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LEAVING FEAR BEHIND

Produced by Filming for Tibet



Leaving Fear Behind (in Tibetan, Jigdrel) is a heroic film shot by Tibetans from inside Tibet, who longed to bring Tibetan voices to the Beijing Olympic Games. With the global spotlight on China as it rises to host the XXIX Olympics, Tibetans wish to tell the world of their plight and their heartfelt grievances against Chinese rule. The footage was smuggled out of Tibet under extraordinary circumstances. The filmmakers were detained soon after sending their tapes out, and remain in detention today.

In a remarkable coincidence, filming concluded in early March 2008 on the eve of the eruption of unprecedented mass Tibetan protests across the Tibetan plateau. Shot primarily in the eastern provinces of Tibet, the film provides a glimpse into the hearts and minds of the Tibetan people and their longstanding resentment of Chinese policies in Tibet.

The filmmakers traversed thousands of miles, asking ordinary Tibetans what they really feel about the Dalai Lama, China, and the Olympic Games. The filmmakers gave their subjects the option of covering their faces, but almost all of the 108 people interviewed agreed to have their faces shown on film, so strong was their desire to express themselves to the world. Excerpts from twenty of the interviews, including a self-recorded interview of the filmmaker himself, are included in the 25 minute film.

The footage reveals with stark clarity that Tibetans are frustrated and embittered by the deterioration and marginalization of Tibetan language and culture; the destruction of the lifestyle of Tibetan nomads through Chinese forced settlement policies; the lack of religious freedom and the vilification of the Dalai Lama; and the broken promises made by the Chinese government to improve conditions in Tibet in the run up to the Olympic games. All are united in their reverence for the Dalai Lama and long for him to return, and as some even dream, to attend the Olympic Games.