

TIBET FOUNDATION

Newsletter

Patron: His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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TIBET FOUNDATION

Tibet Foundation is a registered charity (no. 292400), founded in 1985, which works towards creating greater awareness of all aspects of Tibetan culture and the needs of the Tibetan people. The Patron of the Foundation is His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

- Aims**
- *To create a greater awareness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message of peace and harmony.*
 - *To further the understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture, and to work towards their continuity and preservation.*
 - *To improve education and health care, and to alleviate poverty among people of Tibetan origin in different parts of the world.*

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COVER PICTURE:

The winning entry of Tibet Foundation's Peace Poster competition for Tibetan schoolchildren in India, Nepal and Tibet.

OUTLOOK

This time last year, at the beginning of the 21st century, we all prayed very hard for peace. None of us had the slightest idea that we were about to face the bloodiest year since the Second World War. The highly emphasised Buddhist principles such as impermanence and unpredictability of existence could not be more real to those who suffered death and destruction on the 11th of September followed by further death and destruction in Afghanistan.

Earlier in 2001, we launched a Peace Poster competition among Tibetan school children. Sixty-seven drawings and paintings were submitted. It is interesting to see through these drawings how children also wish strongly for a peaceful world to live in. Understandably, many drawings reflect their feelings about the conflict between Tibet and China. Yet none of the drawings suggest a solution through violence. I was deeply touched by the fact and many seem to seek solution by promoting messages of peace and compassion.

In this world of reality we constantly face social injustice, devastating violence and natural calamities on various parts of the globe. To those who are directly affected it must be frustrating, if not futile to hope for anything better. Yet we acknowledge the other reality – that we all have to live side-by-side on this planet. This brings me to

reflect on a simple teaching which I learnt as young child. All suffering have causes. Discover and remove them, you will not suffer. All happinesses have causes. Discover and develop them, you will be happy.

I like to believe that the authors of the above Peace Posters are right that everyone, however small one feels oneself to be, must make efforts to promote the ideas of peace, living in harmony and sharing one another's suffering and happiness. Only through taking this individual responsibility, can one contribute towards a happier world. This motivation and the efforts to carry it through are the real causes of peace and happiness.

As to the Foundation, we completed another year making remarkable contributions towards the well-being of the Tibetans and their culture. The causes of our success are your individual efforts in supporting us. I would like to thank you for your commitment and encourage everyone to renew your efforts in the years to come.

On behalf of all the trustees, I wish you and your family a happy and prosperous 2002.

Phuntsog Wangyal
Director

November 1, 2001
H.E. Ruud Lubbers
UN High Commissioner for Refugees
Case Postal 2500
CH 1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

Your Excellency,

I have great admiration for the relief work that UNHCR undertakes throughout the world for refugees, including the Tibetan refugees. The difficult humanitarian task you are engaged with in and around Afghanistan for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have been affected by the ongoing conflict in this area is to be lauded.

The tragedy of September 11th is incomprehensible and difficult to imagine. The repercussions of this event are being felt all over the world. Unfortunately, innocent people suffer the consequences of terrorism as well as attempts to combat it. While it is important to bring to justice the people who have engaged in such horrendous acts, I also strongly believe that violence is not the ultimate answer. I am convinced that discussion and understanding the situation of all concerned parties is the best way to deal with hatred and a feeling of being victimized.

In support of the relief work of the UNHCR for the people of Afghanistan I would like to donate \$50,000.00.

With my prayers and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Encl: a cheque for US \$50,000.00

UN THANKS DALAI LAMA

According to UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Press Release in Geneva on 22 November 2001, UN High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers thanked the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, for his personal contribution of \$50,000 toward UNHCR's work on behalf of the people of Afghanistan.

A cheque and a personal note from the Dalai Lama were given to Lubbers on Wednesday by a representative of the Tibetan spiritual leader in Geneva. In the note, the Dalai Lama - himself very much a world citizen and a refugee - expressed "great admiration" for UNHCR's humanitarian work around the world and in particular lauded the agency's efforts to help hundreds of thousands of Afghans.

"UNHCR warmly welcomes the Dalai Lama's personal interest in the plight of refugees and in our work to help them," Lubbers said. "His compassion for the world's dispossessed is well-known. This contribution will help to ease their suffering."

DID BUDDHISM SPREAD WEST?

Traces of Buddhism in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East

WARWICK BALL

Warwick Ball was previously Acting Director of the British Institute of Afghan Studies in Kabul.

The razor-sharp ridge overlooking the ancient site of Kandahar in Afghanistan. One of Ashoka's Buddhist edicts written in Greek was found at the foot of this ridge.

Photo: Warwick Ball

We think of Buddhism primarily as a Far Eastern religion: China, Japan, Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka. But its first outward drive from its origins in north-eastern India was towards the west, not east, and it only arrived in the Far East by spreading westwards first: from its origins in eastern India, it spread into what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the area rapidly became a great centre and stronghold of Buddhism. From there, Buddhism spread northwards into Central Asia, and then eastwards to China, to eventually reach Japan and South-east Asia. But since Buddhism's initial impetus was towards the west rather than the east, the question must be asked: just how far west did it spread?

Buddhism first spread through direct proselytisation. The development of Buddhism in the Indian Subcontinent after 500 BC, with its emphasis on proselytisation and outwardness generally, stimulated a considerable overseas expansion. This came to a head in the 3rd century BC, when Buddhism was enthusiastically embraced by the Emperor Ashoka, the second ruler of the powerful new Mauryan Empire of India. Ashoka summoned a general Buddhist Council at Pataliputra (modern Patna), where it was decided that missionaries should be sent out to all the known world. Accordingly, edicts proclaiming the Buddhist message were set up and missionaries went forth throughout the empire – and well beyond. One edict even specifies the countries of the West that were claimed to have been converted: ‘...conquests by the law of Piety [Buddhism]... won by his Sacred Majesty [Ashoka] in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as 6000 leagues where the Greek king named Antiyaka [Antiochus II of Syria] dwells, and the west of that Antiyaka, where dwell the four kings severally named Turamay [Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt], Antiyaka [Antigonus Gonatus of Makedon], Magas [of Cyrene], Sikandar [Alexander of Epirus], and in the south Cholas and Pandyas, with Ceylon also’.

As confirmation—at least in part—of this claim, Ceylon and the Chola and Pandya kingdoms of southern India were

indeed converted soon after the Council and Sri Lanka has since remained largely Buddhist. The Cholas of southern India were the earliest and most widespread of the Indian maritime powers, with a mercantile ‘empire’ stretching to Africa, Arabia and the Gulf made possible by superior sailing vessels. A highly developed and sophisticated system of maritime trade was accordingly already in place in India by the 1st century AD, having evolved over the previous 500 years. This was one of the main vehicles by which Buddhism was able to spread through the Indian Ocean. Accordingly, we read of traders from western and southern India coming to Aden, Socotra, Salala in Arabia and Apologou near Basra at the head of the Gulf in the 1st century BC. The island of Socotra off the coast of Arabia even had a colony of Indians living there – the name of Socotra itself is derived from the Sanskrit, Sukhatara-dvipa, meaning ‘the land of bliss’ and figuring very highly in early Buddhist scripture as a semi-mythic land of ultimate enlightenment far to the west. The Maldive Islands were converted to Buddhism in the 6th century by missionaries arriving with the traders from Ceylon, while on the Gulf the unusually high occurrence of Indian and Buddhist place names seems to indicate the presence of extensive trading activities there as well. Later on, we read in Islamic sources of cargo ships from India continuing to put in at Gulf and Arabian ports. That these traders were Buddhists rather than Hindus is highly likely, as caste restrictions discouraged Hindus from travelling abroad—a factor that has always confined Hinduism mainly to the Indian subcontinent whilst Buddhism spread all over Asia.

But it is Ashoka's claims for conversions in the Hellenistic world that are more curious. They are all of well documented Hellenistic kingdoms, so even though we know from our own sources that they did not submit to Buddhism, the claims must still have some foundation. Certainly speculation on Mauryan missionary activities in Greek speaking communities received graphic confirmation in 1958

with the discovery of an Ashokan Buddhist edict proclaiming the 'Law of Piety' in the Greek language at Kandahar in Afghanistan. Buddhism then continued at Kandahar until well into Islamic times. But what of further west? Roman authors refer to delegations and their exotic gifts from India, Bactria, Scythia and elsewhere beyond Iran visiting the Roman Empire during the time of Augustus. The most famous was the Indian king, Poros, who sent a mission to Augustus that included exotic gifts and was accompanied by a priest who later immolated himself at Athens. His tomb containing his ashes at Athens was inscribed with the following epitaph: 'Here lies Zarmanochegas, an Indian from Bargosa, who immortalised himself with the ancestral customs of the Indians'. This mission -- particularly with its strong religious overtones -- strongly recalls the Emperor Ashoka's earlier missions to the West. Such visits continued throughout the imperial period: Emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius received Indian delegations, an Indian embassy to Emperor Elagabalus passed through Edessa in about 218, Indian and Bactrian ambassadors attended Aurelian's triumph over Palmyra in 273, Constantine was supposedly venerated by Indians in the early 4th century, and Emperor Julian received an embassy from Ceylon (Taprobane) later that century. We also read that Armenia had a well established colony of Indians from 130 BC to AD 300. Indian goods -- presumably with merchants in their wake -- came regularly up the Euphrates from the Persian Gulf to the annual trade fair at Batnae near Edessa (now Urfa in southern Turkey) from the 2nd century AD right down to the 6th century, and other documents describe colonies of Arabs and Indians controlling the trade in the Red Sea ports. In the light of such activities, the earlier Hellenistic rulers mentioned in Ashoka's edict may well have received Ashoka's missions.

There are further scattered ancient documents that refer to Buddhism in the West. The 3rd century AD inscription of the Zoroastrian fundamentalist High Priest of the Sasanian Empire, Kartir, carved in the cliffs at Naqsh-e Rostam near Persepolis, actually refers to Buddhists in Iran at the time, albeit in a rather negative way: 'And the Jews and Buddhists and Brahmans and Nazarites and Christians and Maktag and

Manichaeans in the kingdom are being smitten. And their idols were destroyed'. Since eastern Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan probably formed a part of the Persian 'kingdom' at this time, this statement may not mean as much as it first appears. We read later on, however, in the early 11th century writings of al-Biruni, one of the greatest of all medieval Islamic scholars, that 'In former times, Khurasan [north-eastern Iran and Central Asia], Persia, Iraq, Mosul, and the country up to the frontier of Syria, was Buddhist, but then Zarathustra went forth from Azerbaijan and preached Magism in Balkh [in Afghanistan] ... In consequence, the Buddhists were banished from those countries, and had to emigrate to the countries east of Balkh'. Whilst al-Biruni's claim for such extensive westward penetration of Buddhism must surely be exaggerated, it may nonetheless be indicative of former missionary activity.

There is also evidence that Buddhism influenced many religious ideas in the West. Some religious practices in the ancient Mediterranean—especially those related to asceticism and mysticism —may have had their origins in Indian ideas in general and Buddhist ideas in particular. Speculation has existed on the possibility of Stoicism being ultimately descended from the dispassionate approach to suffering and death so common in Indian philosophy, made from the initial contacts formed by the Greeks in India after Alexander. Apart from the fertile ground of the Indo-Greek kingdoms in Central Asia and North-western India, the main meeting ground of Indian and Graeco-Roman religious ideas would have been the international city of Alexandria. This was already one of the main centres for the eastern trade, and ideas arrived with the spices. Accordingly, Dion Chrysostom writes of an Indian merchant colony in Alexandria at the time of Vespasian, as well as Persians, Bactrians and Scythians, while Clement of Alexandria (c. AD 150-214) makes reference to the Brahmans and the Buddhists there. It has even been suggested that the Indian element was a catalyst in the philosophical school of Alexandria that resulted in the formation of the mystical element in neo-Platonism, with many of the ideas of Plotinus of Alexandria in particular being cited as drawn directly from the Hindu Upanishads. One of Plotinus' main disciples, the neo-Platonist Porphyry (AD 233-305), wrote at length on the Brahmans, absorbing much



The Greek city of Cyrene in Libya, where Emperor Ashoka of India sent a Buddhist mission in the 3rd century BC.

Photo: Warwick Ball

Left: A possible Buddhist cave complex of the 5th century at Chehelkhaneh near Bushehr in Iran on the Persian Gulf.

Centre: Relief of the Zoroastrian high priest Kartir near Persepolis, whose edict proscribed Buddhism throughout Persian dominions.

Right: For a while Roman portrait busts – such as this one, probably of Emperor Septimius Severus' father-in-law – copied Buddhist imagery, with the top-knot or ushnisha.

