korea), we must assume her personal commitment may compete with political expediency.

Secretary Clinton is a powerful and important ally, and we need to remind her that we rely on her determination and support for the people of Tibet. For that reason, we are now leading a campaign to flood her offices with petitions from those who support the Tibetan people.



**We ask all members and supporters to sign and return the enclosed petition to ICT in the attached envelope so we can deliver them together for maximum effectiveness. Please consider copying this page and asking friends and family to join in the effort. You can also download the petition on our web site at [savetibet.org/action-center/action-alerts](http://savetibet.org/action-center/action-alerts).**

## Petition of Recommitment

**TO: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton  
State Department, Washington, DC**

Dear Secretary Clinton,

During your considerable public service, you have consistently pressed for human rights in Tibet and around the world. I offer my sincere thanks for the work you have done to further our national values.

Because the path to a solution for Tibet has been a long one, the Dalai Lama often cautions that we must “hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.” I am confident that you will continue to champion human rights and democratic freedoms for Tibetans — but I know that China has so far been a difficult dialogue partner.

That’s why I ask you please to recommit your energies to the just cause of Tibet.

In recognition of the astonishing compassion and tireless efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the contribution the Tibetan Buddhist culture makes towards realizing a more peaceful world — out of respect for the Tibetan Buddhist monks who dug out earthquake victims with little more than their bare hands — I ask that you continue to work diligently to advance a solution for Tibet.

On behalf of the Tibetan people, we need you now.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan to Make Your Support Last!

### Consider a planned gift to ICT from your estate.

Those who place ICT into their will or life insurance policy, donate real estate, or participate with a gift annuity are inducted into our Mandala Society to honor their long-term commitment. For more details, please contact Chris Chaleunrath at 202-785-1515 or [members@savetibet.org](mailto:members@savetibet.org).

## Pass the Word — Help the Planet

When you're finished with this issue of Tibet Press Watch, please consider passing it on to a friend instead of throwing it out. Your thoughtfulness will not only ease our carbon footprint in the world, but help to spread awareness about the plight of Tibetans and the mission of peace and compassion of the Dalai Lama. Thank you.



His Holiness  
the Dalai Lama  
is greeted by the  
local Tibetan  
community in  
Washington, DC  
on February 17th,  
2010.

Photo © Sonam Zoksang