



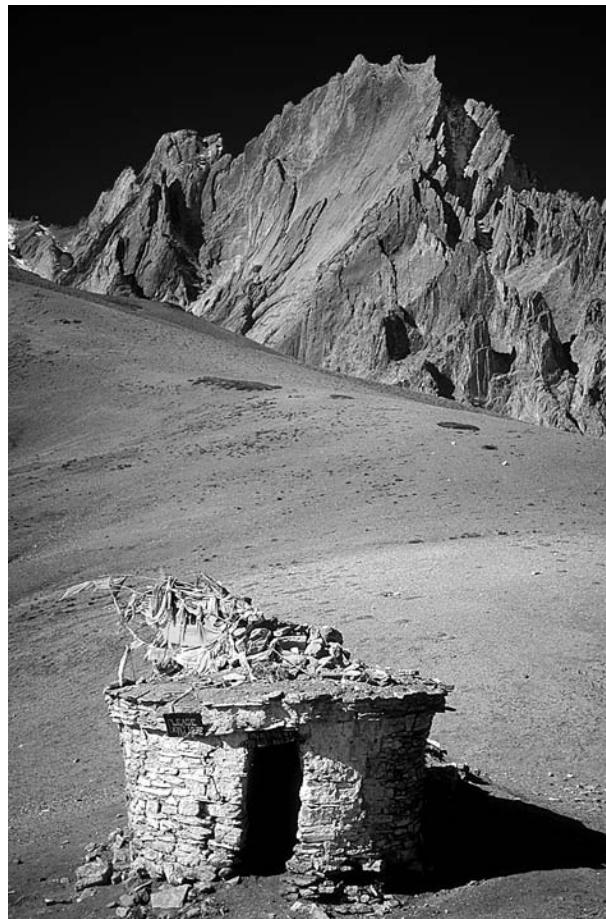
#### HOW TO READ THIS ELECTRONIC POEM

This long poem opens on the computer screen in full screen mode, against a simple black background with no distracting menus.

Use the Right and Left arrow keys on your keyboard to turn the pages.  
On an iPad just tap the right or left side or swipe your fingers across the screen

You can close the ePoem at any time, by typing Control and w (on a PC), or ⌘ and w (on a Mac).

T I B E T



LITO TEJADA-FLORES

P H O T O G R A P H Y

L I N D E W A I D H O F E R



1

a simplicity of stone and wind  
blowing dust, drifting snow  
white peaks, vast plateaus,  
empty spaces and empty space.

a simplicity of history:  
—lived saying prayers, counting beads,  
chanting sutras, offering food to monks  
who say prayers, count beads, chant sutras  
for everyone else, for all sentient beings,  
for us too—were conquered, beaten,  
tortured, exiled in their own land,  
—resisted smiling, died smiling.

a simplicity of smiles,  
the ceaseless underground resistance of  
unquenchable unfathomable happiness.

a simplicity of heart  
free from anger, open, shining,  
full of gifts, lessons, laughter,

a simplicity of mind  
cutting through clutter  
what really matters?  
in this simplified landscape  
bare-bones thoughts.

compassion and wisdom  
heart and mind—mind cool,  
heart warm, full, overflowing.

beyond self: deep joy  
behind self: deep mind  
beside self: deep life  
deep inside self: selflessness

we cannot trade places  
we cannot trade addresses  
we cannot trade traditions  
or karma  
what can we do?  
we can refuse to forget  
6,000 dynamited monasteries  
in an avalanche of cheap plastic toys  
from China,  
we can try to understand when Tibetans  
talk about their persecutors  
with compassion not anger,  
we can try to learn  
what they teach us without trying.

water melting from glacier tongues  
 stone ditches carrying water miles, miles  
 water equals grass, willows, poplars, food  
 each blade, branch, trunk precious  
 each plant, horse, zo, cow, precious  
 each being, sentient or not, who knows?  
 who cares? precious, precious.

