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Lhagyai Trichen
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Fearless: Lhagyai Trichen

Abstract

Humble about his successes and origins, driven by a desire to serve his countrymen and raise awareness about their struggles and identity, and involved in opening dialogues about the issues facing his home country of Tibet, Lhagyari Trichen '17 fearlessly leads others to a greater understanding of Tibetan history, culture, and politics through film and thoughtful advocacy. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, Tibet, King of Tibet, Dalai Lama, refugee, diversity, ethnicity

Disciplines

Ethnic Studies | International and Area Studies | Peace and Conflict Studies | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies

Comments

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SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

FEARLESS: LHAGYARI TRICHEN

February 28, 2014

Humble about his successes and origins, driven by a desire to serve his countrymen and raise awareness about their struggles and identity, and involved in opening dialogues about the issues facing his home country of Tibet, Lhagyari Trichen '17 fearlessly leads others to a greater understanding of Tibetan history, culture, and politics through film and thoughtful advocacy.

Trichen is not very dissimilar from any other student at Gettysburg College. He has lots of friends, explores the town, has his favorite restaurants on the circle, and has been to the battlefields several times. He's currently undeclared in terms of his major, though he's leaning toward Political Science. He's an international student, involved in a few groups on campus, and lives in Stine Hall.

But Trichen also speaks three languages (four if you count basic Chinese), has made a documentary about his country and family, and has a refugee passport. His accomplishments and future goals give him many opportunities to be fearless and brave, and plenty of significance on the international stage because he also happens to be the crowned King of Tibet.

Descended from a line of Tibetan kings, Trichen grew up in India after his father was exiled from Tibet and sent to a prison in China for two decades. Trichen was later crowned the king of his nation by the Dalai Lama at the age twelve, and has used his educational career in India and the United States to broaden his understanding, develop his leadership abilities, and learn how best he can serve his people. "I always look to my ancestors," says Trichen, "especially to my father, because they are leaders who dedicated and gave their lives for the people of their country. They took risks and took action."

Originally, Trichen had planned to continue his education in the United Kingdom, but was advised by the Dalai Lama, his mentor, to study in the US instead. "I'm here in the US so that I can study and get as much knowledge as I can. My real goal is to become as informed and educated as possible so that I can make good decisions for my future and the future of Tibet. And I like learning in the US because of everybody's different backgrounds and histories, and I like meeting more people and making new friends."



Trichen found himself at Gettysburg College after attending St. Andrew School in Delaware (“You know, it’s the same school from the Dead Poets Society movie,” he says). He has already accomplished so much for his people, constantly looking for new opportunities to raise awareness about his nation’s struggles, as well as finding innovative ways in which he can serve them. “I’ve been trying for some time to find a way that I can do something for the people of Tibet so that I can feel proud of myself. I’ve been trying to choose to follow what my ancestors did, but that can be hard in this century! Really, the first big thing I’ve done for my people was to make a film about Tibet.”



Screened on campus last semester as part of an International Student Association event, Trichen’s film *My Country is Tibet* is about his family, especially his father, Tibetan history and politics, and Tibet’s relationship with China. “I’m a filmmaker,” says Trichen, “and I’ve had the opportunity to show this film at more than fifty schools across the US. It’s always great to be able to share it because it starts a lot of conversation and people ask me a lot of questions, which is wonderful because then I get to meet more people, communicate with them, and learn even more.”

“But showing that film and then talking about it with the people who have seen it,” says Trichen, “is probably also the most fearless thing I’ve ever done. Sometimes it can be really hard to face people after they watch it, especially if they have a lot of questions or are Chinese students. There is a huge responsibility that goes along with sharing this information and then talking about it with people. I’m alone here and under huge pressure to be correct and not make mistakes. But I have the goal of serving my Tibetan people, and that’s what I’m trying to do here—practicing so that I can achieve my goal.”

Trichen is undoubtedly a remarkable young leader excited for the future, passionate about his work, and ready for the challenges ahead. While his royal rank, life goals and experiences, and responsibilities to Tibet surely distinguish him from his peers and most other people on the planet, one of the most incredible things that truly separates Trichen and makes him exceptional is his humility.

Trichen is a leader, no matter what the future holds, and his experiences, love of people, and humble attitude will surely be the traits in his character that bring him and his cause far in life. Trichen has already accomplished so much to serve and honor his Tibetan people, and his diplomatic, gentle, and humble character will surely be a part of how he uses his education and leadership skills to help his nation, fearlessly giving voice to Tibetans and their struggles. Having a person as important and notable as Trichen on campus is surely an honor, but it is even more remarkable and noteworthy to have a leader as humble, intelligent, and amiable as he as part of the campus community.

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