



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Film Screening

The Sweet Requiem

Thursday, May 9, 2019

5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

2200 Rayburn House Office Building

Opening remarks as prepared for delivery

Good afternoon and my thanks to the International Campaign for Tibet for the invitation to say a few words to introduce *The Sweet Requiem*, the film you are about to see.

As Co-Chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, I hear about terrible human rights crises all over the world, all the time. There are far too many unaccountable governments that treat people horribly. From human-made hunger to targeted killings, the sheer number of victims of human rights abuses is enormous and growing.

In the midst of so much pain and suffering, it's the individual stories of courage and resilience that keep me going. It's the victims and the advocates who give me hope – community leaders and human rights lawyers, the families of people who've been disappeared or killed and the church leaders who accompany them. It's the people behind the statistics who inspire me.

Some of the stories I've heard are from Tibetans, tens of thousands of whom have fled their homeland since the failed uprising against Chinese rule in 1959. Each one – each man, woman and child – has a story, and each one has had to come to terms with the traumatic passage that changed their lives forever.

That “coming to terms” is what tonight's film is about.

As the flyer says, *The Sweet Requiem* tells the story of Dolkar, a 26-year-old exile who escaped Tibet as a child with her father and now lives in Delhi. Their trek across the Himalayas was perilous and ended in tragedy, and Dolkar has suppressed her memory of what happened.

But then she runs into the guide who abandoned them during the journey, and she is drawn into a search for retribution and closure. You are about to see how that search turns out – and along the way, you will be pulled into a very human account of the Tibetan struggle.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate the filmmakers Tenzing Sonam, Tibetan, and Ritu Sarin, from India. Together over seven years they produced this beautiful film and we are privileged to have them with us tonight to talk about it. Their commitment to telling this story is exactly the kind of thing that gives me hope.

I turn now to Tencho Gyatso of the International Campaign for Tibet, who will moderate this event.

Thanks again for being here.