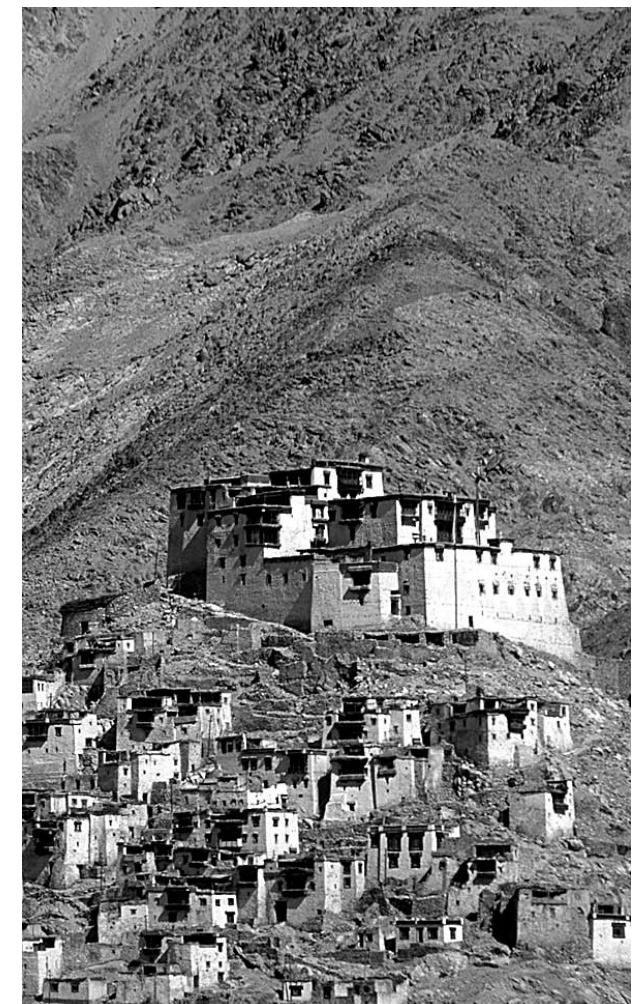
does the wheel of dharma spin faster  
 truer, in this high cold thin air?  
 fewer things, fewer obstacles, less  
 friction between mind and matter,  
 between passion and compassion,  
 between life and living? Does the axis  
 on which the wheel of dharma turns  
 run through some now nearly lost Lhasa?  
 I think not I think so I think not  
 the dharma is neither axis nor wheel  
 the dharma spins us as we try to spin it,  
 we are the spinning not the wheel,  
 but what about Tibet?  
 what about Tibet?

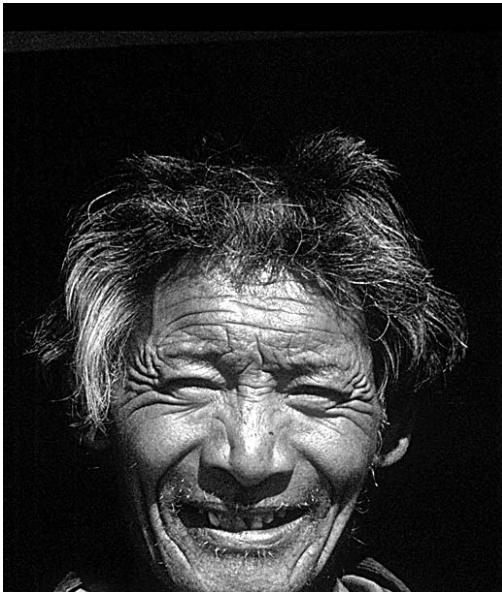
our Tibetan brothers and sisters  
 lotus petals scattered over the globe  
 by angry Chinese winds.

our Tibetan brothers and sisters,  
 living lessons scattered over the globe  
 by bitter Chinese winds.

smiling dharma messengers  
 scattered over the globe  
 by cold Chinese winds.

Tibet was already bare enough  
 empty enough, before  
 these winds began to howl.