Photos: Warwick Ball



of their ideas into his own teachings. Since Porphyry was probably a native of Batnae, the scene of a trade fair with Indian associations on the middle Euphrates (referred to above), the point of contact is obvious. Much speculation has existed too on Indian origins for early Christian monasticism. This is generally attributed to initial beginnings in Egypt, but again the Indian contact with Egypt through Alexandria is an obvious point of contact. Certainly it is possible to recognise -- real or imagined -- influence on early Christianity: St James, the brother of Christ, for example was a vegetarian and wore no wool or other animal products, only linen.

But it is in early Islam—particularly its esoteric branch, Sufism—that we recognise positive signs of these types of religious influences coming westwards. The life and associated legends of one of the earliest Sufis, for example, Ibrahim ibn Adham, shows definite Buddhist origins: Ibrahim ibn Adham was born in about 730 AD in Balkh, one of the most famous centres of Buddhist learning in Central Asia. He later became an important Islamic mystic, but of an ascetic leaning more typical of Buddhism than of Islam at this time. Indeed, an early 12th century legend of his conversion to Islam follows the story of Prince Gautama's conversion to Buddhism almost exactly. His tomb on the Mediterranean coast of Syria is still venerated by many Muslims. Further Buddhist influence on Sufism is seen in the concepts of unity of being and unity with God in the Naqshbandi order of Sufis, which appear traceable to the Buddhist concept of Nirvana. Again, the Naqshbandi movement originated in Buddhist Central Asia.

It is tempting also to see aspects of the Druze religion in the Levant as originating in Buddhism. The Druze believe in an hierarchical ascent to perfection through reincarnation, with each incarnation being a moral testing ground for the next ascent. This belief, though not necessarily exclusive or fundamental to Buddhism, is nonetheless found in Buddhist practice almost everywhere. The similarity is not surprising in view of the origins of the Druze religion: it received its definitive form from Hamza ibn 'Ali, who was born in Suzan in the early 11th century. Suzan, now in north-east Iran close to the Afghan border, was certainly close enough to Buddhist Central Asia to be receptive to ideas from there. A tradition that relates of another Druze community in China is perhaps a further indication of eastern connections.

More Indian and Buddhist elements can be seen in the field of literature. The 1st century AD Fables of Phaedrus, for example, contain Buddhist Jataka stories, while the well-known early Christian work, Barlaam and Joasaph by St John of Damascus incorporates considerable Buddhist elements. Barlaam and Joasaph are two Christian saints; the word Joasaph derives from the Arabic Budasaf, in turn deriving from the Sanskrit 'bodhisattva'. The story, originating probably in pre-10th century Central Asia, derives from the traditional biography of Gautama Buddha in the person of St Barlaam – Buddha, in other words, is a canonised saint of the Christian church, whose saint's day is 27th November!

Iran was a major vehicle for transmitting Indian literary ideas to the West. In Sasanian Iran a major literary genre was the *andarz-nama* or 'mirror for princes', which flourished in the 6th century. The Iranians themselves might well have inherited the genre from similar Indian works, such as the 3rd century BC *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, written for Chandragupta Maurya, the father of Ashoka. At the time that the genre was flourishing in Iran the first Byzantine 'mirror' appeared, written by Agapetus in the time of Justinian. The genre then continued into medieval and renaissance Europe, the 12th century King's Mirror of King Haakon the Old of Norway or Machiavelli's *The Prince* being some well known examples.

Archaeological evidence adds substance to the historical and literary references, such as a 1st century BC Indian ivory found in a house in Pompeii. A possible Buddhist gravestone and other Indian objects found at Alexandria in Egypt are evidence of the ample contacts that existed there. The arrival of Indian sculpture even seems to have inspired a minor artistic fashion in 'Indianesque' portrait sculpture in Rome. This is seen in the series of 1st and 2nd century AD Roman portrait busts that have Buddhist style top-knots, the *ushnisha*, which in Buddhist iconography symbolises the super-normal knowledge and consciousness of the Buddha. One of these portraits has been tentatively identified as Julius Bassianus of Emesa, the father-in-law of the Emperor Septimius Severus. Quantities of Indian Red-polished ware have been found along the Persian Gulf as evidence for Indian penetration there. This distinctive Indian pottery spread around the Indian Ocean from the Gulf to Thailand. Architectural remains have been no less revealing: some artificial cave complexes on the Gulf have been tentatively identified as Buddhist, presumably religious communities that



came in the wake of Indian trading colonies to the west.

Eastern and northern Afghanistan was one of the most thriving centres of Buddhism from at least the 2nd century BC to the 8th century AD. The Macedonian conquest in the 4th century and subsequent Hellenistic kingdoms there opened up the area to western contacts – and indeed laid much of the political and philosophical groundwork for the eventual growth of Buddhism there, just as the Greeks prepared the ground for the eventual spread of Christianity further west. These years were one of the most important in the early development of Buddhism, when many of its philosophical, architectural and iconographical ideas first evolved. The concept of the Buddha image, for example, before only represented by a symbol, was first formulated here from Greek figural art; great monasteries grew up and flourished; the stupa evolved into a symbolic focal point for Buddhist worship. Buddhism in other words came of age here to become the universal religion it is today.

The western presence in the area was reinforced with the arrival of the Arabs in the 8th century. Although Islam eventually predominated (albeit over a long period – Islam did not reach some parts of Afghanistan until the end of the 19th century), Buddhism survived several more centuries co-existing with Islam to exert the influence on Islam that we have already seen. Today, the countryside of Afghanistan is littered with the remains of its Buddhist past, testifying to its former importance: stupas, monasteries, shrines, paintings, and (until recently!) giant Buddha statues.

Sind was another place where the West came into close contact with Buddhism. When the Arabs conquered it in the early 8th century, Buddhism was the dominant religion and contact between Semitic Islam and Indian Buddhism was permanently established. The last Buddhist dynasty to rule Sind was from the mid-6th to the mid-7th century, and much of the administration and provincial government remained in the hands of the Buddhist priesthood, known as Samanis (a word meaning ‘Buddhist priest’, from the same Sanskrit root that English gets its word ‘Shaman’ or Hindi Ashram) until the Arab conquest in the 8th century. In many cases, the Arab invaders were met with peaceful overtures and requests for terms on religious grounds, with opposition mainly from the more warlike Brahmins. The Arabs themselves reciprocated by honouring the Buddhist priesthood and reinstating them in

their traditional positions.

The only time that Buddhism actually spread west in the political sense was with the Mongol conquest in the 13th century. Iran was conquered in 1218-20 by Chinghiz Khan, and in 1256 his grandson Hulagu Khan founded a Mongol dynasty in the Middle East known as the Ilkhans. Hulagu was almost certainly a Buddhist when he founded this dynasty, centred on north-western Iran, as was his successor Arghun Khan, during whose reign Buddhism was actively encouraged in the Middle East. It was repressed, however, in 1295 when Arghun’s successor, Ghazan Khan, converted from Buddhism to Islam, and eventually disappeared altogether from the Ilkhanid Empire. This gives a total of almost forty years for Buddhism in the Middle East which, although relatively brief, was at least the official court religion enjoying the privileged imperial patronage—enthusiastically so under Arghun—of a particularly powerful dynasty. Accordingly, contemporary accounts mention many Buddhist temples being built in Iran. With Ghazan’s conversion however, all temples and monasteries were ordered to be either destroyed or converted into mosques, although the remains of Mongol Buddhist cave complexes still exist in north-western Iran.

In conclusion, speculation has always existed on the possibility of Buddhism spreading westwards in antiquity. On the one hand, we have many very tantalising titbits of information: an unusual place name here, an unexplained monument there, evidence for unusual religious occurrences elsewhere. On the other hand, the Near East or Mediterranean is not exactly littered with remains of any Buddhist monasteries. But what is important to remember above all is that Buddhism spread westwards before it went eastwards. Although very far from being a ‘western’ religion in the sense that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are, the fact that Buddhism is today largely an ‘eastern’ religion is due simply to historical circumstance, not its point of origin and even less to any innate ‘eastern’ or ‘western’ values.

The author currently organises special interest tours to Central Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere. For information on these tours, please contact Warwick Ball at Eastern Approaches: 01578 730361.

Tibet on Horseback – Part Two

BY ISABELLE RODKER

Armed with a bowl of yak dung to fuel the fire, Tashi and I headed back towards the village. I found Ben lying down in the barn next to the house we were to spend the night in. He felt much better, but was still recovering from the shock of waking up and finding so many little pairs of eyes watching him. Tashi, who was much concerned with Ben's condition, asked through means of elaborate charades if we would like to go back on the horses to a spot a bit further up to meet some nomads. This must have been what the description of the trip meant in terms of 'spending a night in a yak tent'. We said yes, but that we would prefer to walk. Our legs had not recovered from the previous day's trek!

So, the three of us set off walking while the children rode our horses with such style and control that it put us to shame. We went up the hillside and over a pass to a big green plain and then stopped. Tashi settled himself down on the grass, smiled at us, waved his hands about, said goodness knows what and lay down, pulling his hat over his face. In the distance we saw some tents and nearby we made out the figures of two people building a yak enclosure. We decided to walk towards it, but did not even get halfway before we became too exhausted to carry on – partly due to lack of oxygen and partly because Ben's stomach started playing up again. As he dashed off to find a toilet spot I tried to stop the children from following him, but to no avail, and watched helplessly as they chased him down the hill.

An hour later we were sitting on the grass with all the children, having handed out everything of interest which might have been in our bags. The pictures of Tibet in our guidebook went down a treat. We had a few more rounds of 'I Like the Flowers', taught them the alphabet and then joined Tashi lying down on the grass. Life was very quiet, still and humble there. The Himalayas are awesome, and the atmosphere created by so much natural beauty is totally exhilarating.

A further two hours later, and by this time ready to strangle the children – who by then had poked us once too often – Tashi slowly got up and beckoned us back towards the village. We were disappointed that we did not have the stamina to reach the yak tents, but were consoled by the idea that perhaps we could ride back up the next day. We arrived back just as the other villagers were returning from minding their yaks. A herd is being brought into the village for the night to be milked and kept safe. Some of

the yaks were dressed up with bells and tassels, with people riding them. It was a spectacular sight. The respect the people shared with their animals was obvious by the gentle way in which they handled them.

The children gradually tailed off for dinner, and we returned to the cosy glow of the house. In between twisting yak hair to make wool and sniffing snuff, the lady of the house prepared another round of tsampa and we ate our pot noodles. The atmosphere changed completely now it was dark. The village took on a mysterious and eerie quality and the house as full of shadows as there were only two oil lamps. The wind howled around the house and I began to dread the night ahead. I could not believe that we had not brought a torch – or even any matches – with us.

It was time for bed. Tashi and the lady, followed by eleven children, took us into the barn aided by an oil lamp. We said our goodnights, but instead of going on their merry way, the group lingered. Were they going to watch us all night? Everyone was still smiling, and Tashi mimed for us to get into bed. This was all becoming quite strange. We took off our shoes and tried not to cringe as we covered ourselves with the mouldy blankets. Everyone was still staring. I said a cheery goodnight, hoping to ignite some movement. To my delight, Tashi stooped to put a candle and some matches by my bed, but when the tucking in ritual was completed he took them away again. I was baffled. We heard the children going off to their respective homes, and the others went into the house, bolting the door behind them. We wondered if we had been left out for the yeti.



One of our mounts eyes the village children warily...

Photo: I Rodker

I had never experienced such darkness before. It was like soup: a rich, thick, black, gooey soup. The wind picked up and tore through the door-less doorway and window-less windows. We were freezing and then it began to rain. In fact, we were in the midst of a storm. Unfortunately, there was no getting away from the rain streaming through the 'windows' as they stretched the length of the wall. By this time, we were both balancing on our sides at the far corners of the beds, as the other sides were no soaked. Could things have got any worse? The thunder and lightning started. The crashes echoed violently around the mountains. We could hear the horses bucking and neighing, their little bells ringing mercilessly. I wondered if would make it through the night without dying of hypothermia, or as the result of something hairy carrying us off into the night.

At last, morning came and we were filled with newfound feelings of hope; the worst was over and we would soon be on our way back to Lhasa. Having only slept for about five minutes, I had a massive headache and sat up feeling something less than human. The little eyes were back, rows of them looking at us. I could feel the excitement rise as I went over to my bag, unzipped one of the many zips and took out... my diary. I could not tell if that killed the excitement or satisfied it. Then I found my camera. The sight of the strange-looking instrument was met with squeals of delight. I took a picture of them and then they begged me to let them photograph me. However, when I released the camera to them there was such frenzied excitement that it fell and broke on the floor. There was a pregnant pause. 'What would she do to us?' It was an unfortunate accident, and I could not be cross with them for long.

