



FRIENDS OF TIBETAN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA (FOTSI)

Annual Report and Newsletter for 2015-2016
Projects in Mundgod and Other Tibetan Settlements



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*Friend to the
Desperate*



*Only Donor to
DG School*



*True Partner
for Health*



*Sponsor for
Students*



*In India for
Refugees*



Friends of Tibetan Settlements in India (FOTSI)
315 Skylark Way Boulder, CO 80303 303-494-4130
chela@colorado.edu <http://www.kunasz.com/TSI/TSI.html>

Financial Report for 2015 (ref. IRS Filing, Anton, Collins, Mitchell LLP)

For more, go to <https://www.sos.state.co.us/ccsa/MainMenu.do>, click on “Search Charitable Database,” and type FOTSI. **The 2016 Report will be printed in the 2016-2017 FOTSI newsletter.**

Income

Donations	\$53,179
Interest/Investment Income or Loss from donated stock	- \$ 14
Total Income	\$53,165

Expenses

Program service (see details below)	\$57,165
Program service expenses (mail/wire fees, supplies, copies, travel)	\$ 2,417
Fundraising (newsletter, mail, copies, printing, supplies)	\$ 360
Administrative (IRS report, state registration, mail, supplies, printing)	\$ 872
Total Expenses	\$60,814

Program Service Details 2015:

Education (part of Program Service) \$22,498

College + Nursing Scholarships, books, boarding school fees (TCV), Dre-Gomang School (including washrooms, toilets, and classroom desks), other student aid

Health/Hygiene/Emergencies (part of Program Service) \$13,313

Representative’s Emergency Fund, Monks’ and Nuns’ Medical Funds, medical aid to laypeople by monks’ and nuns’ projects, direct aid, Tibetan student hostel food supplementation

Sponsorships/Group Support (part of Program Service) \$21,354

34 sponsorships through Rep. Office; 14 nuns and 30 monks sponsored and 5 aided; housing aid for nuns; other one-time and group aid for laypeople helped by monks/nuns

Our program service expenses were \$2,072 for India travel, India mail (\$241), checkbooks (\$24), supplies (\$78), and copies (\$2). At the end of 2015 we carried forward \$46,437. Much of this was used and allocated early in 2016. From early work as CFT/TSI, and later as FOTSI through 2006, our program and direct service expenses were more than \$353,618. Since then, adding in only program service, we have sent more than **\$809,828** to India. As usual, **no salaries have been paid to anyone in FOTSI. We warmly thank all who donated for FOTSI’s operating expenses! We understand health and other needs in the USA remain stressful, so, to all who remember those in Tibet and those struggling in camps in India, thanks very much from our “heartbone” as the Tibetans would say!**

Dear Friends of Tibetan Settlements in India,

We work in resettlement areas (“camps”) in India that for decades have received **Tibetan escapees from Tibet with nowhere else to go**. These areas, begun in the 1960s, now number 38, and support 150,000 residents. The larger camps also, often temporarily, serve as homes for distressed people from culturally related groups under **extreme duress, such as Mongolians and needy ethnic Tibetans** from Bhutan, Nepal, and the Arunachal Pradesh north Indian state. We specialize in aiding the needy in the populous southern camps, especially the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement. We began support in 1984 as individuals, continued as part of Colorado Friends of Tibet, and, since 2001, work as an independent non-profit, tax-exempt charity. **This year we learned that, in these camps, we are the ONLY**



organization in the world helping the suddenly desperate in need of emergency aid. We sponsor **more people** through the Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama than all other groups combined. We are the **only outside group** providing significant aid to the Drepung Gomang School. Details follow on pages 7 to 10. We receive many letters saying, **“I will never forget your kindness.”** **Sometimes a look or a touch says even more.**



In 2015 we sponsored 78 people -- laypeople, monks, and nuns -- and aided many others, helping with medical/dental needs, scholarships, school fees, and special projects. That year we put **\$57,165 into our relief programs in India**, spent \$2,417 on India program expenses (mail/wire fees, travel to/in India, supplies, copies), and used \$1,232 for fundraising and administrative needs (state registration, IRS reports, mail, printing, and supplies). The Tibetans were again most grateful.

It was wonderful to be in a small group with His Holiness the Dalai Lama (photo top of page) and to attend many events in the Mundgod settlement which he led, participated in, and clearly enjoyed. Among



Emory Tibet Logo



Nuns With Their Geshe-ma Hats

the many activities in which he was active were the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the founding of Drepung Monastery (where I stayed), the history-making ceremony celebrating the first awarding of “doctor of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy (Geshe-ma)” degrees to women, the First International Emory (University)-Tibet Symposium of Scholars and Scientists, “Bridging Buddhism & Science,” and the 50th Anniversary of the Central School for Tibetans (CST) Mundgod. **May we all stay inspired by him and by Tibetans in India as we pursue our caring efforts.**

The closure of Tibet to all but Beijing-selected reporters hides what is happening in Tibet. Nonetheless, some news trickles out via the Internet, CNN, “Tibetan Bulletin,” the New York Times, and private communications. **Below I share a little about why FOTSI feels strongly about aiding Tibetans and a school helping 200 Mongolians in the Mundgod camp.**





Larung Gar Destruction

The Chinese government is continuing its massive demolition of dwellings in the Larung Valley, “Larung Gar,” in Tibet’s Garze province. Thousands of Tibetans and Han Chinese, and even some Westerners, once studied at Serthar county’s Larung Gar Buddhist Academy founded in 1980 as one of the world’s largest centers for the study of Tibetan Buddhism. Estimates of the maximum population at Larung Gar are 20,000 or even 40,000 people. The government has been increasing its

eviction and demolition efforts there, with the aim of reducing the early 2016 population from around 10,000 to 5,000. Adding insult to injury, Larung Gar evictees are being forced to return to family homes and attend six months of “political education” classes. As winter came on, the demolition ceased, but is now expected to resume. Expelled people with nowhere to go are being held in camps in desolate areas. See <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/resume-01232017154922.html/>.