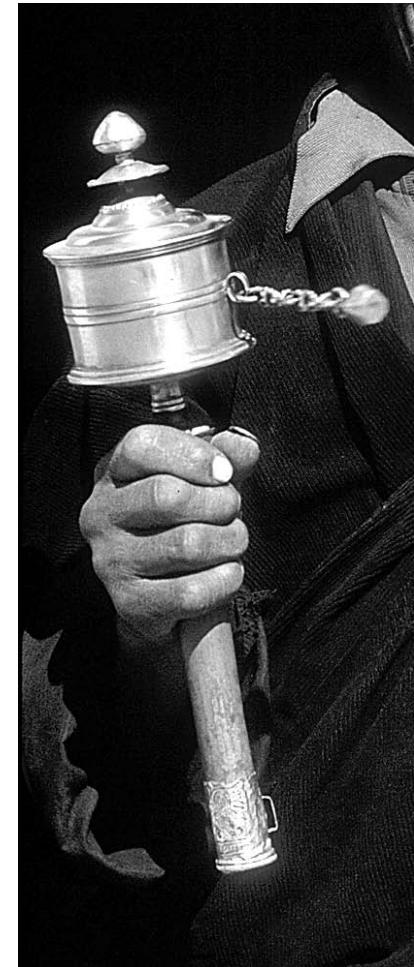


3

so few Tibetans,  
at home in exile  
exiled at home  
so few Tibetans  
so many Chinese  
so much money  
to make    to lose  
so many friends  
so few allies  
so few Tibetans  
so many killed  
so many  
so few.

4

Tibet suffers  
from not being  
completely real  
in our minds  
too far    too high  
too cold    too fabled  
    It is hard to care  
to act    to close ranks  
to protest    to argue  
to do something  
to do anything  
about a place  
like a dream  
about people  
like dreams  
inside a dream



5

in this world  
we're always told  
the squeaky wheel  
gets the oil,  
the wheel of dharma  
never squeaks



—above—

blue prayers, blue sky, black sky, blue-black sky,

blue emptiness, pure

blue, blue prayers.

white prayers, white snow, white ice, white

cloud, white wind,

white prayers.

red prayers, red rock, rusty rock, rock ribs, rock

ridges, red rock-ribbed

land, red prayers.

green prayers, green and growing grasses, green

miracles growing out of

gray and brown, green

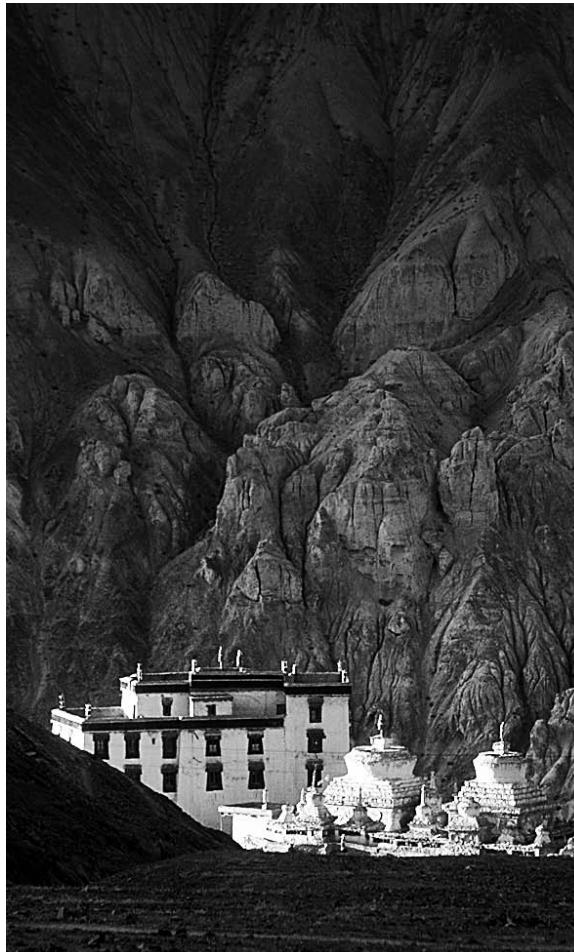
prayers.

yellow prayers, yellow river sand, yellow barley

ripening toward harvest

sickles, yellow prayers.