Tashi came in and made eating breakfast symbols. The toothless old lady greeted us with a wide smile and indicated for us to sit down. She gave us hot water to drink and went back to crushing little seeds with a rock and pouring the resulting powder into her snuffbox. We had another pot noodle. I was determined to succeed at conversation this morning. I wanted to ask them if they thought the yeti was real. I managed to find the words for 'have you seen' in the phrase book, but could not find out how to say 'yeti'. I resorted to imitating the stereotypical image of a yeti, growling and sticking my arms out in a zombie-like fashion. The Tibetans were confused, but highly amused. At last we thought that they had got it, but to my disappointment they answered my question by shaking their heads. Later we met a Tibetan who spoke very good English and he told us that the word they guessed actually means 'leg'.

After lunch, which was pretending to be breakfast, Tashi made no indication that we would be leaving soon. Knackered and becoming fed up with so much hanging around, not the kind of lifestyle we Westerners are used to, we sloped off for another walk around the village, followed by our entourage. We found a quiet spot, which with our little followers could not remain thus for long, and sat down. A boy appeared with

a football that had seen better days, and suddenly they were all up and chasing after it. This gave us time to soak up the atmosphere. The sky was a piercing blue and we could see women laughing and walking together towards a stream with their washing. The children returned and we had many more rounds of *I Like the Flowers* with actions.

Hours passed, and then, at three o'clock, Tashi appeared with the horses: rugs on and ready to go. We went back to the house to say goodbye and to pay for our night there. The lady rustled around the ceiling and pulled out an empty red leather purse, which she carefully put the money into. I was struck by the self-sufficiency of this life, that these people are not reliant on money to live; I thought it would be naïve to presume that they have no use for it. I ask the lady where I should leave the rubbish we had managed to accumulate, and she took it from me. As we left, her little girl stood in the yard and waved us off. She had bits of our rubbish in her hands and, as we moved off she sat down on the grass and played with it.

The journey back from the village took even less time than getting there, and again we did it in a mixture of walking and riding. The journey was truly magical. Once back at Tashi's, we understood that we had two hours to wait before our ride back to Lhasa would arrive. We could not face more sitting and smiling, so we went for a walk, promising the anxious Tashi that we would be back in time. He showed us the way to a nice spot with his baby daughter in his arms. We were relieved to be on our own, and laid down on soft green grass next to a trickling stream and listened to the sound of the breeze playing with the trees.

Twenty minutes later Tashi appeared, looking frantic, and we were summoned back to the house. When we arrived, we found a car waiting for us. Used to the unexpected, we collected our things, bade a fond farewell to Tashi and his family, and went on our way. Bewildered, we sat back in the car and could not quite believe that we would be back in Lhasa in just over an hour. I was looking forward to having a shower, changing my clothes and not eating another pot noodle. Despite only being away for two days and one night it felt like much, much longer.

Budget travel in Tibet may at times be hard, but Tibet is not the kind of place you should visit if you want a relaxing holiday. However, if you want to experience a magical country, rich with its own culture and heritage, it is the right place to go. The horse trip was the best thing we did while in Tibet, as it gave us a chance to taste the life that many Tibetans still lead. Later on we travelled by bus to Shigatse and Gyantse. Although it took us days of gruelling bus rides to reach these places, if we had gone more quickly by expensive Chinese Landcruiser, we would have missed out on the perfect opportunity in which to talk to Tibetan people. If you are willing to rough it a little bit then you are much more likely to experience the true essence of this incredible country.

The Custom of Arranged Marriage in Old Tibet

TSERING DHUNDUP

The following summary of traditional Tibetan wedding customs is by no means exhaustive or representative of all wedding customs, as there are regional variations in Tibet. Characteristically, the main differences reflect the bride's and groom's social status, religious background, wealth and whether the bride and groom have a say in deciding their own destiny. The following may be seen as only a composite of many variations of wedding that were in vogue in the west and south-west regions of Tibet.

MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

During the course of Tibet's long history, the customs and etiquette concerning wedding customs in Tibetan areas have undergone changes. What has remained constant, is, however, the influence of religion, be it Bon or Buddhism on wedding customs as well as on every aspect of people's daily lives - such as looking for divine guidance and omens on starting new projects or making decisions, interpreting dreams, comparing horoscopes to check the compatibility of the groom and the bride, calculating the auspicious dates, seeking guidance from revered lamas and setting an auspicious date for wedding.

Seeking a Bride

When a relatively well-to-do family or one with social status and wealth, considers it opportune to start looking for a bride for their son, they entrust either a relative or a reliable family-friend to start looking for a potential bride, preferably with similar or better social status and wealth. They would be instructed to look for the potential bride's character, social conduct, jewellery and ornaments, beauty and figure, in that order. Once the scouts come back from their errands with reports of potential matches they have discovered, the groom's parents hold discussions to shortlist the potential brides.

Traditionally social customs didn't require the either the presence or consultation with the son himself. Parents considered it their prerogative to decide which lady was worthy of joining their family as their daughter-in-law rather than letting their son decide who was going to be his wife. If a son was actually asked for his views and preferences, that would be indeed be considered a rare case of parental indulgence and liberality.

Then, the matrimonial committee narrows down their choice to three to five girls and send a go-between to obtain the exact day and dates of birth of the potential bride. Once the information is obtained the boy's parents may request their local Lama to check the matrimonial compatibility of their son with the girls on the basis of their birthdays and horoscope signs. While offerings and prayers are made to the Deities in the local monastery for blessings, the Astrologer's calculations is sought to ensure that nothing is left to chance. In fact, the results of his predictions play the crucial role in deciding the couple's fate

Once the choice of the bride is ascertained in this way, the parents of the groom would then dispatch a party led either by the very go-between who had first discovered the potential bride or a close family member, to visit the girl's family and formally make the proposal. The day would have been carefully chosen to be auspicious according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. To invoke good luck the proposal party would be carrying 'droso chemar' (tsampa and barley grains with butter-works of auspicious symbols), an arrow braided ceremoniously in rainbow coloured cloth, gifts in cash and kind, a copy of the Astrologer's calculations. After offering the customary gifts along with the best quality white 'khatags' the bride's parent's are formally asked to consent to the match already pronounced compatible according to the astrological calculations.

Although, it could be said that the parents of the potential bride had already betrayed their willingness to accept the suit when agreeing to divulge the day and date of their daughter, they make a fuss when formally asked to consent to the proposal. They may pretend hesitance and claim the interest of many other parents who had sent go-betweens inquiring after their 'precious' and 'model' daughter. Eventually, they agree to accept the suit by stating that since the astrological calculations and the pronouncements predict a good future for the potential couple and that the groom's parents are of such social standing, they would be happy to offer their daughter in her best interest.

Thereafter, the groom's emissary and the girl's parents discuss to decide the auspicious date on which to conduct the Chang offering ceremony to seal the betrothal agreement. Ideally, a longer preparation time would be convenient to have all the necessary arrangements for the betrothal ceremony and party. However, as a precaution against any last-minute change of heart on the part of either the groom or the bride, both parties try to have the betrothal date fixed within fifteen to twenty days or not later than a month from the day of their verbal agreement.

Then on the appointed day, the groom's parents visit their prospective daughter-in-law's home taking gifts of clothes, food and 'chang' depending on what they can afford. They wear their best clothes and even decorate their ponies. Once there, the girl's parents and close relatives are seated in rows to receive the gifts from the boy's parents which could include, 'white khatag', sweetened rice with raisins and 'droma', (sweet potato

MAKING THE PROPOSAL

root), rolls of butter and boxes of tea, bags of rice, barley and wheat. On top of this pile of gifts would be placed the cash gift in silver coins wrapped inside a white bag bearing the label 'Reimbursement for the day's expenses' specifying the amount enclosed.

This custom had arisen ostensibly from practical considerations to save the prospective groom's parents from the trouble of having to buy and make all arrangements for the day's feasting, drinks and treats for all guests as they come from afar. So, the girl's parents do all the shopping and preparations for the party but the boy's parents offer the cash gift as compensation for the costs. Every member of the girl's household has to be presented with individual gifts of clothes made of wool or silk or felt, along with the customary white 'khatags'.

Even at this late stage, the boy and the girl may still be kept completely in the dark about the decisions being made about their future. On this day, conniving relatives may invite the girl on a visit to be conveniently away when the groom's parents come calling or she may be persuaded to go on a trip to the local monastery or some other holy place for worship and prayers. The important parties in proposal and betrothal negotiations are the parents of the prospective bride and groom, rather than the bride and groom themselves. So the gifts meant for the bride-to-be are accepted on her behalf by her parents.

Besides the above gifts, the mother of the bride-to-be receives special presents in the form of cash gifts, personal items of clothing and a woven apron of superior quality traditionally called 'nu-rin' or compensation for breast-feeding her in childhood. And then, either the two sets of parents or their representatives sit down to discuss to finalise the formal betrothal agreement drawn up and signed.

THE BETROTHAL AGREEMENT

The text of the betrothal Agreement would start with invocation for the blessings of the 'Triple Gem' - the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings) and the Sangha (monks and nuns) on behalf of all sentient beings, and then for the good fortune of the prospective couple as their lives are about to be entwined by fate and the decision of their parents. The text of the Agreement also includes prayers for the new couple to get to like each other and generate love that is as pure and precious as the purest of gold. It would also contain an undertaking that the groom would be faithful to his wife and refrain from going with another 'female companion' or indulge in unbecoming habits such as gambling games like 'sho' and 'sbag' or resort to excessive drinking or wasteful habits like squandering money. On the part of the girl, she would undertake to show respect where respect is due and socialise with equals with friendship and treat the lowly with kindness and consideration, and strive to build a model family worthy of their parents' social status and prestige.

The Betrothal Agreement would then be signed and sealed by the two sets of parents endorsed by the signatures and seals of their respective relatives as witnesses to the Agreement. Copies of the Agreement would be exchanged for safekeeping and this serves as the finalisation of the engagement. The actual wedding date may be finalised at this point to fall on an auspicious day according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. After the groom's parents and accompanying party are properly dined and plied with many servings of 'chang' they are seen off ceremoniously.



A Chang-ma, or beer-serving lady, sits at a Tibetan wedding waiting to serve guests. On the table next to her is a jug of chang, two cups, and the drosso chemar – a trough divided into two sections, one containing tsampa, the other barley grains. Ears of barley are also tucked into the trough.

The boy and girl may still be in the dark unless parents decide to let their child in on the fate awaiting them. In cases where a boy is in the know and cannot wait to get a glimpse of his bride-to-be, he may contrive to catch her on the estate, or at the local monastery or while out in the market or while out with relatives and friends, assiduously trying to remain unnoticed. A girl in the know may not be so adventurous even though curious.

Within the next couple of days, the girl's parents would invite monks or tantric practitioners to the home to perform religious prayers and rituals to appease the spirits and banish all negative spirits that may cause impediments to the impending union of the bride and the groom as husband and wife. Incense is burnt on rooftops, offerings made to the Buddha and other deities in the shrine room; all guardian deities and spirits appeased and prayed for their blessings and help. The girl may be lured to participate in these religious prayers and rituals without letting her know the real purpose. This is said to be done to ensure that the family's guardian deities or the local deities may not hold it against her when she leaves the family eventually to join her husband-to-be.

PREPARING THE BRIDE TO GO TO THE HOME OF THE IN-LAWS

Occasionally, the bride may be completely kept in the dark until the last moment of her departure to the home of the husband-to-be for the wedding ceremony. In many cases, the girl is simply duped to leave the family home, supposedly on

pilgrimage or to visit a relative or go for a hot-spring bath, whichever is convenient to get her to the groom. Once there, the unsuspecting girl is suddenly welcomed with offerings of traditional ceremonial food and told the real purpose of her being there. She is then helped by ladies-in-waiting to change into the ready-made wedding clothes and wear the turquoise jewelled headgear in preparation for the wedding ceremony. Like a trapped game, the unsuspecting girl may struggle and cry and shout and create mayhem but eventually, her parents and relatives and siblings or anyone who is considered persuasive enough, try their best to make her accept her destiny and to undergo the ceremonies, extolling the virtues of the groom and his family and reminding her how lucky she is to be marrying into such a noble family.

Many a tragic tale is told of how an unwilling girl tries to run away only to be caught and brought back forcibly to accept her parent's wishes and for her own good and to save face for the family. Once in a while, a girl may feign reluctance to leave home for the wedding ceremony when actually she is keen and willing. An anecdote is told of an innocent younger sister who couldn't bear to see her elder sister crying her heart out when the time approached for departure. She naively volunteered to go in her elder sister's place if she really detested the groom so much. To her surprise, the elder sister replied through a stream of tears, "It's alright, dear. I will go through it myself. It's just the thought of leaving behind our parents that is so unbearable!"