The Beijing government continues to be extremely oppressive, especially to Tibetans and Uyghurs. As we wrote in last year’s newsletter, China passed its first “counter-terror law” in December of 2015 as another way to facilitate removal of human rights. This new law is increasing extrajudicial killings, torture, imprisonment, and crackdowns on even mild expressions of religious identity and culture in



Tashi Wangchuk

Tibet, and Xinjiang. People can be punished for environmental efforts like planting trees and for fighting for Tibetan language in schools. A current example is shopkeeper **Tashi Wangchuk**, who peacefully asked that Tibetan language instruction be more available to Tibetans as allowed in the Chinese Constitution, but was indicted on charges of “separatism.” He has been imprisoned since January 2016 with no trial. See the excellent, informative link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HGZXcBq87c>.



Jigme Guri

A more “militant” Tibetan, the monk **Jigme Guri**, was suspected of organizing a protest about lack of religious freedom. Although he was not at the protest, he was imprisoned and tortured. He did have the gaul to make a video in which he described his treatment and that of others. There is a deep concern by relatives who had visited him, that after his long imprisonment and “hospitalization,” he was maltreated or even deliberately sickened. He had warned them that he had heard plans about his coming “hospitalization.” He seems a broken man these days. See <http://tchrd.org/high-profile-tibetan-political-prisoner-hospitalized-six-months-before-release/>. One of the better documentaries about Tibet is a September 2016 video by CNN which concludes Chinese-ruled Tibet is a “tinderbox” with no space for dissent; see <http://www.cnn.com/2016/12/29/asia/china-tibet/>.

Last year I wrote of many other issues, such as abuse of the environment and climate change in Tibet. An influx of Han Chinese into Tibet, with a bias towards them in all aspects of life, continues. And now there are also massive problems in **Mongolia**, a land with huge deserts and 3 million people. From 1920 until 1990 it was under a Soviet style one-party rule. More than 1 million of its people live in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, with the rest living as nomadic herders. These days it has great difficulties due to weather, and also economic and political realities. Normally, a weather condition called “dzud” comes every 12 years, except, for the first time, it has come twice. Last year’s dzud brought a summer drought followed by a prolonged winter of heavy snow and temperatures of -40F

to -59F, and it killed more than 1 million livestock, the only source of food, transport, and outside income for about 1.5 million people. The shocker is that there has now been a second dzud; already, as of 2/17/17, 40,000 livestock have died, a number expected to balloon during this second killer winter and into the spring when weaker animals die. This forces families who have lost their livestock into the slums of Ulaanbaatar. The Red Cross has appealed for aid. The IMF has agreed to send funds to try to keep the country out of bankruptcy. The country has a lot of buried natural resources, but China's slowing growth has damped its immediate interest. The Soviets used to partner with Mongolia but Russia's current involvement is down. A Mongolian Buddhist lama, who had concerns even during the first dzud, gathered up around 200 boys, several from each of many groups of nomads and small villages, and got permission to bring them to the Drepung Gomang Monastery to be housed there and attend the Drepung Gomang School. These children speak only Mongolian. They more than doubled the size of the school. As FOTSI is the only outside donor for the school, we had to suddenly increase our help, a tiny effort in brutal times. See pgs. 9-10 for more. We also helped a newly arrived child who had a painful fall get to a clinic.



Dead Mongolian Livestock

Besides the huge drop in Tibetans being able to escape and reach India and the increased arrival of Mongolians and ethnic Tibetans from northern areas in and around India, there were other changes in the Mundgod Settlement. The most extreme was something close to a run on the local Mundgod banks caused by India's President Modi's sudden demonetization project. This required everyone in India to exchange 500 and 1000 Rupee notes for new bills within a few months! This overwhelmed small village banks so that they closed for days at a time with signs saying "No Money." Then they had to absurdly limit the funds one could take out of accounts. This put a huge strain on everyone, especially monasteries and schools. Funds I'd sent ahead could not be accessed. People were beaten in bank lines by police. Access to the internet and its use were worse this year. While in Mundgod, I learned that the Tibetan Government in Exile will replace the Indian government in running all non-monastic schools in Mundgod. This has positive aspects, but will decrease school funds. The houses in Mundgod, many now decades and monsoons old, are failing at a disturbing rate (pg. 8).



Syndicate Bank, Mundgod

My own "adventures" continued, beginning the day I left Boulder with a sudden potential flooding of my basement an hour before I was to be driven to the airport. With minutes to spare, this was quenched. Later in India, an army of tiny biting ants in a rapidly donned blouse made their presence known, but not nearly to the extent as did a large bull, which chased me, knocked me down, and could have trampled me. Frightened, surprised, and dusty, I survived with only a sore back. Later I heard that several local women had been killed or seriously injured in this way this year. **The many people we help, FOTSI's donors, and FOTSI's Board of Directors help me persevere when I encounter such obstacles, and remind me how lucky some of us are in our usual lives. I wish to send you all, and especially new Board Secretary, Fox Magdovitz, a huge THANK YOU!**

With heartfelt gratitude,
Chela Kunasz, President, FOTSI



Chela



Ven. Tenzin Norzom

True Colleagues -- People at the Heart of FOTSI's Work

Without the wise advice and hard work of **many** Tibetans our projects would never arise and flourish the way they do. Those most essential in 2015-16 are shown and described here.