—below—

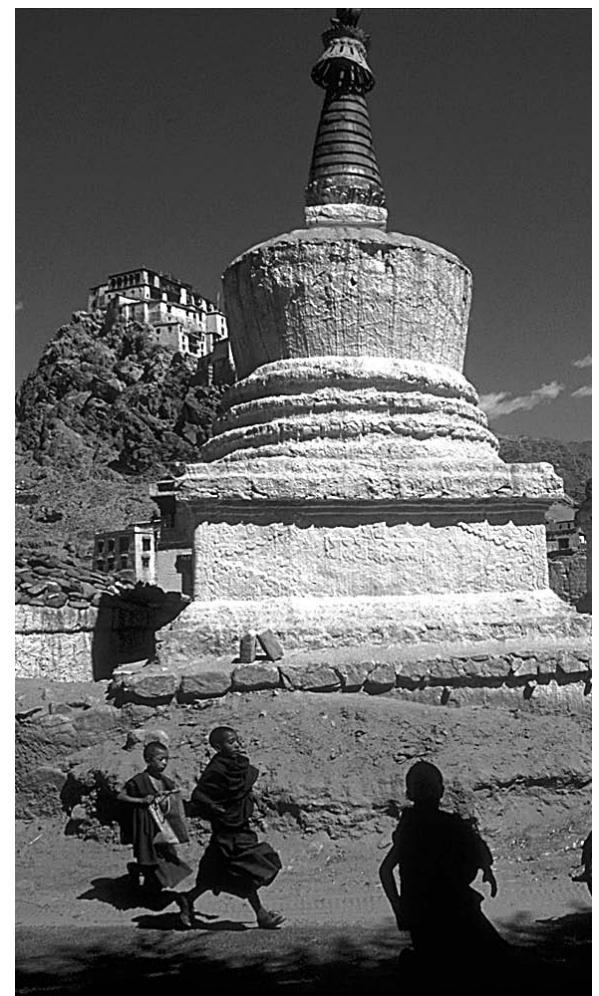


Tibetan time  
woodblock ink on paper  
wrapped in silk  
dusty shelves  
Tibetan time  
monastery time  
nomad time  
texts and time  
birth and rebirth  
Rebirth  
is too slow  
too long  
too patient  
Tulku time  
over and over  
and over  
What will happen  
to the world when the last  
soldier in Lhasa murders  
the last bodhisattva?  
Can we assume  
they will all be reborn  
in the west?  
I think not  
Hard times  
for sentient beings  
for all  
sentient beings.

Avalokitesvara, can you help? will  
 you help? are you not already helping? Buddha of  
 compassion, what advice will your eleven heads  
 whisper? Chenrezig, Buddha of compassion, who  
 will you touch with your many arms? will you touch  
 the Chinese? will you touch us? Avalokitesvara,  
 Chenrezig, don't abandon Tibet....

Vajrapani, Channadorje, Bodhisattva  
 of the thunderbolt, don't abandon Tibet...  
 indestructible diamond, clarity and emptiness,  
 method? action? where? what? what can we  
 do? what skillful means can we use? does your  
 thunderbolt ever really strike?

Maitreya, Buddha of the future, how  
 may thousand years must we wait for your return?  
 a short 40 years have been long enough to destroy  
 thousands and thousands of monasteries, burn  
 thousands and thousands of books, kill thousands  
 and thousands of Tibetans, torture them out of  
 their minds, out of their homes, out of their history,  
 enough time to transplant thousands on thousands  
 of Chinese into the empty garden of Tibet....  
 Maitreya Buddha, is there ever enough time? is there  
 enough time for Tibet? Buddha of the future, is there  
 a future for Tibet?...



Tibet is not a place

Tibet is not a slogan

Tibet is not a dream

Tibet is a tradition

that lives only through living

that can't disappear

and won't.

Tibet is a precious gift

the world hasn't earned

but someday may.



far view, far views

thin air, blue ice

a perspective of

peak and plateau

wind scrubbed

thoughts

wind scoured

mind

a perspective of

wind and emptiness

pure perspective.

To close this electronic poem  
type Control and w (on a PC),  
or ⌘ and w (on a Mac).

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Linde Waidhofer's photographs accompanying this poem were all made in Ladakh. Historically, Ladakh has often been called *Little Tibet*. Technically part of India rather than Tibet, Ladakh today is, sadly, one of the few remaining examples of a healthy, intact Tibetan Buddhist society.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linde Waidhofer".

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