

Political hypocrisy a tragedy in Tibet

by Ira Nayman

American foreign policy is driven by economic, not moral issues. When investment is threatened by a foreign government, that government is demonized in the (mostly compliant) press, as a precursor to political, and sometimes military, intervention. Conversely, if the US has a good trading relationship with a country, it is willing to overlook flagrant human rights abuses.

China's occupation of Tibet in 1959 and its on-going, brutal suppression of the country's predominantly Buddhist population (over one million people, one seventh of Tibet's population, have died) is a case in point. Despite a policy verging on genocide, both the United States and Canada have given China Most Favoured Trading Nation Status.

"Canada is willing to speak up for human rights in those countries where there is no price to pay," claims a member of the Canada-Tibet Committee in *A Song for Tibet* (part of TVO's *Human Edge* series, Tuesday, March 10). The hour-long National Film Board of Canada documentary, made with something called DLI (Dalai Lama International?), is a well-crafted, eloquent plea for action to save the Tibetan people.

Much of the documentary is narrated by the Canadian teenage daughter of Tibetans who fled the Chinese invasion. These scenes, along with family reunions, children in a refugee camp and the like, are a bit

TELEVISION

Human Edge: A Song for Tibet
TV Ontario
Tuesday, March 10, 10 pm

emotionally manipulative.

But seamlessly woven into the personal stories are the historical and political facts. Buddhism is a non-violent, non-materialistic belief system which acknowledges "the ephemeral nature of the material world." It is shocking to see Buddhist priests being hustled out of a monastery and beaten by Chinese police.

Even more shocking is the fact that the Conservative government refused to meet with the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, or even give him security as a world leader visiting Ottawa. As the documentary makes clear, China's billion person market was (and remains) more important than Tibet's 7 million survivors of occupation. Freedom is "a losing battle," one Tibetan says, "because nobody really cares what happens to Tibetans."

Had *A Song For Tibet* focused on the political struggle of the Tibetan people, it would have been a powerful document. It is a sad comment on North American audiences that so many people cannot distinguish between right and wrong ideas, but must be swayed by emotional arguments.

Either way, *A Song For Tibet* is a strong, not always hopeful, statement about the hypocrisy of Canadian and American foreign policy.



The young Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet. He appears briefly in *The Human Edge* episode *A Song for Tibet*, which chronicles China's brutal invasion and occupation of that small country.

Nicer and Smoother CONCERT

by Jason Braithwaite

Nice and Smooth
The Concert Hall
Friday, February 14

So I get to the concert and I think to myself, "this is going to be hype." Why? Well of all the concerts I've been to this year, this is the first one where the stage has been decorated with more than just a sign on the turntables. A huge painting of Nice and Smooth served as a backdrop. Real nice. It reminded me of the old adage, "Don't judge a book by its cover."

Don't get me wrong. Hip hop artists Greg Nice and Smooth are every bit the showmen. But the first act, Tim Dog, failed to get the crowd jumping like say, Fu-Schnickens (openers for the Leaders of the New School) did. His show was a bit short (almost an opening, opening act). And the crowd wasn't too familiar with his repertoire, except for the ever popular rap "Fuck Compton."

After sitting, or rather, standing through Tim Dog, I was ready to see Nice and Smooth. I must admit the wait between the showtime printed on the ticket and the actual showtime wasn't too long. Producer Ron Nelson deserves the credit.

They played some slammin' jams

between the two acts. From this point on, the show went downhill.

Throughout the performance (which included, "How To Flow," "Sometimes I Rhyme Slow," "Sex, Sex, Sex" and the kickin' "Hip Hop Junkies"), Nice and Smooth had a problem with the mikes. When the mikes were working properly, the music overpowered the vocals. If I didn't know the words, I wouldn't have known what the hell they were saying.

My biggest problem with the show is the only point where I can put blame where it counts, on Nice and Smooth. They have an entourage that includes five dancers, four singers and about five other people on stage who do nothing but walk around. It was so confusing at times, I didn't know where Nice and Smooth were!

Hopefully, the next time Nice and Smooth do a show, they'll consider the dimensions of the stage.

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