In the majority of cases, the girl is informed the night before the day of departure. The reception party from the groom's family arrives the day before the departure with gifts of clothes and jewellery for the bride. They are properly accosted and treated to lavish dinner and drinks and preparations made for a dawn departure as soon as the cockerel announces the impending daybreak. Horses are prepared and farewell gifts and clothes packed. Juniper leaves are gathered and prayers flags readied for a final incense burning ceremony and a propitious send-off the next morning.

Early in the morning, the bride is attired in the bridal clothes and bedecked with turquoise jewellery brought as welcoming gifts by the reception party. A symbolic arrow braided with rainbow coloured ribbons is inserted behind her back down her collars. If it is a groom who is being accosted, then the braided arrow is stuck through his cummerbund. This tradition is said to have followed the time when King Songtsen Gampo wed the Chinese Princess 'Wu Chen Kon Jo' who was escorted to Tibet by the able Minister Gar Tongtsen who first welcomed the Princess with an arrow draped in a rainbow coloured ribbons. The pointed tip of the arrow symbolizes the repulsion

of any invading inimical forces; the closed feathers at the end symbolises material prosperity and wealth; the five-coloured ribbon symbolizes the appearance and blessings of the 'panca jina' (the Five families of the Buddha); the adornment of the bride with corals, turquoise and amber stones is to wish her material prosperity. The bride is gently tapped with the arrow on the head to wish that she may get to wear jewellery of gold, silver, turquoise, pearls and corals. Next she is gently tapped on both sides and her lap to wish for armfuls of children.

RECEIVING THE BRIDE INTO THE FAMILY HOME

As the cavalcade of bridal procession approaches closer, the groom's family would hurriedly carry out the ritual ceremony to drive out any resident spirits or prevent any incoming evil spirits by symbolically castigating an effigy made of 'tsampa'.

If the man carrying the effigy is seen by a member of the bridal party, he is pursued in mock chase.

Not far from the groom's home, the bridal party comes to a halt as they reach the point where a pair of stones lie, one white, the other black. The spokesperson of the bridal party dismounts and symbolically destroys the black stone and makes this propitious announcement:

*"You the divine white stone here to my right,
wearing this scarf of white 'khatag',
I beseech you to bless us with protection and success,
and all that we wish for.
You the devil's black stone here on my left side,
wearing this black garment,
I discard you as you represent the unwanted
and dark forces of evil."*

Now the party is welcomed at the main gate by two daintily clad ladies one on each side of the door, holding wooden

bowls with silver linings filled with ceremonial 'chang' to welcome the bridal party whilst bursting into a song of welcome and good luck. Then, the head of the bridal party dismounts and holding the bridle of the bride's horse, asks the head of the welcoming group,

*"Have you got barley, wheat and peas for the bride?
Have you got the best of silks from Dartsedo for the bride?
Have you got the tiger-skin and leopard-skin for the bride to dismount on?"*

As the reply comes, "Yes, we have." the bride is helped dismount and handed a pail filled with butter and a wicker basket full of cow dung to carry into the house of her in-laws for good luck.

And then supported by maids from both sides the bride is escorted behind the leader of the bridal party who offers



Thubten Wangdue, LTCV School, Dharamsala

propitiatory white 'khatags' to the door, pillars, ladder, and even the dog if there is one by saying, "Save your worst bark for the foe, and sleep in peace when friends approach." And then the bride is helped to deliver her present of butter and dung to the inner chamber of the house. Thereafter, the family helps both the groom and bride to change and dress up for the formal wedding ceremony.

THE WEDDING

In the main hall where the formal wedding ceremony is to take place, tables are laid out with 'dro so che mar' (decorated wooden container filled with barley and tsampa), various kinds of food and delicacies, drinks and including a pride of place for a whole sheep intact with the head for good luck, and piles of salt, wheat, barley, rice and whatever other food-grains they have, adorned with multicoloured 'khatags.' A dais would be put up in the middle covered with leopard or tiger skin or the best woven carpet upon which would be formed a reverse swastika with barley grains to symbolize permanence. The groom and bride would be seated there to receive the well-wishers bringing gifts of cash and kind with 'khatags'. Cash gifts would normally be placed inside an envelope and addressed, 'Congratulatory contribution to the Wedding specifying the amount' and the names of the individual or family making the offering. A family scribe keeps a record of who brought what and how much cash offerings made to help remember when it is their turn to take gifts. 'Thank you notes' are not in custom. On ornamental table-tops are decked out with food and drinks and assorted delicacies and fruits.

On the left side of the bride would be seated the brides-maid. The parents and close relatives of the bride and groom would be ranged on either side when the 'khatag' and gift offering ceremony is held. The well-wishers would first of all offer

'khatag' at the altar of the shrine or statues of pictures of the Buddha and other deities. After that they garland the groom and the bride, their parents, relatives, and sometimes even the cooks and the 'chang' ladies. All the while, there would be singing, music, dancing and propitiatory recitations of special poems praising the groom, the bride, the family, the home, the shrine and the statues, the auspicious articles on display, the pillars, the 'chang' pot, the whole cooked sheep, the parents of the couple and so on. This would be followed by incense burning and a prayer-flag raising ceremony on the rooftop or sometimes outside in the courtyard. This is to propitiate the spirits of the earth, water, sky and the deities in all directions to request their blessings and protection from evil spirits and harm.

The wedding banquet includes both lunch and dinner. The festivities and partying continues, often throughout the night and could run into three or more days. Small groups would form to indulge themselves in various kinds of games some with stakes and some just for fun, small talk, drinking and singing until a guest, worst for wear and inebriated, chooses to take leave and is given a hearty send off with a ceremonial white 'khatag'. Often, teetotalers would be on standby to help escort home inebriated guests who may not otherwise be trusted to find their home alone.

Although religious influence permeates every aspect of the wedding ceremony from beginning to end, lamas, monks and nuns would be conspicuous by their absence since it is considered unbecoming of them to be closely involved and participating in a wedding.

Source: bod kyi sngar srol gnyen sgrig las slong chang skor by Sontse pp 215 - 220 gtsang khul gyi gnyen sgrig byed srol skor by tsho dbang pp 221 - 234 in 'spang rgyan me tog' Editorial Group (Tenzin Gelek, Dechen Dorje, Nyima Dorje) 'bod kyi dmangs srol gces btus' Nationalities Publishing House, Beijing 1999

A Critique of Tibetan Democracy in Exile

JANE ARDLEY, KEELE UNIVERSITY

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama began his exile in India in 1959, one of his first acts was to announce the formation of the Tibetan government in exile. One of his immediate aims upon re-establishing his government was to reduce the formality and ceremony that had routinely surrounded political activity in Tibet, and to introduce genuine democratic reforms. Once in permanent residence in Dharamsala in 1960, the Dalai Lama began the process of the democratisation of his government in earnest. The major objective of this exercise was the formation of a democratic government in exile which would run Tibet upon its future reversion to Tibetan control. Three major steps have been taken in this direction: first, the establishment of a popularly elected legislature, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD); second, the formulation of a constitution, later replaced by a charter of Tibetans in exile; and third, the direct election of the kalon tripa, the most senior minister in the Tibetan exile parliament.

The first initiative of the Dalai Lama was to introduce an elected legislature; the ATPD. This legislature replaced the traditional government of monks and nobles that had existed in Tibet, and the first elections were held in September 1960. Membership of the ATPD is based upon one of two criteria: the regional origin of the candidate, or religious affiliation. There are no political parties represented in the ATPD. The reason for introducing the regional basis for election into the ATPD is explicitly linked to the Chinese occupation: the Chinese-created Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) does not include parts of the traditional eastern Tibetan provinces of Dotoe (Kham) and Dhome (Amdo), these instead being subsumed into neighbouring Chinese provinces. The Tibetan government in exile seeks to be the representative body of all Tibetans, and so the inclusion of the excluded regions is a politically symbolic gesture. It is especially significant that prior to the Chinese invasion, harmony between the regions had been notable by its

absence, and so the incorporation of all the regions in the exile parliament is an important gesture of inclusiveness.

The election of deputies based upon their regional credentials has, however, drawn criticism. Some – notably central Tibetans, traditionally the holders of centralised power in Tibet – argue that the inclusion of these criteria for election is in itself harmful to unity. Unity – in pursuit of the ‘goal’ – is of course crucial for the independence movement to flourish, and so formalised divisions are regarded as harmful.

There does often seem to be some confusion though between the issue of unity in terms of the independence struggle (in other words, the presumption that all Tibetans want independence) and the idea that all Tibetans have the same general political goals. The idea that there may be political (or social, or regional) diversity within the Tibetan community, while as a group they supposedly have a single goal, has still to be appreciated by the Tibetan exile authorities. It is an issue of which they should



be most aware, as the obsession with pursuing ‘unity’ is more to be found in authoritarian regimes than in democracies. It is unsurprising that arguments in favour of maintaining the regionalisation of the election system have come overwhelmingly from the non-central regions, particularly the east; from those who did not hold power in Tibet, and who are also in the minority in the exile community. It is true that for the communities of east Tibet to ensure equal representation in the government in exile – which is, after all, regarded as a caretaker government – then an equitable distribution of seats among the regions has to be ensured.

Although early elections to the ATPD were rather ad hoc, they became truly popular in 1975, when candidates could for the first time be chosen in primary elections. Even then, however, the notion of the right to vote for one’s chosen candidate remained arcane for many voters. Anecdotal reports suggest that many people preferred to pray to His Holiness for help in deciding for whom to vote. This illustrates that the religious authority of the Dalai Lama does conflict with his position as a political leader in a supposedly democratic government. He attempted to approach the issue of the fusion of religion and politics with the implementation of the Tibetan exile constitution in 1963.

The constitution contains provisions to balance the powers of the Dalai Lama with the popularly elected ATPD. Controversially, the constitution contains the means whereby the Dalai Lama can be removed from office: article 36 provides for the impeachment of the Dalai Lama. The inclusion of this article was deeply unpopular with the Tibetan exiles, and there was a failed attempt to remove the article. Of course, the possibility of this clause ever being used is slight; ultimately its provision is symbolic. It is clear, though, that the position of the Dalai Lama is an anachronism in a supposedly democratic polity: he retains his position on the basis of reincarnation, and is not elected. However, as the Dalai Lama himself has stated many times, there has to be a change in the indisputable leadership of the Dalai Lama in order to have a full and genuine democracy. Until very recently, the position of the Dalai Lama in the government in exile has presented the largest challenge

to the Tibetan democratisation process. The recent election of Samdhong Rinpoche as kalon tripa, however, represents a move towards genuine democracy in exile.

The constitution was replaced in 1991 with the charter of Tibetans in exile. The introduction of the charter brought further democracy to the Tibetan exile polity: it discontinued, for example, the practice of the Dalai Lama appointing ministers to the kashag, or cabinet. As with the implementation of the

Tibetan ballot papers for European elections, and for the preliminary and final rounds of the recent Kalon Tripa elections.



Left: Samdong Rinpoche, the newly elected Kalong Tripa

constitution, though, there was conflict between the wishes of the Dalai Lama and those of the Tibetan exiles. The Dalai Lama was firmly in favour of naming the Tibetan polity a ‘secular’ state in the new charter, in line with his belief that religious and political power should be separated. In his view, secularism implied that the state would not differentiate between religions, rather than there being an absence of religion per se. The Dalai Lama believed that the potential of the charter would be restricted by designating any particular religion as ‘official’. In a rare gesture of defiance of the Dalai Lama’s wishes, the ATPD decided, by a narrow margin, to exclude the word ‘secular’ from the charter; thus demonstrating, albeit rather ironically, a certain spirit of independence. Instead, article three of the charter reads: *‘The future Tibetan polity shall uphold the principle of non-violence and shall endeavour to be a Free Social Welfare State with its politics guided by the Dharma’*. It is clear that far from containing a commitment to a secular state, this provision explicitly provides for Buddhist principles in government. It is interesting to note that precedents for an overtly ‘Buddhist’ government are rare. The Tibetan charter refers to ‘politics guided by the Dharma’; dharma refers to the process of spiritual transformation, it is the ‘truth’ of Buddhism. However, Tibetan exiles have been at pains to stress that this does not mean a return to the dualistic government of ‘old’ Tibet; instead, true government along the principles of dharma would mean that dishonesty and self-interest have no place in the Tibetan political process. Their conviction that the article does not proscribe other religions is reinforced by article ten, which guarantees religious freedom.