Rep. Karma Dhondup



Migmar Tsering

Ven. Tenzin Norzom - important Tibetan nun who facilitates FOTSI's aid to nuns and some lay people in Mundgod
Karma Dhondup - new Representative of HH the Dalai Lama in Mundgod, top official; heads Office of Rep (ORM)
Migmar Tsering - Secretary of Drepung Gomang Monastery; works expertly, tirelessly, and kindly with all
Geshe Lobsang Sangyas - runs our general monks' health fund; helps Chela a lot when she is in India, and works at Drepung Gomang Monastery



Geshe Lobsang Sangyas



Geshe Lobsang Ngawang

Geshe Lobsang Ngawang - new head of Dre-Gomang Buddhist Cultural Assn. (DGBCA) administration; helped Chela a lot during 2016 visit and travel
Kunga Lhundrup - new Secretary of DGBCA; helps Chela in India & during travel to/from Mundgod in India
Dickyi Chodon - FOTSI's social worker for the ORM; is a huge help, rescued Chela when she was ill at an event



Kunga Lhundrup



Dickyi Chodon

Lhakpa Choden - Rector, CST Hostel, who manages food aid to students with our Tibetan Education & Welfare donation
Dr. Kyizom - doctor at Tibetan Medical Clinic; helps in many ways; was very helpful to Chela in 2016
Tamdin Dolma - Home for the Elderly (OPH) head, Mundgod



Lhakpa Choden



Dr. Kyizom

IMPORTANT COLLEAGUES ALONG THE BOTTOM ROW
Geshe Jampa Gyatso & Ven. Lobsang Tashi #2- Gungru Khangtsen Health leader and translator respectively. This translator also helped with a health talk and bulletin.
Office of the Representative, Mundgod, staff: new accountant, **Passang Dhondup** (2016), cashier **Tsewang Thinley**
Choney Dolma, partnering very well with Tamdin at the OPH



Tamdin Dolma



Geshe Jampa Gyatso & Ven. Lobsang Tashi #2

Passang Dhondup & Tsewang Thinley

Choney Dolma with Chela

Friend to the Desperate -- Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama, Mundgod (ORM) Emergency Fund

In 2015 through 2016 we sponsored elderly people, patients, and caregivers in many ways. **In 2015 we sent \$2,405 to our Emergency Fund and \$150 in general funds to the Home for the Elderly (OPH). In 2016 we sent \$2,535 to our Emergency Fund and \$250 to the OPH. In addition, about \$1,515 from some older donations by FOTSI have been merged with our Emergency Fund.** For years this fund was used to help the truly destitute people in the Mundgod Settlement as well as to provide emergency aid for our sponsorees. There was a short period when we restricted our emergency aid to sponsored people's families as they were encountering costly problems, including multiple drug resistant TB, dangerous mental illness, and other medical issues affecting the wider community. In this reporting period we have resumed aid to the wider group of desperate people in the community. **The ORM told us that FOTSI is currently the only organization providing funds for these cases. We need your help to meet this critical need.**



N. Tsering & His Wife



Dickyi

We have several times provided significant aid to **Jinpa**, a disabled man missing a leg who lives alone and is a TB patient. We helped multiple drug resistant (MDR) TB patient, **Karma Lodoe**, and bedridden patient **Samdup**. **Karma Dechen, Sonam Dolma, Y. Dolker, and Yangchen** were desperate for basic needs like food and FOTSI helped. We also aided **Tsering Wangchuk**, who lives alone and has serious mental illness but does not harm others. Much of the time he wanders and sleeps in the cremation grounds. We helped **N. Tsering and his wife**, whose daughter has a very serious illness, and **Dolma and her ill mother, Dickyi**. Our funds aided at least 10 others with emergency medical bills. In particular, we helped **Lobsang Choephel**, one of the few who managed to escape from Tibet in 2015, who needed medical help in Mundgod.



Tsering Wangchuk

Jinpa

Sometimes we are asked to take on sponsorships or projects that involve costs or a long-term commitment that is beyond FOTSI's power to sustain. Our board discusses our direction and projects every year. It can be hard to say, "No," so, when we must, we talk with our Tibetan colleagues and try to make creative suggestions for solutions whereby we might participate but not over-commit ourselves. One example was a request that we sponsor an HIV infected family. We suggested that the ORM ascertain how many such families there are, and ask any organization that does one-time help, such as donating an ambulance or school bus, to make a small additional donation to a "Fund for HIV (or Destitute) Families," and that letters also be sent to all of Mundgod's local institutions (monastic, medical, etc.) asking for help. We will do our best, but more help is needed for the long term.

Friend to the Desperate -- Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama, Mundgod (ORM) Emergency Fund (cont.)



*Chime Sangmo At
Delek Hospital*

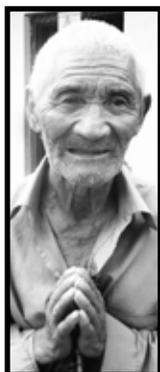
Last year this newsletter included details about the struggle of **Chime Sangmo**, now 39, the older sister of our student **Tenzin Lhakey**, who completed her post-basic nursing degree and internship at St. John's Hospital in Bangalore in 2016. Chime Sangmo was unfortunately suffering from XDR (extensively drug resistant) TB. There has been an urgent effort by medical professionals in many countries to try to find a drug or several of them that can combat this dangerous disease. When we wrote previously, doctors and nurses, both Indians and visitors from other countries, still had not come up with a drug that could win against Chime Sangmo's XDR TB. But, finally, new foreign drugs were tried, and she began to recover! The Delek Hospital in Dharamsala where she was being treated wrote that her "TB

treatment had been partly supported by the Delek TB Fund and Health Department of the Central Tibetan Administration, but that she is bearing most of the cost of laboratory work up." There were also other family costs. Finally, during my visit and after 2 days working with the ORM, **they were able to write a substantial check from our Emergency Fund to help cover the cost of Chime Sangmo's ongoing treatment and needs.**



*C. Sangmo's Son Tenzin Lhakey's Dad Receiving
Chime Sangmo's Check*

We were very happy when we heard she was truly recovering and staying XDR TB free. What an achievement for the researchers and medical workers! She was still in the hospital, taking the medicine, trying to recover from her depleted state. Her parents, sister Tenzin Lhakey, her son, as well as FOTSI and the staff at Delek Hospital were all rejoicing, as were 2 other patients who are now benefitting from the treatment that worked for Chime Sangmo. Tenzin Lhakey's schedule at the hospital in Bangalore was changed at the last minute, so I was unable to meet with her in India, but we spoke on the telephone, and she said she really appreciated our help and also the chance to talk to someone about all she and her family went through in trying to pay even the uncovered part of her sister's bills and worrying that Chime Sangmo would die.



