

Dear Friend,

The time has come for me to go to Tibet again. Last time when I went to Tibet in 1997 - after my graduation - I was arrested by the Chinese authorities, beaten up, interrogated, starved and finally thrown out of Tibet after keeping me in their jails for three months in Lhasa and Ngari. I walked to Tibet, on my own, alone, across the Himalayan Mountains from the Ladakh.

Eleven years later, I am walking to Tibet again; this time too, without permission. I am returning home; why should I bother about papers from Chinese colonial regime who have not only occupied Tibet, but also is running a military rule there; making our people in Tibet live in tyranny and brutal suppression day after day, everyday for fifty years.

The Year 2008 is a huge opportunity for the Tibet movement to present the injustices the Tibetans have been subjected to, when China is going to attract international media attention. I am taking part in the return march from Dharamsala to Tibet, that is being organized as a part of the "Tibetan People's Uprising Movement", a united effort put together by five major Tibetan NGOs: Tibetan Youth Congress, Tibetan Women's Association, Gu-Chu-Sum Movement of Tibet (an association of former political prisoners), National Democratic Party of Tibet and Students for a Free Tibet, India.

The march will start on 10 March 2008, from Dharamsala, the capital of Tibetan exiles and will pass through Delhi and then head towards Tibet. Walking for six months, we might reach the Tibet border around the time China opens the Beijing 2008 Olympics (August 14-25). Presently it's too early to approximate at which border point we would be crossing; Tibet and India share a border that runs 4,075 Km along the length of the Himalayas. We might choose any point, or even multiple points. We'll see the situation.

I know there had been similar attempts in the past, but this is 2008, and I have seen the organizers working extra hard with strategic planning, taking care of every minute detail, and the best thing is that we have all the NGOs working unitedly for the common goal. This unity is our strength! I do not know where we would end up, that's why I am giving away the little collection of books (my only possession in life) to a library at is being setup in McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala. My friends: Lobsang and Nyingje (who served in the Indian army as part of the Tibetan battalion) are also giving away their personal belongings; committing themselves for the march.

Of course the Indian police will do their duty; the Chinese army at the Tibet border would be overtly enthusiastic. Since we are leading a peaceful march, with absolute commitment to non-violence, I do not think anyone - either from Indian authority or Chinese - would impose themselves on us. Inspired by Gandhi's Salt March, even if they did try to stop us, we are not stopping. For how many days can they jail us for just walking peacefully? And why should the Indian government stop Tibetan refugees voluntarily returning home on foot?

In the past I have climbed buildings to shout for freedom, thrown myself at the Chinese embassy gate in New Delhi, spent months in jails, got beaten up police, fought court cases, but I never lost the dignity of the struggle: my believe in Non-violence. The March to Tibet will be non-violent; it is a sadhana, a spiritual tribute to the truth and justice that we are fighting for. This is our Long March to freedom.

And on our journey home, we will cook and camp in tents on the roadside, there will be the marchers and the support marchers, the kitchen team, logistics, media and the medical team. There will be dancing and singing, and theatre and film shows on the road as we take this long journey home.

Dear friend,

Here is an opportunity to join a historic non-violent freedom struggle, a people's effort to win freedom for a country that remains subjugated even in 2008. I request you to join us, support us in whatever ways possible. We need people to know about it, so spread the word. You can walk with

us, as we walk for six months, maybe you can join us for a day along the path, even one hour, or for a week, months as a supporter. Schools, colleges and even whole town can walk with us. We need volunteers, media people, writers, photographers, bloggers can help us. We need nurses, cooks, technicians and your prayers.

Ever since the march was announced on 4th January 2008, Tibetans have been talking about it; it's a major discussion in the refugee camps. Recently the organizers launched the entry form. And I heard people are slowly getting themselves registered. You too can register your volunteer online. For more information please visit: www.TibetanUprising.org For enquiries email the coordinators: Lobsang Veshi (lobsangyeshi2006@hotmail.com) or Sherab Woser (sherabwoeser@yahoo.com)

Join us.

Tenzin Tsundue

Dharamsala