The legislature, constitution and charter are all positive steps towards the full implementation of democratic principles in the

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

We have a good record of responding to enquiries promptly, and individually wherever possible. We very much appreciate your comments - criticisms and compliments alike - and welcome any questions about our work. I would like to take this opportunity to answer some of the general questions which are often asked by the public. If you have any others, please do not hesitate to either contact me directly or the Foundation's office.

PHUNTSOG WANGYAL

What are your objectives?

The main aims and objectives of Tibet Foundation are:

- To create a greater awareness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message of peace and harmony
- To further the understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and culture, and to work towards their continuity and preservation
- To improve education and health care, and to relieve poverty among people of Tibetan origin in different parts of the world

Are you a political organisation?

No. The Foundation is a non-political, non-governmental, charitable organisation - UK registered charity no. 292400.

Where do you work?

Tibet Foundation manages programmes in the following areas:

- Tibetan refugee communities in India and Nepal (Tibetans in Exile)
- Ethnic Tibetan regions in China (Aid to Tibet)
- Mongolia (Buddhism in Mongolia)
- Pakistan (Balti Tibetan Culture)
- The West - mainly Europe (Art and Culture)

Brief details of each of these programmes can be found on page XX.

Are you allowed to work in Tibet?

Yes, the Foundation has been working in Tibet since 1993. We work there closely with the local Tibetan communities and authorities. Our focus is to improve education, health care and the local economy. Our programme is authorised and approved by relevant official bodies. Working in this way within the law of the land, we have never faced any problems.

Is it difficult to work in Tibet?

Yes and No. All our projects are in remote Tibetan areas - hence the monitoring and administration of them costs more financially and requires more time from our staff. Legal systems are different from country to country, and the law in China is not always clear or easy to interpret. However, having said that, the local communities and authorities have always been co-operative, enthusiastic and fully supportive of our work.

How do you know the money is spent properly?

We check thoroughly all the applications which we receive seeking funding, and make sure that these projects: a) fall within the charity mandate of the Foundation b) are approved by the local authorities c) are practical and sustainable. All projects thus adopted by the Foundation are carefully managed and closely monitored by experienced staff, both directly from London as well as from our offices in the field. In this way we can ensure that every penny donated goes directly to where it should.

What do you mean by Tibet?

By 'Tibet', we mean all the ethnic Tibetan areas in the People's Republic of China. This includes the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces of China.

What do you try to achieve in Tibet?

Our aim is to, ultimately, secure sustainable and prosperous livelihoods for the Tibetans. Our projects focus on the promotion of better education and health care, and to help Tibetans to improve their own standard of living as the rest of China moves forward to greater economic prosperity.

What is your emphasis: work in Tibet itself or in the exile community?

Neither and both. Our aid projects in India and Nepal are well established and sponsorship and support for the most vulnerable in the exile community continues to be one of most important activities. In contrast, our Aid to Tibet programme is still relatively young, and we are proud of what we have already achieved while working in what is often a more difficult situation than in, say, India. This is why Aid to Tibet might sometimes have a higher profile in our literature. In financial terms, the money which we were able to send to India and Nepal last year was 10 times that which we were able to raise for Tibet. That is another reason why Aid to Tibet sometimes has greater visibility.

How is Tibet Foundation run?

The Foundation is run mainly by volunteers. The Board of Trustees is supported by a number of committed and dedicated Programme Managers and other staff members.

What is the source of your income?

Tibet Foundation does not receive funds from any government. It is funded solely by donations. The European Commission has given co-funding for one specific project 'Sershul County Health Initiative' in Tibet.

How many members/supporters do you have?

Tibet Foundation is a Trust and not a member-based organisation. The Foundation has around 11,000 supporters - one-third of whom are regular subscribers and sponsors.

What is your annual income?

The Foundation's income for the year 2000-2001 was £899,928.00 according to our audited accounts (Nov. 2001). The annual income does fluctuate from one year to another.

What are your administration costs?

Our administration costs are, on average, less than 10% of our annual income. This is mainly due to the fact that much of our work is done by volunteers - even the highest paid staff member is only earning £13,500 per annum.

Are your annual accounts audited?

Yes, the accounts of the Foundation are audited annually by approved auditors, and then submitted to the Charity Commission. A brief Trustees' report of our accounts will be published in the Newsletter later in the year.

How can I support the work of Tibet Foundation?

You can support our work in various different ways:

- Join Tibet Foundation by sending an annual subscription of £15 (UK) or £20 (overseas). You will receive our quarterly Newsletter and regular news updates on all our programmes

and events.

- Send a donation - either a one-off lump sum or any amount on a regular basis.
- Sponsor a child/an elderly person/a specific project or even a yak.
- Become a fundraiser for the Foundation in your own area, and at a time to suit you.
- Volunteer to offer your skills and expertise to the Foundation.

We will provide you with any information and support that you may need.

How can I donate?

You can send your donation by cheque or postal order made payable to Tibet Foundation. Alternatively, you can pay by Visa/Delta/Mastercard by phoning our office on +44 (0) 20 7930 6001.

It would be even better if you could complete a banker's order form as this saves time and reduces administrative costs.

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer, please do not forget to sign the Gift Aid form available from the Foundation office or on our website www.tibet-foundation.org. It increases your donation by nearly one third without any extra cost to you.

Can I donate through a Will?

Yes, you can. Donating through a Will is one of the most tax efficient ways of supporting a charity like Tibet Foundation which is exempt from Inheritance Tax. By remembering Tibet Foundation in your Will you could make a big difference to our work. Your solicitor can help/advise you how to do this.

If you would like information about making a bequest, please contact the Foundation.

Could my donation make a difference to your work?

Yes, indeed, your donation could make a BIG difference. It would enable the Foundation to continue its work in:

- promoting peace initiatives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- keeping Tibetan culture alive
- helping Tibetans to help themselves
- giving Tibetans a sustainable future

We assure you that your donation will be put to work immediately and efficiently, and that every penny will go directly to where it should.

For more information about Tibet Foundation, please visit our web site:

www.tibet-foundation.org

or contact the office on tel: +44 (0) 20 7930 6001

**Tibet Foundation, 1 St. James's Market,
London SW1Y 4SB**

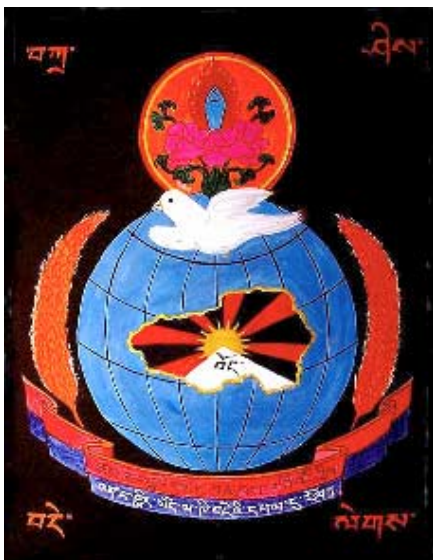
TIBET FOUNDATION NEWS

Tibet Foundation Peace Poster Contest Results, 2002

Tibet Foundation in London has great pleasure in announcing the winners of the last year's Peace Poster Contest. The participants were challenged to draw, paint, or sketch their interpretations of peace and/ or the non-violent approach to resolving conflicts.

The contest was organised by the Foundation to mark the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Enthronement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his personal commitment to Peace. Of the paintings received from various Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Tibet the 13 finalists' posters were shortlisted.

Tibet Foundation would like to congratulate all the participants in this Peace Poster Contest and special congratulations to the winners for their artistic drawings.



Sonam Tsering, Namgyal Higher Secondary School, Kathmandu

Following are the results of the contest:

1st Prize - IRS 10,000

1. Ngawang Dorjee
Tibetan Homes Foundation School (VTC), Mussoorie
Pictured on the cover of this newsletter

2nd Prize - IRS 5,000

1. Sonam Tsering
Class: IX, Namgyal Higher Secondary School, Kathmandu

2. Tenzin Namsey
Class: XII, SOS Tibetan Children's Village School, Bylakuppe

Runners-up - IRS 1,000/RMB100 each, as applicable

1. Chime Tashi Ghangsa
Tibetan Homes Foundation School (VTC), Mussoorie

2. Jamyang Mindrol
Sershul County Tibetan Medical School, Kandze

3. Kunga Namdol
Class: IV, Central School for Tibetans, Kamrau, H.P.

4. Tenzin Choedar
Class: XII, SOS Tibetan Children's Village School, Bylakuppe

5. Tenzin Khedup
Gyaltan School, Kandze

6. Tenzin Migmar
Class: IX, Tibetan Children's Village School (Upper), Dharamsala

7. Tenzin Senoen
Class: IX, Tibetan Children's Village (Lower), Dharamsala

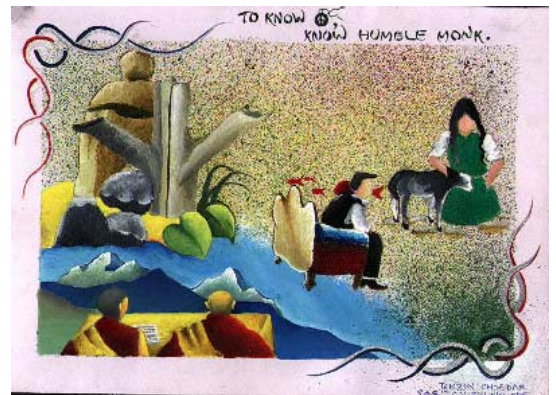
8. Tsering Thinley
Class: VIII, Tibetan Children's Village School (Lower), Dharamsala

9. Thubten Wangdue
Class: IX, Tibetan Children's Village School (Lower), Dharamsala

10. Tenzin Yega
Tibetan Homes Foundation School (VTC), Mussoorie



Chime Tashi Ghangsa, THF School, Mussoorie



Tenzin Choedar, TCV School, Bylakuppe

TIBET EVENTS

An Information Service of Tibet Foundation

Tibet Foundation receives numerous requests for information on Tibetan and Buddhist events in UK and abroad. We also receive a large number of leaflets and brochures from fellow Tibetan and Buddhist organisations on such events.

Due to the lack of adequate space in the office to display all of them and lack of space in the Foundation Newsletter, the Foundation has decided to publish a *Tibet Events* list as a supplement to the Newsletter from the next issue. *Tibet Events* will be a separate publication, mailed together with the Foundation Newsletter.

The purpose of *Tibet Events* will be to provide our readers with news of special events of Tibet-related and Buddhist organisations. Please send your contributions, typed and double spaced or if possible email them to the Foundation as an MS Word attachment, marked *Tibet Events*.

Copy deadlines for 2002 are 4th of March, June, September and December.

The Foundation reserves the normal editorial rights. The views expressed in *Tibet Events* will not necessarily reflect those of the Foundation and the Foundation does not take any responsibility for the events themselves nor their authenticity or accuracy.

Please do not send more than 2 copies of your leaflets or brochures to Tibet Foundation's office. Regarding insertion of your leaflets in the Foundation Newsletters, please contact the Office Manager for details.

Phuntsog Wangyal
Director
Tibet Foundation

Newsletter 35 Copy Deadline

News items, coming events and articles intended for publication in the coming *Newsletter* should reach Tibet Foundation by **4th March latest** and be marked for the attention of the Newsletter Editors. Submissions should be typed and double spaced or emailed in MS Word format if possible.

THANKYOU

In the past three months, 200 individuals have joined the Foundation, some as regular subscribers and others as supporters promoting our work and raising funds for the Foundation's programmes.

There are many supporters who have made generous donations on a regular basis for many years. The Foundation would like to thank all of them for their kind support and would like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks to Trudie Styler, Dieneke Chan, K. M. Harbinson, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Bridget Hickey and Vyvyan Knivett for their generous donations in 2001.

MARIANNE WINDER OBITUARY

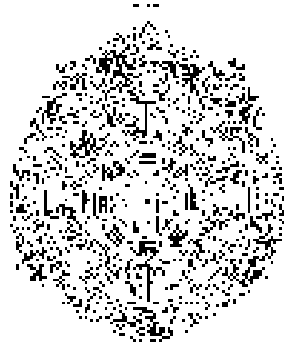
Marianne Winder, a distinguished scholar of Tibetan Medicine, died peacefully after a short illness on April 6th 2001 aged 82 years. Born near Prague in 1918, Marianne came to England as a refugee in the 1930's. Following a degree in German at London University the first part of her career was dedicated with some distinction to the etymology of German words. In 1964 she was appointed Assistant Librarian at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine and later filled the newly created post of Curator of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books. In this post, which she held for the rest of her career, she undertook the enormous task of organising and cataloguing the Wellcome's extensive Oriental collection. It is thanks to her tireless and thorough work that many of these treasures, including numerous Tibetan *thankas* and manuscripts, were brought to public and scholarly attention.