Sonam



Kunsang

We also helped other sponsored families, such as **Kalsang Dorjee's mother, Tenzin Dolma**, who has suffered from a serious problem with her throat. Kalsang is spending all his time taking care of his grandmother who needs 24/7 care. We also helped **Kunsang, Sonam, and**



P. Sangmo & T. Dolma

daughter Karma Dolma, who had a tough year. Fortunately, Sonam, who last year seemed so ill he might die, rallied. I enjoyed seeing him energetically chatting with social worker, Dickyi Chodon. Dickyi and I visited **Phuntsok Sangmo**, who talked about her mother, **Tsultrim Sangmo**, who died in August 2016. Phuntsok is worried about her roof, as is sponsored **Tenzin Lhakey**. If possible, Dickyi will try to help them with their leaky roofs from our Emergency Fund.

Only Donor for DG School -- Student Population Soars -- More Desks, Bathrooms, and Teachers Badly Needed

The Drepung Gomang (DG) School teaches English, Tibetan, math, science, social studies, and Buddhist courses to young monks arriving from poor, ethnically Tibetan areas and the few who can still escape Tibet. It is also a summer school for all children of the Mundgod Settlement who want to study Tibetan language/culture, so endangered now. This school has also been the site of periodic science exhibitions for the local Tibetans and Indian school children.

Five years ago, the population of the DG School was around **120 students**. Since then, as the number of children managing to escape from Tibet has dwindled to almost zero, the number of boys from poor ethnically Tibetan families in areas in or near northern India, such as Nepal, Ladakh, Bhutan, and the Arunachal Pradesh state of India (which includes the former kingdom of Mon) has increased so that the number of Tibetan-speaking children at the school rose to about 200. But, **in the last two years**, the number of children from Mongolia and only speaking Mongolian, has risen from essentially zero to 200, so that the **school population is now around 400!** This influx is due in large part to a kindly Mongolian lama, seeing poverty growing in his country (due to climate change, political problems, etc.), got permission from the Drepung Monastery and the Indian Government to find poor



Chela at DG School



Mongolian Students, Some Desks, a Bit of Chaos

Mongolian boys with little chance for education or much of a life, and bring them in several waves to the Drepung Monastery and the DG School. This made some sense because a hundred years ago, Lhasa's Drepung Monastery was 50% Mongolian, and it was a seat of education for Mongolians, now nonexistent due to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The chaos from hundreds of new students arriving at the school not knowing the language of

the area is daunting. Some of the lovely blackboards around the school used to have inspiring quotes in English and Tibetan. Now they are all scribbled over. This is a metaphor for the state of the school, and we are all trying to repair the situation soon.

Since this school serves both the monastic and lay community, as well as Indian and other visitors, its facilities are used by hundreds of people. The old bathrooms suffered from pipes that were hopelessly corroded and clogged and were buried in concrete slabs (not brilliant!).

It was decided to build a new and larger washroom building that would not have buried pipes, but would have, as well as both Western and Indian toilets in private stalls, good basins and handwashing areas served by many faucets, with showers as well. A water tank to hold a good supply of water would also be included, which could maintain a water supply even when the electricity is out.



New Indian Toilet



Old Dead Toilet



New Western Toilet

Only Donor for DG School -- No. of Students Balloons More Desks, Bathrooms, and now Teachers Badly Needed (cont.)



One of Several Large Handwashing Sites



Part of Large Shower/Washing Area



New Washroom, Bathroom, Shower Facility

Now a new washroom/bathroom has been completed with FOTSI's funds and help from the Drepung Monastery itself. FOTSI contributed **\$6,815** to this project from 2014-2016, and it was good to see it in operation at the end of 2016. There was also an urgent need for desks and tables, which were bought in two waves as first 83 Mongolians arrived, and then about 120 more. FOTSI provided a total of **\$2,765** for this, and the general monastery also helped.



Sharing a New Desk



Shy Mongolian



Toothbrushes!



Teacher in Science Class



Group "Hello" & "Thank You"

Now the current great need is for more teachers. Drepung Gomang School needs more Mongolians who speak Tibetan, a new English teacher or two, and another science/math teacher. Increased pay for these teachers is also a must! **Please contribute towards this project soon.** The monastery has authorized a small school supply/snacks shop at the school which should also help. Our general help to the school has been \$9,436 from 2014 to the present; some of this was used for daily school needs and some for the above projects. Compare this to your local school's expenses! Chela **again gave out toothbrushes from Boulder dentist Jay Swartzwelter**, enjoyed giving out prizes at year end, and teaching in some of the classes (English and Science).



Teacher



Student



Student



Student



Student



Student



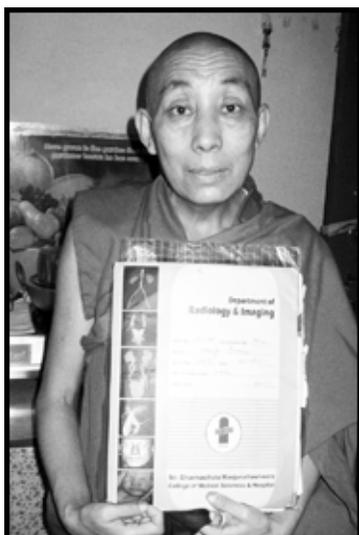
Summer Student

True Partner for Health -- Jangchub Choeling Nunnery

In 2015 we sent this group of about 200 nuns \$5,635 for their medical/dental needs and \$300 for their medical aid to the lay community. This is larger than usual because, due to issues from the nuns' side, we had to send funds intended for the second half of 2014 in early 2015, along with our complete 2015 donation. In 2016 we sent the nuns \$3,830 for their medical/dental needs and \$200 for their medical aid to the community. Our donations were used for surgeries, doctor's appointments, dentistry, eye glasses, and treatment of many medical issues, including heart disease, skin problems, female-specific problems, and hepatitis B. The funds were also used for lab tests and scans. An average of 54% of our donations in 2015-16 went to the General Nuns' Medical Fund under the Jangchub Choeling Education and Welfare Society, run by the nunnery and supported by others, and the rest of our funds were separately dispensed and managed by Ven. Tenzin Norzom, who, importantly, makes sure that needs, such as dentistry, scans and certain tests, not otherwise covered, are met. Large medical charges as for life-threatening situations, can be augmented with our aid. Below are some we aided in 2015-16. Many others were helped as well.



