

《为切阳什姐喝彩—第一个西藏奥运奖牌得主》

和很多来自西藏农村的女子一样，她在畜牧业发达的草原上长大，唱歌和祈祷是她业余的爱好。直到2008年，她才有机会第一次在电视上观看奥运会。但是这位22岁的女子，切阳什姐，作为第一个西藏奥运奖牌得主，她在伦敦奥运会女子20公里竞走比赛中为中国队夺得铜牌，她的名字将永垂中国奥运史册。



She grew up herding yaks on a plateau meadow, just like many other women from rural Tibet. Singing and praying accounted for much of her spare time. And it was not until 2008 that she got the chance to watch the Olympic Games on TV for the first time.

But 22-year-old Choeyang Kyi has etched her name into history as China's first Tibetan Olympic medalist, having secured a bronze medal in the women's 20-km race walk event held on Saturday at the London Summer Olympics.

"I had only one thought in mind -- fight! The crowds were so enthusiastic. That helped me stay in high spirits," she told reporters after the race.

Chinese fans have hailed her success, flooding her account on Sina Weibo, a popular microblogging site, with well-wishes and congratulations.

"Last night, all of the Tibetans here stayed up and watched your game on the track. We were thrilled to see you win a medal. Tashi delek (blessings)! Hope you can bring more glory to the Tibetan people," wrote microblogger Kelsanga.

"She smiled a lot during the final 20 km. But I was almost thrilled to tears," wrote blogger "Xiaoye Q" from northeast China.

Feng Jianping, director of the Qinghai provincial sports bureau, hailed Choeyang as "the pride of Qinghai, of Tibetans and of China."

Choeyang's parents watched their daughter make history on TV in their rural home in Haiyan county, located in the Haibei Tibetan autonomous prefecture in northwest China's Qinghai province. Although they were unable to understand the Mandarin-speaking commentator, Gonpo Rabten and Sonamje stared at the TV, fingering prayer beads and chanting Buddhist sutras.

When Choeyang crossed the finish line, her parents smiled, tears welling up in their eyes. Cheers and applause could be heard breaking out in the tents that make up their herding community on the Jinyintan pasture.

They prepared milk tea and food at home as relatives, friends and neighbors flocked to their house, bringing ceremonial white scarves to extend their greetings.

Choeyang said she has missed her parents a great deal, as she has not been home for a long time due to her training.

"My blessings go to my parents and every single one of my supporters," she said.

The woman, whose name in Tibetan means "the sun," cited renowned Chinese hurdler Liu Xiang as her idol.

"Liu Xiang is the model for Chinese track athletes. He has done his best and he has my full support," she added.

From horseback to track

Choeyang's uncle Haichen, who accompanied her to the London games, said Choeyang first showed her athletic ability at the age of nine, becoming known in her community for her exceptional horse-riding skills.

Her parents sent her to the provincial sports school seven years later after she won a township-level marathon. In 2008, Choeyang was picked by coach Yuan Dejiu to concentrate on the race walk event. She joined the national race walk team two years later.

"Choeyang grew up on the plateau, which may explain her strong heart and breathing capacity, but what really makes her stand out is perseverance," Yuan said. "She takes the pain in the training and never lets up."

To prepare for the Olympics, Choeyang trained hard at the Qinghai Duoba National Sports Training base, starting her training at 9 a.m. daily and walking about 30 km every day.

After Choeyang earned her Olympic qualification in March, Feng visited her home and gave a 50,000-yuan (\$7,874) subsidy to her impoverished family. She was also given a 3,000-yuan monthly allowance for her training.

Qinghai sports officials said many Tibetan children in rural areas have great athletic potential, but have not had access to proper training.

But the tide has started to turn. The proficiency of Tibetans in sports like shooting, archery and track and field events has led some of them to emerge at national sports competitions.

"We will bring more exceptional Tibetan athletes to the world stage," said Feng. "Choeyang represents just the first step."