Marianne had a long-standing interest in Buddhism and in Tibetan language and culture. She became proficient in the Tibetan language and developed a particular interest in Tibetan Medicine. She co-operated with Rechung Rinpoche on his work, *Tibetan Medicine Illustrated in Original Texts*, which was one of the first English-language texts to be published on Tibetan medicine and has since become a standard text on the subject. She was working on a revised edition of this text at the time of her death as well as contributing to several other works on Tibetan medicine. It is a tribute to her scholarship that these works will be appearing posthumously. Marianne also lectured on Tibetan Medicine for the Tibet Foundation some years ago. She was an extremely kind and generous person, much loved by colleagues and friends, and always a pleasure to work with. Her enthusiasm for Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Medicine was inspiring and she will be sorely missed. Marianne's funeral was held at Golders Green crematorium on 23rd April 2001 and Ven. Ato Rinpoche also kindly offered prayers on her behalf. A candle offering service has been proposed for a later date (Call Jackie Young on 0208 449 7771 for details).

Jackie Young

Astrology

Good, bad and interesting days in January, February and March according to Tibetan astrological understanding.



January

Friday 18th

Today's daily combination (*sa-sa*) is highly favourable and today is generally good, particularly for agriculture and celebrations. However, it is not a good idea to travel far on this day, and the day of the Tibetan month (5th) indicates immoral behaviour, so watch out if you do have a party.

Wednesday 23rd

A bad day and the conjunction *mda'* indicates that any physical or mental exertion will lead to suffering. Convalescents and babies should not make their first trips outside of their homes. It is also a disharmonious day and not good for patching up friendships. That said, it might be a good day for business.

Wednesday 30th

A good day for longevity rituals and offerings to local deities, and a day on which to expect friendship and compassionate love. All is not rosey,

however, as it is a dangerous day on which to travel, and one should be cautious about financial decisions on this day as loss is also indicated.

February

Wednesday 13th – Losar Tashi Deleg!

The first day of the Water Horse year is excellent for accomplishing all your wishes, and a wonderful day for meeting with close friends and family. It is also good for religious activity, but not for fire rituals. Water Horse years are characterised by excitement and great activity, tempered with sensitivity and thoughtfulness. A good year for completing projects, and expect change.

Understandably, the first day of the year sees a lot of astrological changes. Not least of these is the movement of the *sa bdag* – the 'Lords of the Earth'. These are a class of potentially hostile deities which live in the soil, and each year their relative locations move. This can lead to complications when performing

certain actions in any given direction. For example, this year the *sa bdag* King's ostler is in the west, and consequently any activity to do with horses should be avoided in that direction. Don't travel westwards to buy a horse this year.

Sunday 17th

The early part of this day is highly unfavourable for all activities, and agriculture and making snap decisions in particular should be avoided. Matters improve later in the morning and it will be good to perform virtuous acts, and prosperity is indicated for the rest of the day. Marriage is not a good idea on this day.

Monday 18th

In contrast, this stay starts off well and then deteriorates after mid-morning. The conjunction *zad* and the element combination *sa-rlung* at this time indicate disharmony, depletion and exhaustion.

March

Friday 8th

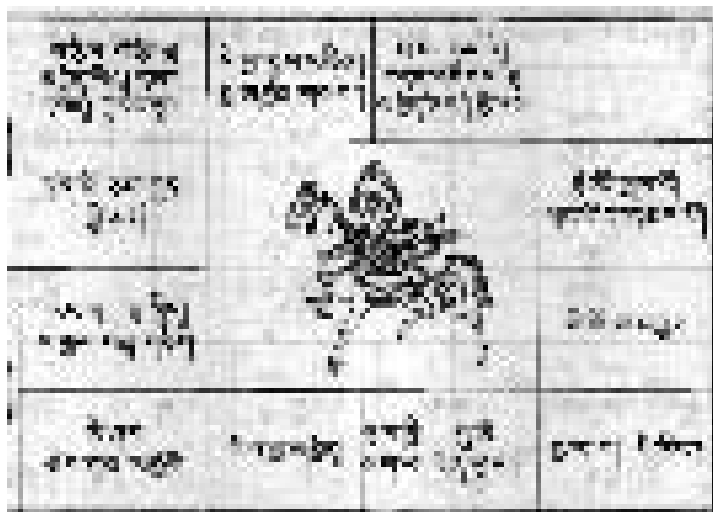
Today is good for celebrations – the element combination *sa-chu* indicates youthful energy and parties. This day of the Tibetan month (the 25th) is when feminine energy is at its strongest and it is a day of clarity and intelligence. Excellent for travel – specifically in eastern or western directions and a day on which wishes are fulfilled. It is also good for making offerings to the Nagas, and consequently any work with water (irrigation, fording a river) should be avoided in order to prevent offending these subterranean/water deities.

Tuesday 12th

A bad day for most activities except war. This is particularly true in the early morning when the element combination *sa-me* is dominant along with the conjunction '*gal me*', but extends throughout the day. Exercise caution and do not take risks with your health.

Saturday 23rd

An excellent day for most activities, especially parties, marriage, longevity rituals and moving house. It is also good for agriculture, but as it is a day of the dragon it is not good for ploughing. Neither is it particularly good for travel, but it is good for banditry and theft!



The location of the *sa bdag* in the coming year, reproduced from a Tibet *lo tho* (astrological almanac). South is at the top.

Tsipa Chung

PROGRAMME NEWS

TIBET FOUNDATION PROGRAMMES

Tibetans in Exile

Building a future for Tibetan refugees

Since 1959 thousands of Tibetans have fled into exile and established refugee communities all over India and Nepal. The Foundation has supported:

- hundreds of religious institutes to restart and continue their ancient traditions,
- thousands of children to gain a decent education and
- hundreds of destitute and elderly to live in dignity

Aid to Tibet

Empowering people to help themselves

With the change of Chinese leadership in 1979, access to Tibet became somewhat easier for the outside world. In 1993 Tibet Foundation had the opportunity to start an aid programme actually in Tibet. Since then, the Foundation has supported and encouraged Tibetans:

- to get better education and health care,
- to gain access to investment and income generation schemes,
- to build sustainable livelihoods and
- to build their capacity to survive in a fast changing environment

Buddhism in Mongolia

Suppressed for 60 years.

For centuries Tibet and Mongolia shared the same Buddhist culture and religion. In the past 9 years, the Foundation has supported Mongolians' efforts to revive their Buddhist traditions, helping:

- to train young Mongolian monks and nuns in India,
- to provide highly qualified Tibetan lamas to teach in Mongolia,
- to translate and publish Buddhist texts into modern Mongolian language and
- the communication of Buddhist teachings through print and broadcast media

Art and Culture

Bringing the ancient wisdom of Tibet to the West

Since its beginning, the Foundation has helped to create awareness of Buddhism and Tibetan culture in the West, and promoted His Holiness the Dalai Lama's message of peace and non-violence. The Foundation has organised:

- visits of performing arts and music by monk and lay artists,
- visits of HH the Dalai Lama and many Tibetan scholars and Lamas,
- visits of Tibetan physicians for lectures and consultations and
- exhibitions of arts and crafts

Balti Tibetan Culture

Helping the Balti people revive their traditional Tibetan script and language

The Balti people of northern Pakistan share a common ethnicity with Tibetans, and for centuries this was reflected in their language, architecture and way of life. Today they would like to revive their ancient identity. The Foundation has supported the Balti people:

- to publish school text books in Balti (Tibetan) script,
- to run Balti (Tibetan) language courses and
- to preserve ancient cultural objects and monuments

Tibetan Peace Garden

Promoting initiatives for peace and harmony

His Holiness the Dalai Lama emphasises the oneness of humanity and living in peace and harmony. His advice is to always adopt non-violence as a method resolving differences. Following this, the Foundation built the Tibetan Peace Garden:

- to promote His Holiness' message of peace
- to remind ourselves of the importance of the principle of non-violence
- to encourage harmony between people of different backgrounds and traditions

AID TO TIBET

A report by Jon Aldridge, the manager of the Aid to Tibet programme.



THE SERSHUL COUNTY HEALTH INITIATIVE - ONE YEAR IN.

Regular readers of the Tibet Foundation Newsletter will already know all about the Sershul County Health Initiative*, currently one of Tibet Foundation's largest and most important projects. Following a long financing period, during which co-financing was sought from and granted by the EC, the project commenced late in 2000, with work beginning with the coming of Spring 2001. So at the end of its first year, Aid to Tibet manager Jon Aldridge looks over the progress so far.

Introduction

Sershul is an ethnic Tibetan area of China with which Tibet Foundation works closely. Following the blizzards of 1995-6 that decimated the northeast apex of the Tibetan Plateau, Tibet Foundation provided emergency relief throughout Sershul, specifically targeting impoverished nomads. In subsequent discussions with local officials aimed at best targeting any future aid, the area of greatest need was found to be in the field of healthcare. A partnership with the existing hospital known as the Sershul Tibetan Astrological and Medical Institute was chosen to accomplish this. The Institute was chosen primarily as it provided the best means of channelling improvements in medical care to the remotest and poorest communities in Sershul, but also because of the consequent support to Tibetan Medicine - a pillar of Tibetan Culture - that would result.

The Sershul County Health Initiative was duly drawn up and submitted for

co-financing, but encountered a severe delay before co-financing was given. Through this delay, Tibet Foundation supported the hospital, providing machines for small-scale production of medicines, and some funding to the medical college.

The formal project funding-period started in Autumn 2000, with actual work commencing in May 2001, major work being impossible during the harsh Tibetan winter. Through the year we have had unprecedented access to the region, with three visits being made to the hospital by Tibet Foundation staff and consultants in the winter, spring and late-summer. The employment of two local men as Tibet Foundation project staff, and the arrival of the hospital's first computer and e-mail connection have created a much closer working-relationship with our project in Sershul. The once-languorous post to Sershul - from which a reply would take upward of several months - has been replaced by almost instantaneous communication by e-mail.

Buildings

Though the main Hospital building was of recent construction, much of the Hospital's work was carried out in a series of 1950's mud buildings, many of which were virtually desolate. In the initial (1997) project proposal, money had been assigned to the renovation of existing buildings, but further deterioration over the subsequent winters, and developments to the hospital's needs meant that more work was needed on the existing buildings, and that several entirely new buildings would be needed. The high-profile contribution of Tibet Foundation, and some hard negotiations in numerous

meetings by local and expatriate staff led to the Sershul Government finding the extra funding necessary for these buildings. Building work started as soon as the plans were approved in June, and was completed to schedule in late August - apparently the first time this had happened in the county!

The old buildings were extensively renovated outside and in, providing vastly improved accommodation, with space for all students and staff. An entirely new medicine production hall was built, providing a much more appropriate and safer production area. A separate generator housing - the electricity in Sershul being very unreliable - was added at sufficient distance from other buildings to insulate them from the noise, smoke and vibrations that the generators would soon be producing. On the other side of the compound a much needed toilet block was added, and garages constructed to protect the two Chinese land-rovers being bought to allow herb collection from outlying areas of Sershul.

The Tibetan Medical College

The achievements with the medical college - though less visible - were equally significant. By the time of the field-visit in September 2001, an extensive curriculum embracing Tibetan and Western medicine had been drawn up by the staff of the Medical College, with help from the Tibet Foundation consultants. The core of the studies remained the Tibetan Medical texts, with literacy classes for those students who had not received adequate basic schooling. A substantial western component to the course was drawn up by several Himalayan-experienced medical consultants. The Swiss Red Cross -



*Facing page:
The Sershul Hospital buildings
before renovation. Broken
windows, leaking roofs and
serious damp made many
buildings practically unusable.
Photo: Karma Hardy*

*This page:
The accommodation buildings
after renovation. Re-roofed,
damp-proofed and renovated
inside, the repaired
accommodation was a world
apart from before.
Photo: Karma Hardy*

who run a medical programme in Xigaze (Central Tibet) - provided much appreciated support too, donating copies of Tibetan language textbooks which they had produced.

The college changed the focus of its courses, training fewer students to a higher level. This change means graduates will receive a government-recognised qualification, with which they could draw a small salary from the local authorities in exchange for providing simple medical care to the local society.

