

Dear Friend of Freedom:

I hope you will use your right of free speech to help stand up for the people of Tibet who can not speak out for themselves without risking imprisonment, torture and possible death.

The beautiful prayer flags I've enclosed for you are an expression of Tibetan culture and identity.

Sadly, this unique culture is under assault by the Chinese government.

That is why I'm writing to urge you to take two urgent actions:

First, take a moment to unfurl the Tibetan Prayer Flags I've enclosed for you and display them in a prominent place.

Second, please sign the enclosed **Affirmation of Religious Freedom** to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and return it to me.

Through these actions you can help the International Campaign for Tibet, the citizens group which has worked for 20 years on behalf of human rights and self-determination for the people of Tibet.

Let me explain.

As a Buddhist, a student of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and as Chairman of the Board of the International Campaign for Tibet, I'm writing to inform you that the Chinese government has taken two outrageous actions in arrogant disregard of the religious customs of Tibetan Buddhism and the culture and identity of the Tibetan people:

1) First, defying the Dalai Lama's recognition of the Panchen Lama, one of Tibetan Buddhism's most important religious leaders, they picked their own Panchen Lama.

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THEN... to add insult to injury...

2) The Chinese government detained the boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama. Born on April 25, 1989, he and his family have been in detention since May 17, 1995 at an unknown location. The boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, has now spent fifteen years in the custody of the Chinese government and remains that way today.

China's agenda is no secret: If they can choose the next Panchen Lama, they think they will be able to choose the next Dalai Lama.

AND ... if they choose the next Dalai Lama, that will be a blatant interference in the culture, religion and heritage of the Tibetan people. This may also lead to the demise of the Tibetan cultural tradition as we know it.

To many, the issue of the Panchen Lama may seem esoteric in a world filled with so many problems.

But, the fact is that this controversy is a symbol of a campaign to persecute a people and to destroy its culture.

Under China's occupation, all but 13 of the country's 6,254 monasteries were destroyed or damaged and tens of thousands of monks were killed or sent to internment camps.

Today, they are still hitting the Tibetans where it hurts most: in the heart of their religious beliefs.

But the world is becoming alert to this religious persecution. And, caring people like you are taking action.

Our intensified efforts to restore religious freedom in Tibet began at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. when the Dalai Lama and a group of religious and moral leaders from all faiths rededicated themselves to securing for all the world's people the right to worship and the right to cultural survival.

Today we are engaged in a peaceful, prayerful and nationwide campaign designed to help win freedom for the people of Tibet.

There's no question in my mind that the tide can be turned in Tibet's favor. But, we need your help.

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The International Campaign for Tibet is launching a major effort to mobilize all Americans who believe in the right of a nation, that harbors one of the world's great ancient spiritual cultures, to survive.

And that's where the enclosed Affirmation of Religious Freedom comes in. And why I hope you will take time out of your busy schedule to help. Here's how.

Take Action. Get Involved.

FIRST... please sign the enclosed **Affirmation of Religious Freedom** for Tibet. Our goal is to collect thousands of affirmations, thousands of new determined American voices for Tibet and deliver them to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

You and I must not remain silent.

Not when China is aggressively undermining Tibet's ancient religious and cultural traditions.

We must not let that happen.

We can no longer look the other way. The eyes of the world are on China... and Tibet... and on us.

We can make a difference.

And that's why it's so important that I receive your signed Affirmation as soon as possible.

By signing your personal **Affirmation of Religious Freedom** and returning it to us today, you can take a meaningful stand.

SECOND... please make a contribution of \$25, \$35 or even \$50 to help support this nationwide mobilization for religious freedom and give effective support for the Tibetan people and their just cause. They desperately need our help.

Of course, if you wish to join with those who send \$100, please do so.

Any amount you are able to contribute will be deeply appreciated.

Dealing with a government like China's is no easy task. Nor is it an inexpensive task. ICT has an impressive record of victories, and we urgently need resources to keep up the fight

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on behalf of the Tibetan people.

Of course, money alone is not enough. This mobilization will require manpower, dedication, energy and - yes - prayers and moral support.

THIRD... please, unfurl and display your enclosed Prayer Flags in a prominent place. They represent a powerful symbol for our campaign. Each flag is a tangible reminder that we won't forget Tibet and that the world is watching.

Tibetans often hang prayer flags to offer prayers for generating good luck, for the wellbeing of a relative who is ill, for the long life of the Dalai Lama or for peace. When the wind blows, they believe that it reads the characters of the prayer on the flag and multiplies the prayer many times over.

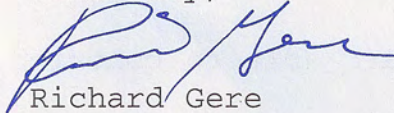
When you hang these prayer flags, think of one of your prayers or hopes.

And, please, while my letter is before you, take these three actions in defense of religious freedom:

- 1) Sign and return your **Affirmation of Religious Freedom** to me today and we will deliver it personally along with thousands of others to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton;
- 2) Then... prominently display the enclosed Prayer Flags - a symbol of Tibet's unique identity and culture that we want to save; and
- 3) Finally... please make as generous a contribution as you can to help meet the costs of this mobilization and to support the ongoing work of our International Campaign for Tibet.

Please let the brave people of Tibet know they are not alone.

Sincerely,



Richard Gere
Chairman of the Board of Directors
International Campaign for Tibet

P.S. To thank you in advance for your concern and commitment, the Prayer Flags I've enclosed are yours to keep as a token of my appreciation.