*Ven. Yama Choega with Eye Surgeon
Surgery Successful!*



*Ven. Lobsang Dickyi with Scan--
Cancer of her Glottis*



*Ven. Namgyal Lhamo
Care & Meds Post
Heart Surgery*



*Ven. Thubten Choedron
(from New York) Helped
with Health Advice Plan*

Besides being honored to work with Ven. Tenzin Norzom and the Administrators of the Jangchub Choeling Nunnery (JCN), I have been lucky to become acquainted with Ven. **Thubten Chodron**, from New York, who is studying and debating at the JCN. (She is not the famous American Buddhist nun Ven. Thubten Chodron of Sravasti Abbey in Washington State.) After she suggested the nuns could benefit from health advice by me, I wrote up a talk. However, with all the activities surrounding the new Geshe-ma degree and many visitors including HH the Dalai Lama coming and going, time for a talk was impossible to find. So, I gave my notes to Ven. Thubten Chodron and the nuns' capable science teacher, **Tashi Lhamo**, who will share my and their own health advice. This may be the best idea anyway! And, later I gave my health talk to the monks of Gungru Khangtsen (see next page). To the right is a **photo of some of the nun's medical bills** I reviewed at the Nunnery.



True Partner for Health-- Monks

We see that the problems in Tibet, Mongolia and some Himalayan areas pose enormous challenges and invite hopelessness. We know our efforts in Tibetan resettlement areas only indirectly address these huge issues. Yet, in helping people who suffer but don't give up, we can make a difference in helping them adapt and keep their great Tibetan-Mongolian-Himalayan culture alive. As we watch HH the Dalai Lama work with scientists, educators, and counselors across the planet to bring compassion as well as mindfulness as secular virtues into our world's educational systems, mental health counseling, as well as everyday life, as I saw him do at the Mundgod Emory-Tibet Science/Buddhism Symposium, there are rewards for the rest of us. Tibetan monks and nuns have borne the brunt of punishment in the "Land of Snows." We wish to help them survive refugee life in India, which has a different climate and its own problems, for example, having the most cases of extensively antibiotic resistant TB in the world. Thus, **in 2015 and 2016 we sent a total of \$2,574 and \$4,175, respectively, to aid monks in paying for medical needs. This year all were from Drepung Gomang Monastery.**

One of the many monks we aided in 2015-16 is **Ngari Khangtsen Tenzin Dorjee**, 10, who had an ear surgery for his right ear that improved his hearing in that ear from 25% to 90%.



Ven. Tenzin Dorjee Ear Surgery and in December 2016

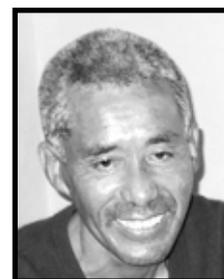


Ven. Samten Norbu Shows Medical Report, Thanks FOTSI and Chela

Last year we wrote of our plans to help **Dati Khangtsen's Ven. Samten Norbu** who is from a part of Arunachal Pradesh, India, that was once part of Tibet, deal with the facts that his epilepsy medicine was not working well and that his previous brain scan had left open questions. So, in 2016 he revisited doctors and the scan center and showed Chela his reports in December. His medication was changed, adding a new component. Doctors agreed that his new brain scan did not indicate more severe issues and think he will thrive.



There was a lot of good news for monks we aided, but unfortunately, the special Ngari Khangtsen teacher, **Geshe Tsewang Kalsang**, whom we helped in 2015 and 2016, died of cancer. His last days were not easy. We hope our aid did at least a little to ease his brave struggle. He was an inspiring guide to many and is sorely missed.



Geshe T. Kalsang

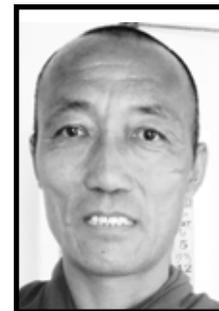
We have continued to help monks through the Gungru Khangtsen Health Fund. A number of them have Hepatitis B. One in particular, **Ven. Tenpa Tsering**, was found to have a distressing increase in that virus and is now taking new medicine and getting regular checkups. The rest seem to be doing better. Those include **Vens. Jigme Dorjee, Ngawang Dhamchoe, and Lobsang Tashi, our extremely helpful translator** (more of him on the next page).



Ven. Tenpa Tsering, Jigme Dorjee, N. Dhamchoe

True Partner for Health-- Monks (cont.)

Although there were fewer cases of TB among the monks, TB and other diseases are more common when there is another illness weakening the immune system. One example of that is **Ven. Palden Gonpo**, still recovering from terrible diabetes with many sores. He spent 15 days in a hospital in Chandigarh where he was treated for diabetes, TB, and digestive problems. The good news is that now he shows no sign of the TB bacteria and only has only one diabetic sore. He has to eat a special diet, not just the food provided by the monastery.



Ven. Palden Gonpo

Ven. Ngawang Wusung, who caught Denge fever and also has diabetes, is another example of someone with multiple illnesses, as is **Ven. Tenzin Tsongsas**, who had kidney stones in 2016, and in the last few years had an appendix surgery followed by TB. Tenzin is now recovered from all three and very much appreciating our health fund.



Ven. N. Wusung



Ven. T. Tsongsas

Geshe Jampa Gyatso, who serves on the Gungru Khangtsen Health Committee that works with FOTSI, presented me with a confusing set of medical reports that at first seemed to indicate possible cancer of the throat or glottis. He brought me reports from his recent medical appointments, coming to see me with several every few days. He had both throat and stomach pain. I finally read in one report's English that he had a bad abscess on his thyroid that had been treated twice with powerful antibiotics after it was concluded he did not have cancer. The stomach pain was his response to two rounds of antibiotics, one of which was very strong and appeared to have wiped out much of his beneficial bacteria. As a health committee worker, he brought news and photos of another monk, **Ven. Yonten Nyima**, who was having seizures and got help from FOTSI's donated funds.



