

Leaving Fear Behind
A Secretly Produced Film
Captures the True Feelings of Tibetans

Tibetans Speak on Tibet, China and the Olympics

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Beijing: Today in the city of the XXIX Olympiad, an unprecedented film made secretly in Tibet and smuggled out just days before the March uprisings will be screened for world media. ***Leaving Fear Behind*** is a 25-minute documentary shot by a team of courageous Tibetan filmmakers which captures the ***sentiment within Tibet about China's rule, the relevance and symbolism of the Olympic Games, and the return of the Dalai Lama.***

A team of self-taught filmmakers from eastern Tibet, Dhondup Wangchen (a farmer) and his friend Golog Jigme (a monk), secretly filmed over 35 hours of interviews with everyday Tibetans on three subjects: Chinese rule in Tibet, the Beijing Olympic Games, and the Dalai Lama.

Armed with a \$300 video camera, and with virtually no experience, the filmmakers set out on motorcycle, travelling to the remote corners of eastern Tibet and across the Tibetan plateau. From the beginning, their goal was to bring Tibetan voices to the Beijing Games. *"It is very difficult for Tibetans to go to Beijing and speak out there. So that is why we decided to show the real feelings of Tibetans inside Tibet through this film,"* notes the filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen in his film.

More than 100 interviews were taped from October 2007 to March 2008. Heartfelt feelings were recorded from Tibetans of all backgrounds: farmers, businessmen, students, nomads and monks, young and old. The authenticity of their responses speaks simply and eloquently of lives characterized by oppression and discrimination.

Quotes from interviewees:

"Actually we would be happy about the Games but much is being misrepresented. China was awarded the Games on the condition that the situation in China and Tibet would improve."

"...outsiders may think that the Tibetans are treated very well and that they are happy. But the truth is that Tibetans are not free to speak of their suffering."

“For every Tibetan, there are ten to fifteen Chinese. The Chinese are everywhere in these Tibetan areas.”

“Even if I had to sacrifice my life for this message to be seen by the Dalai Lama, I agree and welcome this chance.”

All twenty of the people who appear in the film agreed to have their faces shown on film—at great personal risk. Wangchen reveals that some interviewees “said that we absolutely had to show their faces, otherwise it wasn’t worth speaking to them,” so strong was their desire to counter Beijing’s narrative on Tibet.

During the precarious filming Dhondup Wangchen worked under the code name *Jigme* (“Fearless” in Tibetan). His code name, and the bravery of all those associated with this project, inspired the film’s name *Jigdrel*, which translates to *Leaving Fear Behind*.

Soon after sending out their tapes on March 10, 2008, Dhondup Wangchen and Golog Jigme were arrested. They remain in detention today. Dhondup Wangchen was last seen in detention in Guangsheng Binguan in Xining (Qinghai). Golog Jigme was last seen in a detention center in the town of Lingxia (Gansu).

Their tapes were transported to Switzerland, where the final cut was put together by Wangchen’s cousin, Gyaljong Tsetrin. Gyalijong Tsetrin, who escaped from Tibet in 2002, founded *Filming For Tibet* to produce this film.

For more information and to view the film online, visit www.leavingfearbehind.com. To access the website from within China, tools are required to circumvent the government censorship apparatus. Recommended options are a VPN (virtual private network); Tor software to counter surveillance of visited websites; or Psiphon, an open source web proxy to bypass content-filtering systems.

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