



AABBS

Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies

"Tortured Logic: Defining Tibetan Buddhist Belief and Practice"

Professor John Powers - ANU

Rogers Room

John Woolley Building

27th March 6.00pm

In March and April of 2008, the Tibetan plateau erupted in the largest and most widespread demonstrations in the history of the region. This prompted a massive military crackdown and a propaganda campaign by the People's Republic of China (PRC) that attempted to explain the unrest and focus attention away from the PRC's human rights record and on to foreign "anti-China forces," most prominently the Dalai Lama. This represented a significant shift in PRC propaganda, which has characterized him as a "political corpse" with no influence in the region, a remnant of the past that has been largely forgotten by Tibetans.

The main focus of the monastic demonstrators was the PRC's "patriotic re-education" campaign, which subjects monks and nuns all across the Tibetan plateau to intensive programs of propaganda indoctrination. The focus in this talk will be "patriotic re-education" within the larger context of Chinese propaganda relating to Tibet. This is part of a nationwide program of patriotic education, but the Tibetan version has particularly interesting features. The talk will look at how PRC propaganda characterizes Tibetan Buddhist belief and practice and how these relate to the PRC's version of Tibetan history. This is a critical period for both sides, and the last part of the talk will look at the current situation and why both see this as an endgame time.

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