Medicine Production

Medicine production has continued on the machines given by Tibet Foundation in previous years and several new machines. The completion of the new production hall has made work safer and much easier for the staff. Quotas of herbs were drawn up by the hospital director, and distributed through the Shiangs (sub-county divisions) for collection. Training in herb recognition was provided by existing students in the medical college, and staff of the hospital. Sales of medicines through channels independent of the hospital are an important part of the project, and with help from Tibet Foundation staff, innovative packaging was developed to enable the sales of Tibetan medicines through the small shops common in Tibet. This method of selling is particularly being used for "precious pills" - forms of Tibetan medicine generally taken as a preventative.

Local Project Staff

The project employs two local Tibetans as management staff. Their role is to manage the project finances, and to provide information to Tibet Foundation

on project progress, but a secondary aim is to employ and train committed local people. One of the project management staff - Tsering Parlo - a 24 year-old Tibetan with great commitment to helping Tibetan people, is currently in London studying English. Tibet Foundation brought Tsering to the UK for the Initiative's three-month winter closing, to allow him to further his English thanks to a generous scholarship from the David Game Institute, and gain insight into the workings of Tibet Foundation's office.

A new project manager, Chuni from nearby Kandze County, will be starting work on the project in March 2002, having recently given birth to her first child. Aid to Tibet is looking forward to having this complete team in place for the Tibetan Losar 2002.

Finally, the funding.

The Sershul County Health Initiative is one of the largest projects undertaken by Tibet Foundation. Tibet Foundation needs to raise around £70,000 to match the EC contribution. Over the year Tibet Foundation has received literally hundreds of donations large and small from our supporters. Other money has come from the Jewel of India - which donated the money raised beyond its original target toward purchasing the land-rovers used in the project - and local groups across Britain, which have organised events to raise money for the project. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated by the people of Sershul, but more is needed. If you can help with a donation, or by raising money for the project, please contact Jon Aldridge in the Tibet Foundation office.

SPONSOR A YAK CHANGE IN COST

Unfortunately, economic factors such as inflation in China and a modest strengthening of the Renminbi against Sterling over the past couple of years have meant that the actual cost of buying a yak now stands at around £80. With the administration costs of processing each yak sponsorship, and the cost of sponsor's T-shirts (finally in stock), we regret that we will have to increase the cost of yak sponsorship to **£85**. This will take effect from Tibetan New Year on 13th February.

Before this date, you can still sponsor a yak at the old rate of £68, but in reality (we can't afford to run the project at a loss), the money will be pooled and we will buy as many yaks as possible with it.

NEW T-SHIRTS

We have a special limited edition T-shirt, designed by a student from Gyalten School in East Tibet, for people sponsoring a yak at the new rate.

BOOMSAR YAKS

Thanks to some dedicated fund-raising, Riga Wangyal, the manager of Tibet Shop, has raised enough money to buy more than 60 *dri* (female yaks in calf) for Boomsar Old People's Home. They will help to provide dairy produce for the Home, making it almost self-sufficient. A big thank you to everyone who sponsored a yak for Boomsar, and a special thank you to Riga for all her efforts.

TIBETANS IN EXILE

report by Phuntsog Wangyal

Tibetans in exile have much more exposure to the West than those living inside Tibet. So we witness many Tibetans in exile living successful lives. Yet areas where help and support are much needed are not that obvious. We living in the West often take it for granted that things must be satisfactory as Tibetans look, by their nature, jovial and do not seem to like complaining.

Recently I noticed a report by Elaine Jarvik, the Utah Desert News staff writer on a fund-raising tour in the States by Jetsun Pema, the Dalai Lama's sister. This is an extract of her report.

"The children in her town do not have a fancy new hospital, Jetsun Pema said, so it is not always possible to treat the ones who are very, very sick. Even a woman with a bad tooth - even a woman who happens to be the sister of the Dalai Lama himself - may simply have to have the tooth pulled for lack of modern dentistry, as happened to Pema just last month. So, perhaps it might seem odd that the Dalai Lama, knowing of these needs, last spring donated \$25,000 to state-of-the-art Primary Children's Medical Center during his historic three-day visit to Salt Lake City.

" 'Ah, but you see', Pema says, 'the Dalai Lama doesn't think of things that way, does not consider how the needs of one place might be different or greater than that of another'.

" 'You save an American child and it's the same as saving a Tibetan

child,' Pema explained Sunday evening. 'A life is a life. You can't draw a line. I think His Holiness is above all that.'

"On the other hand, Tibetan children living in exile do need help, which is why Pema has just travelled to Sun Valley, Idaho, to participate in a fund raising event for the Tibetan Children's Village in India.

"In her town, Pema told the families gathered in a play room at Primary Children's Sunday afternoon, that there are still children who arrive barefoot and frostbitten, having climbed across the Himalayas to get to freedom. Four decades after the first wave of Tibetans fled their homeland, at least 500 new children are still smuggled into northern India each year, leaving their parents

behind in Tibet.

"The 500 or more who arrive each year are added to the thousands already living and going to school in the Tibetan Children's Village. Only a few of the village's children are true orphans, she says, but about 30 percent have left parents behind in Tibet. Others have parents who are too destitute to look after them.

" 'We cannot build enough homes to keep up,' Pema explained. 'So, one problem is overcrowding.' A unit of [this school] that houses no more than 50 children would house 350 to 400 children at the Children's Village", she said.

" 'If you came to visit India, you would be shocked,' she told her

American audience that included children being treated for cystic fibrosis, leukaemia and open-heart surgery. 'There is no proper medication. In some villages they don't even have a nurse. A son might carry his aged mother four hours on his back to reach a clinic'."

I cannot agree more with what Jetsun Pema said and add that conditions in the Central Tibetan Schools (CTS) are even poorer than the Tibetan Children's Villages (TCV) which Jetsun Pema was referring to. Thus, you could imagine the situation in remote settlements and CTS schools which are mainly in the Tibetan settlements in different parts of India.

There is a genuine need for support and financial assistance for better healthcare, not only in schools but especially in remote Tibetan settlements like Tezu and Miao. Many of us do not visit these areas as they are either too remote or they are in restricted areas requiring special permits from the Indian government to visit.

picture to come

BALTI TIBETAN CULTURE

In the past five months we have seen an unprecedented war in Afghanistan. This has affected not only the Afghan people but also those in the neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan. The Balti people live in a northern region of Pakistan. They are now caught in the middle of yet another uncertainty: a possible major conflict between their country and India.

As a result we regrettably have had to put our Balti Tibetan Culture programme on hold. We pray for a peaceful resolution to the situation. When conditions improve we shall reassess the situation and continue our work for the Balti people.

ART AND CULTURE

We had a very successful and fascinating exhibition of antique Tibetan furniture and a thought provoking lecture on Bon tradition in November. As always both the events were well attended and many of our supporters as well as the general public enjoyed and learnt more about various aspects of these ancient Tibetan traditions.

In December we organised a cultural event to mark the Nobel Peace Prize Day in association with the Tibetan Community in Britain. It was one of the best celebrations where Tibetans, along with Western supporters, had a great day with live Tibetan dance and music, Tibetan delicacies and talks on the Dalai Lama and Tibetan aspirations.

Later in the month the staff of the Foundation organised a party to celebrate Christmas. It became a full house as we were joined by many friends from other Tibet-related groups and the party continued with fun and festivities lasting till dawn. We all missed the company of 'our uncle' Tsering Gombo who was sadly unwell and in hospital.

With the start of new year of 2002, we all look forward to many interesting cultural programmes the Foundation plans to organise. We hope that many of you will be able to join us and benefit from the programme.

BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA

report by Sue Byrne, manager of the Buddhism in Mongolia programme.

REGAINING LOST KNOWLEDGE

Mongolian monks receive teachings from Tibetan masters once again

Since the beginning of the programme, one of Buddhism in Mongolia's main activities has been to facilitate and fund the education of Mongolian monks and nuns. Following 60 years of oppression under Soviet rule, knowledge of Buddhist philosophy in Mongolia was held by a few elderly monks whose memories were fading fast. The reality was that there were practically no qualified teachers left in the country who could pass on

their wisdom to a new, enthusiastic, generation. This was in contrast to the situation in India, where many Tibetan monasteries had been re-established, many of the most highly respected teachers were living in exile, and, against all odds Buddhism was thriving.

Consequently, it seemed logical that India would be an ideal place for young Mongolian monks and nuns to study, and an exchange programme was born.

One such monastery is Drepung in South India. Although the original Drepung Monastery in Tibet was founded in 1416, the twin monastery in exile was re-established in 1969 thanks to the tireless efforts of 60 exiled monks. These days, the monastery as a whole caters for more than 1,400 monks. Drepung Monastery is divided into colleges, one of which is

Drepung Gomang, and this college alone has over 200 monks enrolled.

Luvsanjampts is a young Mongolian monk who has been studying in Drepung Gomang for 7 years. He is by no means the first Mongolian monk to study at Drepung Gomang – the college has long had ties with Dash Choinpel Datsan in Mongolia. A Mongolian incarnate lama named Telowa Tulku Huthuktu studied in the original college in the early 20th century, and was the first Drepung Gomang monk to visit the USA. Ties between the two Buddhist educational establishments were renewed in the 1980s.

Below, Luvsanjampts writes about his routine, the differences between life in his homeland and in India, and his plans for the future.

My life in the monastery

At 5am the breakfast bell rings a wake up call for us. Usually we are up, getting ready for the morning text of day. Then I bring my breakfast from the main kitchen. Then from 6.00-8.00 memorize texts. At 8.00-9.00 I have class with Geshe Tenzin Choinpel.

At 9am another bell sounds a signal from the debate ground for two hours of debating. The meaning of the day's text is tested at 11.00. After lunch at 12.15 I have a nap. From 13.00-14.30 I have class with Geshe Lobsang Genden, and from 14.30-15.00 I have a bath. At 15.00-16.00 I have a class with Geshe Yongden Damchoi. Then I memorize before dinner at 17.00. From 18.00-23.00 there is more debate, sometimes stretching till 1.00 am.

Usually, I study English also from 12.00, but these days I don't have time as I'm preparing for our annual class debate competitions. Mondays are a weekly holiday. Otherwise we sometimes have prayers for the whole day or work for the new monastery's building.

There are 21 Mongolian monks here apart from Buriat, Tuva and Kalmyk monks [all autonomous regions of Russia]. From Gandantegchinling 8, Zuun khuree 5, Nalaih 2, Darkhan 1, and Bakula Rinpoche's school 4. Our study is going very well, though we are all in different classes. We live in 12 square rooms in a hostel with a communal toilet and bathroom, and kitchen. Sometimes it's little difficult as there are many people. I have an idea to improve the kitchen.



The weather is sometimes difficult, as we are accustomed to the cold weather in Mongolia. Here it is very hot from December to May, and there is the monsoon for a few months after that, when it's cold and wet. In this time many of us become sick. Sometimes, I really feel like leaving, but here the opportunity is better for study and my monastic vows. The situation and facilities are better than Mongolia.

I have many plans when I return Mongolia. But first I want to finish my study here. I will stay about two more years. Then I'm thinking of working for several years in my monastery (Gandantegchenling and Dash Choinpel Datsan). After that, I'd like to come back here for my Geshe degree. These are my immediate plans. In my upcoming two years, my few small ideas, we'd like to do a few things such as improving our kitchen etc. as I mentioned before.

D. Luvsanjampts

ROOM FOR ONE MORE IN YOUR HOME?

The Buddhism in Mongolia Programme is inviting a Mongolian monk, Sansarbat, to London to study for one year from January 2002. Sansarbat already speaks reasonable English, but he needs to become proficient in order to take on the role of International Affairs Assistant to Khamba Lama Chojampms, the Head of Mongolian Buddhists. We are expecting him to arrive in January, and we have organised short-term accommodation for him in London. HOWEVER, we would much prefer him to stay with a sympathetic family in London.

Can you help?

If you have a spare room in your home, live in Zone 1, 2 or 3, and might be prepared to offer it to Sansarbat, we would very much like to hear from you. We are not expecting anyone to commit to the whole year of Sansarbat's stay (although it would be wonderful if that is possible), and Tibet Foundation will cover Sansarbat's expenses and can contribute some rent. He is a fully ordained (gelong) monk and ideally we are looking for a family which, while not necessarily Buddhist, is sensitive towards Buddhism.

If you can help, please call Nick at the Tibet Foundation office on 020 7930 6001.

Thank You

REVIEWS



BSTAN-'GYUR

'Tengyur', the collection of commentaries to the teachings of the Buddha in Tibetan language

The Ethnic Publishing House
Beijing 2001
Hardback 1491pp
Price per volume: £

There are some 218 volumes of the *Tengyur* (*bstan 'gyur*, the commentaries on the Buddha's teachings by early Indian Buddhist scholars) to the *Kagyur* (*bka' 'gyur*, 108 volumes of teachings given by the Buddha himself). Before 1959 there were four sets of printing blocks for printing the *Tengyur*, in the printing houses in Lhasa, Nathang, Derge and Beijing. Some of the original printing blocks were destroyed completely during the Cultural Revolution.