Geshe J. Gyatso



Ven. Yonten Nyima



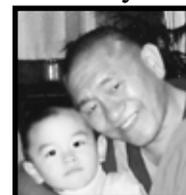
Chela with Some of the Monks at Talk

I led a **health discussion with monks of Gungru Khangtsen**. **Ven. Lobsang Tashi**, who translates for them during medical exams and treatment, did a great job translating for this large group. I spoke about viruses, bacteria, dangers of antibiotic overuse, new research on beneficial bacteria, common drugs that can be harmful (like Omeprazole and Nexium), recent information on XDR (extensive drug resistant) TB, etc. Later, **Ven. Lobsang Tashi** worked with **nurse Tenzin Norzin**, a FOTSI sponsored student up through 2016, to prepare a health bulletin in Tibetan about important issues and ways to protect health during upcoming travel to events with HH the Dalai Lama. During the talk and afterwards, everyone



Ven. L. Tashi & T. Norzin

told me how helpful the relatively new basic hospitals and medical clinics run by Drepung Loseling and Gaden Jangtse Monasteries are. It was a delightful piece of luck that I could meet the **Gaden Jangste monk, Dr. Lobsang Tenzin**, who is an administrator at the Gaden Jangste Hospital and whom one of our FOTSI donors had asked me to find, knowing only a bit about him and that he might be somewhere in Mundgod!



Dr. L. Tenzin

Sponsor for Students -- Scholarships

FOTSI College and Nursing School Scholars 2015-2017

Name	Major	College
Ms. Tenzin Khando	B. Commerce, completed 2016	Teresian College, Mysore University
Mr. Tenzin Phuntsok	MS Degree, Economics, finished 2016	St. Philomenas College, Mysore
Ms. Tenzin Dolma	MCA Comp. Sci. (slowed by illness)	University of Madras, Chennai
Mr. Sonam Dorjee	B.S. Physics (almost finished)	Madras Christian College, Chennai
Ven. L. Norbu Samphel	B.A. Buddhism, Languages	Central Univ. of Tibetan Studies, Delhi
Ms. Tenzin Noryang	Basic Nursing, 1st year 2016	KLES Hospital, Belgaum
Ms. Tenzin Tseyang	Nursing 1st year, starting 2017	St. John's Nursing School, Bangalore
Mr. Tenzin Palbar	B. Commerce, 1st year, starting 2017	College not yet definite
Ms. TC	We've offered aid for English studies or beautician training if needed	
Ms. Tenzin Norzin	Nursing, post-basic, & Internship finished 2016	KLES Hosp., Belgaum
Ms. Tenzin Lhakey	Nursing internship, finished	St. John's Nursing School, Bangalore
Ms. Pema Lhamo	Physiotherapy doctorate, finished	Amar Jyoti Inst. Physiotherapy, Delhi

Family deaths and illnesses complicate life for any student, but especially for poor, refugee students such as Tenzin Dolma and Sonam Dorjee. Many supported students have struggled in various ways during their studies. Tenzin Norzin, Tenzin Lhakey, and Tenzin Tashi, former students, have jobs.



Tenzin Khando



Tenzin Phuntsok



Tenzin Dolma



Sonam Dorjee



L. Norbu Samphel



Tenzin Noryang



Tenzin Tseyang



Tenzin Palbar



Tenzin Choekyi



Tenzin Norzin



Tenzin Lhakey



Pema Lhamo

Sponsor for Students -- Scholarships (cont.)

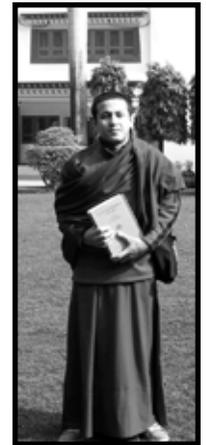
In 2015 we sent \$14,685 for student scholarships at nursing schools and colleges. Of this \$9,985 went through the Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama in Mundgod (ORM), \$3,000 went to students through the Drepung Gomang Buddhist Cultural Assn., and \$1,700 went directly to a student we've supported through the ORM. We continued our aid in 2015 and 2016.

Tenzin Noryang, who began a basic nursing course at **KLES Nursing School** and Hospital in 2016, will now begin getting our aid. She is 19 years old and has a good high school record and is doing well. Despite her high grades, a mistake in her records that was not her fault resulted in her not getting a scholarship. Because Chela has known the family a long time and thanks to help from a donor for those wishing a medical career, FOTSI decided we could contribute towards her studies. To begin her training in 2016, her family took out a significant loan.



Tenzin Noryang

Ven. Lobsang (Norbu) Samphel, a young monk continuing his studies at the **Central University for Tibetan Studies (CUTS)** in Delhi is doing very well. We now have a sponsor for him and several donors who especially wish to help with his scholarship. His goal is to be a translator from Tibetan to English, especially for Buddhist monks and teachers. We learned from a recent email that he is studying Sanskrit, English language and poetry, Tibetan language and poetry, Buddhist philosophy (Middle Way philosophy, Logic, and Lam Rim), political science, and various modern topics. After he completes the Acharya degree at CUTS, he'll return to Drepung Gomang Monastery to complete his Geshe degree.



L. Norbu Samphel



Tenzin Tseyang

Tenzin Tseyang, from Camp #9 in the Mundgod Settlement, was in the midst of important final exams when I met and spoke with her at the Central School for Tibetans (CST) Hostel in December. She lives at the hostel because her home environment is not adequate for the serious study she needs to qualify for nursing school. She wants to follow in the shoes of other young women from Mundgod, such as Tenzin Lhakey, who have studied at **St. John's Nursing College** in Bangalore and are now happily working at hospitals helping many. Her grades are good; if all goes as dreamed and planned, she will enter the nursing college in August with aid from FOTSI.



