

June 4, 2007

Dear Participants of the “Conference for an Independent Tibet,”

Namaste and Tashi Delek! I am deeply sorry I cannot attend this extremely timely and important meeting of individuals and organizations committed to securing Tibet’s Independence. Beginning on June 27<sup>th</sup>, I will be taking part in a “March for Tibet’s Independence” that starts at China’s Consulate in New York City. My organization, the International Tibet Independence Movement (ITIM) is coordinating this walk. Our walk ends on July 4<sup>th</sup> at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. This day is the Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence for the United States. As such, it is the most important day for Rangzen in the United States and we thought it was critical to reaffirm our demand for Tibet’s independence on this particular day. So, I hope you will understand my absence.

I was very happy to learn that Friends of Tibet-India is organizing this Conference for an Independent Tibet. First, it is critical we establish a much stronger coalition of individuals and organizations that advocate independence for Tibet. For too long, skeptics and critics have overshadowed our voice. They have argued independence is not realistic or necessary. Some of these same persons also have claimed there are few people and groups that advocate independence. Additionally, they have stated we do not have a plan or strategy to achieve independence. All of these claims are pure propaganda, as we all know that almost every Tibetan inside of Tibet and in-exile wants nothing less than Rangzen. We also know Rangzen is attainable and that we have had a clear and practical strategy. Hopefully, as a result of your Conference, our collaborative efforts to achieve our shared goal will become stronger and more effective.

There is one other reason I was extremely glad to hear about this Conference. I strongly believe it is essential that India and the Indians take a much more active role in resolving the Tibet-China dispute. Further, like others, I think India and Indians must recognize it is in their best interest that Tibet is independent. To put it bluntly, India and Indians must wake up before China dominates India as well. I firmly believe that India is the primary country that has the potential to stop China’s imperialistic and military pursuits and that India has the power and ability to force China to return Tibet to the Tibetans. Put another way, it is high time the sleeping, powerful elephant woke up to tame the aggressive, unchecked dragon.

As most of you might know, Taktser Rinpoche and I co-founded ITIM in 1995 to secure Tibet’s independence through nonviolent methods. Therefore, our mission is consistent with the primary focus of your Conference. As you also might know, Rinpoche has been a strong and firm voice for Rangzen ever since He escaped from Tibet in 1951. He has been tireless and relentless His effort to achieve Rangzen. Even now, at the age of 85-years-old, Rinpoche remains unwavering in His position that Rangzen is the only viable and acceptable solution to the Tibet-China conflict.

Since 1995, ITIM also has strongly advocated independence as the only acceptable solution. We firmly believe Tibetans are the only individuals who have the best interest of Tibet in mind, and who can effectively preserve and promote the Tibetan culture and religion. We also believe

Tibetans should never compromise on their birthright of ruling their own country. Our demand for Rangzen will never change.

I am absolutely convinced your Conference will inspire the Tibetans in Tibet, and I hope it will motivate a larger number of persons and organizations in-exile, especially Indians and Tibetans to proclaim publicly their wish for Rangzen. I also hope this Conference will lead to the greater worldwide coordination of actions designed to secure Tibet's independence.

I am anxious to learn about the outcome of this Conference. Please know that I will discuss the outcomes with Rinpoche and my ITIM Board Members. I also want you to know that ITIM is more than ready to collaborate on any actions that will further our mutual mission to achieve independence for Tibet.

Wishing you all the best for a very successful Conference.

Bhod Rangzen!

peace, Larry Gerstein, Ph.D.  
President, International Tibet Independence Movement  
Director, Center for Peace & Conflict Studies-Ball State University  
Professor-Ball State University

P.O. Box 592  
Fishers, Indiana 46037 USA  
<http://www.rangzen.org>  
[rangzen@aol.com](mailto:rangzen@aol.com)