Between the different editions there were some variations, some minor ones like missing characters or spelling mistakes and others like missing or additional sentences. In the 1990s a research project was initiated by Mr Tashi Turing, one of the first Tibetan communists. He took the initiative to set up a team of researchers and got funding from the Chinese government. Some 87 Tibetan scholars from various traditions and background were recruited from all over Tibetan areas in China. The project was to identify the variations, systematically record them, and publish them in one set of *Tengyur* in modern book form, *Bstan-'gyur Dpe'sdhur-Ma*.

The first 57 volumes in modern book form have now been published. Each volume of *Tengyur* contains two volumes of the traditional loose folio *Tengyur*. Thus, 114 out of 218 volumes have been published and are available for sale. The rest of them are expected to be published within the next two years.



Cry From The Highest Mountain

Tess Burrows
TravellersEye Ltd. 2002
Hardback 252pp
£14.99

This is an inspiring book, with a forward by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, written by a mother of three young boys who started climbing mountains to raise funds for charities. Introducing the book, Joanna Lumley says "It had everything to make a good story, lecture, book or film..." The book concludes with a chapter of Peace Messages which ends with "May the roof of the world be restored and may the Dalai Lama continue to flourish towards universal awakening".

Traditionally, there were hardly any books in Tibetan on non-religious subjects, let alone illustrated books for children. Even today it is very difficult for schools in Tibet to find books suitable for children learning through Tibetan language. In the last couple of years a large number of Tibetan and Chinese scholars have been involved in producing children's books in Tibetan language - largely translations from existing Western and Chinese sources.

Unlike during the Cultural Revolution, they are written in good Tibetan. They are primarily about modern subjects such as botany, biology, marine life, science, technology and communications. The format is well thought-out and creative, and in many of the books the reader follows the cartoon-style adventures of two young children as they discover the world of science. Sadly, the print run for each book was only 8,500, and now they are all out of print. The publishing house would like to reprint them in

the near future once more funds are available.

Following are examples of some of the books obtained by the Foundation from the Ethnic Publishing House in Beijing. If anyone is interested, please contact the Foundation.



legs 'drub yong ba ji ltar byed

How to Become Successful: A story of the King of Motorbikes
Ethnic Publishing House
Beijing 1999
Paperback 190pp
£4.50

This book is about the famous entrepreneur, Puntan Zong Yilang, a person who developed his business from a mere repair shop to one of the most successful motor companies, Honda. Written in simple Tibetan, the subject is interesting and inspiring to young people. The phrase on the cover page says, "Teach me how to find gold rather than give me gold".



sngo ljang chan gyi 'jig rten

Green Planet
Ethnic Publishing House
Beijing 1999
Paperback 156pp
£4.50

This book is about the environment.

Yan Chichi, the author of the original book wrote about the importance of the subject and the importance of presenting the subject in simple language with illustrations for young people. The book is translated well and has ten chapters on the origin of plants, the importance of vegetation, methods of looking after plantlife and taking new initiatives to protect the environment.



kun nus brdha 'thrin
Communication Technology
 Ethnic Publishing House
 Beijing 1999
 Paperback 156pp
 £4.50

This book covers the science of modern telecommunications. Again, the author is Yan Chichi, and the book has the same philosophy of clarity and simplicity as Green Planet. The translation is good, and the six chapters on subjects such as the history, principles and methods of electronically transmitting messages, and sending messages to other planets, all read well. It is good reading for children and a good introduction to daunting subject.



Teaching Schedule of His Holiness the Dalai Lama - 2002

Please contact the sponsors of these events directly for details and ticket availability.

APRIL

USA – BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

Saturday 13 at 10:00AM

Dedication of Chamtse Ling Temple

Venue: Tibetan Cultural Center grounds, 3655 Snoddy Road, Bloomington

5:00PM

Finding Inner Peace in Today's World - Public Talk

Venue: Assembly Hall, Indiana University

Sponsor: Tibetan Cultural Center, PO

Box 2581, Bloomington, IN 47402

Tel: (812) 334-7046

E-mail: tcc@tibetancc.com

www.tibetancc.com

USA – NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Thursday 18 to Saturday 20 (morning and afternoon sessions each day)

Art of Transformation: Practical

Instructions on Spiritual Development - Buddhist Teaching

Venue: Radio City Music Hall

Sunday 21 at 9:30AM

Three Commitments of Sakyamuni Buddha - Buddhist Initiation and Long Life Blessing for His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Venue: Radio City Music Hall

Sponsor: The Tibet House, 22 West

15th Street, New York, NY 10011

Tel: (212) 807-0563

E-mail: ganden@mindspring.com

www.tibethouse.org

3:30 PM

A Human Approach to World Peace - Public Talk

Venue: Radio City Music Hall

Sponsor: The Office of Tibet and

Tibet House U.S. Tel: (212) 807-0563

E-mail: ganden@mindspring.com

www.tibethouse.org

USA – BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Thursday 25 and Friday 26

Mind & Life X. Investigating the Mind: Exchanges between Buddhism and the Biobehavioral Sciences on How the Mind Works

Venue: Harvard University

Sponsor: Mind/Brain/Behavior

Interfaculty Initiative of Harvard

University and the Mind & Life Institute

Tickets are not yet available. Registration through www.theinvestigatingmind.org

Saturday 27 at 1:00PM

The Global Community and the Need for Universal Responsibility - Public Talk

Venue: Worcester's Centrum Centre in Worcester, MA

Sponsor: Mind & Life Institute and

The Tibet Fund Tickets are not

yet available. Tickets will be available

at www.theinvestigatingmind.org

CANADA – OTTAWA

Monday 28

Ethics for the New Millennium - Public Talk

Venue: To be determined

Sponsor: Canada Tibet Committee,

www.tibet.ca

Tickets: To be determined.

Email: coordinators@tibet.ca to be added

to the visit listserve and place "DL

Listing" in the subject heading.

MAY

AUSTRALIA – CANBERRA

Monday 20 to Wednesday 22

Atishas' Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment and conferment of Avalokiteshvara Blessing.

Contact: Tibet Information Centre

Canberra 14 Napier Close Deakin

Canberra ACT, 2600 Australia

Tel. 61-6-285-4046 Fax: 61-6-282-4301

E-mail: offtibtet@onaustralia.com.au

NEW ZEALAND – NELSON

Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29

Tentative - The topic of the teaching is yet to be finalised.

Contact: Tibet Information Centre, Canberra

14 Napier Close Deakin, Canberra ACT,

2600 Australia

Tel. 61-6-285-4046 Fax: 61-6-282-4301

E-mail: offtibtet@onaustralia.com.au

www.dalailama.org.nz

OCTOBER

AUSTRIA – GRAZ

Tuesday 15 to Monday 21

Kalachakra Teaching and Initiations

Tuesday 22

A Long Life Empowerment for the Public

Contact: Kalachakra Office c/o She Drup

Ling Graz Buddhist Center Griessgasse 2

8020 Graz, Austria

Fax: 0043-316-7172974

COMING EVENTS

Events organised by Tibet Foundation are marked **TF**
Information 020 7930 6001.

JANUARY

Fri 25 at 7PM

Sat 26 & Sun 27 at 9.30AM-5PM

Thanka Painting Course

By Angelika Schnabel

At Kagyu Samye Dzong, Tibetan Buddhist Centre, Carlisle Lane, Lambeth, London SW1 7LG

Course fee: £45 Advance booking essential.

Information: 020 7928 5447

Sat 26 and Sun 27 10AM-5.30PM

Meditation Retreat

Rigpa Buddhist Centre, 330 Caledonian Road, London N1 1BB

£25 (Cons £12) Advance booking essential

Information: 020 7700 0185

FEBRUARY

Mon 4 at 6.30 to 8.00PM

Divination

Illustrated lecture by Dr Gyurme Dorjee
At Asia House 105 Piccadilly London W1J 7NJ

Entrance: Asia House Members plus 1 Guest
FREE, non-members/concessions £7/£4

Information: 020 7499 1287

Tue 5 at 8.00PM

Tibet: Past and Present

A talk by Robert Ford

At Room 324, Ken Edwards Building,
Leicester University, Leicester

Information: 0116 283 9208.

TF Tuesday 12 at 7PM till late

Losar Party: Tibetan New Year

Water Horse Year 2029

At Tibet Foundation. By invitation only

Information: 020 7930 6001

Saturday 16 at 7PM till late

Losar Party

The Tibetan Community's New Year
Celebration

Highbury Roundhouse, 71 Ronalds Road,
London N5

For ticket and booking information,
please contact Tibetan Community in
Britain 020 8683 4319

Wednesday 27 8AM - 8.30PM

Great Prayer Day

With Geshe Tashi

At Jamyang Buddhist Centre, The Old
Court House, 43 Renfrew Road
London SE11 4NA

Entrance: Free

Information: 020 7820 8787

TF February 13, 14, 15 and 16

Tibetan New Year Holidays.

Tibet Foundation office and Tibet shop Closed

MARCH

Saturday 9 at 10.30AM

Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising.

March from Chinese Embassy, London to
Whitehall organised by Free Tibet Campaign
Information: 020 7833 9958

Saturday 9 at 2PM

Public Meeting

And events marking the anniversary of the
Uprising. Organised by the Tibetan Community,
the Tibet Society and the Office of Tibet

Information: 020 8683 4319/020 7272
1414/020 7722 5378

Saturday 16

Concert for Tibet

Benefit concert for Tibet with local musicians.

Belmont Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

Information: 01742 366246

Saturday 23 March 10am-6pm

Occupation of Tibet

One Day Public Conference (organised by
Free Tibet Campaign): debates and workshops
on current Tibetan issues with presentations
by 2 Tibetan nuns, former political prisoners
of Drapchi Prison in Lhasa.

At SOAS, Thornhaugh St, London WC1.

Entrance: £12 (concs. £7)

Information: 020 7833 9958

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 10AM to 5PM

Vajrasattva Retreat

Jamyang Meditation Centre, the Oldcourt
House, Renfrew Road, London SE11 4NB
Entrance Free

Information: 020 7820 8787

Saturday 23

China by Bicycle, a One Woman Ride

Slideshow by Catherine Hopper of FWBO

At Belmont Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

Information: 01742 366246

Fri 29 to Sun 7 April

Rigpa's Annual Easter Retreat with Sogyal Rinpoche

Information: 020 7700 0185

APRIL

Wednesday 3 to Sunday 7

Teachings and Empowerments by Akong Tulku Rinpoche

Kagyu Samye Dzong, Carlisle Lane,
London SE1 7LG

Information: 020 7928 5447

Sat 13 and Sun 14 10AM-5PM

Introduction to Oriental Medicine

With lecturer HLA Myat Saw

Kagyu Samye Dzong, Carlisle Lane,
Lambeth, London SE1 7LG

Course Fee: £45

Information: 020 7928 5447

TF Wednesday 17 at 7PM

Schools in East Tibet

A video film with a visiting teacher from Tibet
At Tibet Foundation

Entrance: £5 (Cons. £3)

Information: 020 7930 6001

Sat 27 April to Friday 5 May

Luding Khen Rinpoche

Teachings and initiations.

In Reading (27 April to 1st May), London
(2nd May) and Bournemouth (3rd to
5th Mat).

For information contact Sakya Ling
in Reading on 01189 672744, Tibet
Foundation in London on 020 7930 6001
Sakya Thupten Ling in Bournemouth on
01425 611661

MAY

TF Thur 2 May at 7PM

Manjushri: Clarity of Mind

A teaching on generating wisdom by the
most eminent Luding Khen Rinpoche

At Tibet Foundation

Entrance: £7 (Cons £5)

Information: 020 7930 6001

Sunday 26 at 3PM

TF Saga Dawa: The Buddha Day

Prayers and Meditation with Buddhists
from China, Shri Lanka, Japan and Tibet.

At Tibet Foundation

Entrance: £5 (Cons. £3)

Information: 020 7930 6001

TF Friday 31 May to Saturday 15 June

Golden Jubilee Festival

To mark the Golden Jubilee of HM Queen
Elizabeth II, Tibet Foundation will be
organising a festival of Tibetan cultural
events. Full details will be posted on our
website www.tibet-foundation.org nearer the
time, or can be obtained by sending a SAE
to Tibet Foundation in April.

TIBET FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER
IS DESIGNED FOR TIBET FOUNDATION BY PETER FRY
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foundation.org](mailto:enquiries@tibet-foundation.org)

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