Tenzin Palbar Now

Tenzin Palbar also stays at the CST Hostel. He had wanted to enter a program for Charter Accountants (a high-end goal), but the cost of that is too high, so he will begin a **Bachelor of Commerce** program (B. Comm) and try to do well on that first. If successful at that, he'll see what he can do from there to work his way up to an interesting business job. He has, since he was tiny, always seemed intent, but with a sense of humor. He is excited about his plans. We will learn which college he will attend in 2017 after the ORM counselor helps him finalize his options and choice.



Tenzin Palbar 2002

Sponsor for Students -- Scholarships (cont.)

This year we discovered that one of FOTSI's sponsored elders has been supporting his grandchild, **TC, 17, since her mother died of TB several years ago.** At that time, TC was not well herself and it was unclear if she had TB. TC, devastated by the loss of her mother and weakened by her own health issues, dropped out of high school after she had completed 10th grade. **Her health improved, but she lost the chance to re-enter high school and has been living like a hermit in her grandparents house for several years, losing hope and enthusiasm for life.**

FOTSI's social worker, Dickyi Chodon, and I visited TC at home as we had not previously been aware of her plight. At first she did not want to talk with us, and I think I, a big Western lady with bad Tibetan, seemed at least a bit intimidating. After Dickyi began softly speaking to TC, offering possibilities such as a career as a seamstress or a beautician, TC began to show increasing interest. Later, she and her grandmother came to see me and she seemed really happy to think of possibilities. We hope she will talk with a counselor and begin an English review class, beauty school, or perhaps something else. Some of these classes are offered at little or no cost through the Office of the Representative. **If there is a cost, FOTSI will help. Finding TC, such a lovely young woman, who seemed so hesitant about any future, and seeing her smile and think of possibilities with the encouragement of Dickyi and her grandmother, was a high point of my visit to Mundgod.**



Tenzin Phuntsok



Tenzin Khando

Student **Tenzin Phuntsok** has completed a **Master's degree in Economics "With Distinction"**! We are also celebrating **Tenzin Khando**, who has completed her B. Comm. degree. Both are seeking jobs with the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala. Tenzin Khando thinks she'll need to pass some courses and exams there to get certificates in Microsoft Word and Excel to have a chance at a job, and T. Phuntsok thinks this could apply to him. FOTSI will cover the cost of these courses and exams if needed. **Tenzin**

Dolma is almost finished with her Master of Computer Applications degree, having completed her thesis demonstrating innovative talent in using PHP, a hypertext (XHTML and HTML) preprocessor to design an outstanding website. She only needs to pass final exams on the SQL language and Oracle's database certificate material. These together cost around \$300. She was halted in completing these earlier when there was a death in her family, her mother had housing issues, and she had some health problems. Now she is back on track, and we have offered her our help for this final push.



Tenzin Dolma

Sponsor for Students -- Scholarships (cont.)

Another sponsored student is **Sonam Dorjee**, who is still pursuing a degree in physics at Madras Christian College. As we wrote last year, his father died and he had to return to Mundgod to help his mother. As a result, he got incompletes and lost scholarship funds from the Tibetan Government in Exile. He has had to stay in Bangalore (expensive rent) to finish a required project and take exams (at various times). He has now completed his student project and all his exams, including a difficult oral exam on digital circuits. He won't know until April if he passed and he won't get his graduation certificate until then. He has worked in various ways as he waits, and a Tibetan friend from his college who got asylum in Canada recently sent him 4000 Indian rupees (about \$70), while his brother, an Indian Army soldier, also sent him some help. We have also helped while he was taking his exams. Just when it seemed he could finish by year end, the college put off his oral exam for a month due to a tsunami in Dec. 2016! That allowed him to come see me just before I went back to the US. I tried to help prepare him for his exam since he is shy, and oral exams are NOT his favorite! He will look for a job that will use his degree after he gets his certificate. He was thinking about going for the teaching certificate that student Tenzin Lhadron got, but that expenses-paid program is unavailable in 2017. If his basic degree in physics is not enough to get a science job, a plan B will have to arise. In January, after I was back in the US, Sonam sent an email saying, "*I will do my best and will never give up whatever my journey brings my way... Love and love, your son, Sonam*". **He is infinitely grateful for FOTSI's longtime aid.**



Sonam Dorjee



Chela & Tashi Lhamo

We celebrate post-basic nursing graduate of 2016, **Tenzin Norzin**, who is working full time at KLES Hospital in Belgaum and was **ranked 3rd in her class of 50 at graduation**. Another post-basic nursing graduate is **Tenzin Lhakey**, working at St. John's Hospital in Bangalore. For more about her and her gravely ill sister, Chime Sangmo, see pg 8. **Pema Lhamo** also completed her studies as a doctor of physiotherapy. **Tashi Lhamo**, a 2015 graduate, is working for Accenture in Bangalore and loves her job answering customers questions by email, not at their phone bank. She and her family are still struggling to find funding to help sister Tenzin Yangzom get her needed kidney transplant at a reliable hospital. Sponsored **Tenzin Yingsel**, who had considered starting a Hotel Receptionist training, got TB and must rest this year.

Students at Tibetan Children's Village Schools

The **Tibetan Children's Village (TCV)** is a great educational community for destitute Tibetan children in exile as well as those who have escaped from Tibet. **Karma Tashi**, 18, attends Suja TCV School in north India and is in class 12 this year (we had this wrong last year). We also sponsor **Kalsang Gyatso** now in Class 11 at Gopalpur TCV School. We help him through the monk who helped him escape a kind of slavery when he wasn't allowed to go to school. He is effectively orphaned and without Tibetan documents. FOTSI got his January 2017 letter filled with gratitude, saying he appreciated our great help in looking after him for a long time. ***We have sent funds to TCV for Karma Tashi, and to Kalsang's monk friend for Kalsang's TCV fees, along with general funds to the school in 2015, 2016, and 2017.***



Kalsang Gyatso



Karma Tashi

Sponsor for Students -- Food, Other Needs

School Hostel Food Supplementation & CST Visit

I was happy to again visit the Central School for Tibetans (CST) and its Hostel at the end of 2016, and to meet **Rector Lhakpa Choden**, and the **new Principal, Mr. Raveendra**, whose has previously been Principal of this school. I attended a Hostel dinner with the two of them along with one of the science teachers and other staff.



Lhakpa Choden

Later I was invited to give a “pep talk” on studying for important exams coming up in a class devoted to review for that. I also discussed our plan to send more funds for supplementary food for the students with Ms. Lhakpa Choden, increasing our yearly donation to \$3,000 from \$2,400. This is still not very much, as there are over 150



Chela (at right) in CST Classroom Mr. Raveendra

students at the Hostel, but it helps, especially as our funds are used for vitamins and appropriate foods to help some of the physically weaker students. Several staff members with whom I spoke said they thought the food is still inadequate. Most of the cost of the food at the Hostel is from the Tibetan Government in Exile. One issue that will be critical for the CST is that control and funding for this school will soon be transferred from the Indian Government, which has run the Tibetan Schools in Mundgod and Tibetan Settlements for a long time, to the Tibetan Government in Exile. This will mean that funding for the school will drop. I don't yet know how significant this will be or how it will affect the Hostel food budget. We started this program to stop a perceived increase in TB among the students eating at the Hostel, and so far this has been successful. We need to make sure that, with the amount of funds diverted to disaster-hit Nepal and the pull-out of the Indian Government from CST, the food at the Hostel remains adequate, and that health problems do not increase. I trust Rector Dr. Lakhpa Choden to help us stay in touch. For more on this, see last years' newsletter on the web.



Students eating at the CST Hostel

Nuns' Education-- and Geshe-mas First in History



Many of you may know that in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition a “Doctor of Buddhist Philosophy” degree and title for a monk is “Geshe” (meaning virtuous knowledge). Nuns did not, until last year, have an equivalent educational option. In a ceremony in December at the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement, His Holiness the Dalai Lama awarded the first Geshe-ma degrees. FOTSI has been sending heartfelt but small donations for education to the nuns

and some nuns thus benefitted are among those who have or will soon get those degrees. See web post <http://www.dalailama.com/news/post/1512-ceremony-to-award-nuns-the-first-geshe-ma-degrees--golden-jubilee-of-cst-mundgod>.

In India for Refugees -- Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama, Mundgod (ORM), Sponsorships

FOTSI sponsored 34 people through the ORM in 2015 and 2016, sending them a minimum of \$120/year and, if possible and we know they have special problems, we can send more. This sponsorship also gives these families priority aid if they find themselves in an emergency situation, as well as giving the sponsored person priority for our scholarships. **In 2015 we sent \$5,975 to these sponsorees for their sponsorship and extra help. In 2016 we sent \$6,025 for the same.**

One sponsoree is **Topgyal**, a hard-working, kindly old man who is mute, but can hear and can communicate adequately with those with whom he works. He has a number of jobs for Camp #5, where he lives in a small, simple place with a bed. He manages the community lighting and water supply and serves as a watchman for the camp. He also cooks for the children at the camp's nursery school and helps look after the children. He is in his 70's and has a ready smile. He has been sponsored for decades, and as he spends little money beyond his basic needs, he put



Topgyal at Camp #5 Nursery School

aside a little each time he got his \$10/month sponsorship money. In 2016, he suddenly experienced great pain and all his food began backing up from very low in his intestines. It turned out his intestine suddenly became twisted. He was rushed to a hospital for an immediate surgery that saved his life. Unfortunately the cost of this surgery was 90,000 Indian Rupees, or about \$1,400. The funds he had so carefully saved for so long amounted, amazingly, to 20,000 Rupees. When the people of all nine camps heard his story -- how much he had carefully saved and what he had done for Camp #5 for so long -- many donated to help pay his bill and the remaining 70,000 was raised! When I met him at work at the nursery school, he was joyful at being healthy again and for the support he had from the people of the camps and his sponsor. He posed for a photo, and showed me his huge scar!



Tenzin Dasel

I met 93-year old **Phurbu** and his **great granddaughter, Tenzin Dasel**, and elder **Tenzin Lhakey** at their homes. Along with Ven. Tenzin Khendak as a translator, I visited elderly monk **Ven. Yeshi Ngodup**, 88, whom we started sponsoring through the ORM when he was in the Home for the Elderly (OPH), but who now lives in Drepung Loseling Monastery housing. Surprisingly, he had contracted TB. He is now



Ven. Y. Ngodup

bacteria free, but very frail and needing to regain strength. He said the FOTSI sponsorship and extra funds we sent were very helpful, as were some funds he got from the Indian Army in which he served years ago before he was a monk. Loseling Geshe Dhamchoe also provided extra help when he was in the hospital. I met with many sponsorees, such as **Dawa Bhuti** and **Kalsang Dorjee's mother, Tenzin Dolma**, at the ORM office. Tenzin Dolma shared a photo of Kalsang's 95-year old grandmother, **Ringdzin Dolma**, whom he



Ringdzin Dolma



Dawa Bhuti & Chela

assists day and night. When I visited **Sonam Tsering**, he showed me a cat and kitten he is helping. He is now quite crippled and bent over, but finds meaning in caring for homeless animals. I could see he loved human company too.



S. Tsering's Hands Holding Kitten

In India for Refugees -- ORM Sponsorships, Help for the Home for the Elderly

At the Camp #3 Home for the Elderly (OPH) I again enjoyed meeting and talking with our sponsored elders there, **Kunsang Wangmo**, **Tsokyi**, **Tsering Choephel**, and **Sherap**, who is now living there due to his painful knee and back problems. I brought him some funds from his sponsor and gave him some of my topical Bengay patches, which he enjoyed even though he knew the benefits were temporary. One of the OPH workers said that they buy some patches already, but after seeing Sherap's



Sherap



Kunsang Wangmo

reaction to the ones I brought, she wants to find some inexpensive and safe versions from their supplier. **Tsokyi** and **Tsering Choephel** were doing well. **Kunsang** had a remarkable story to tell. She became very ill and weak and almost died in 2016. To prepare to die she gave away everything she had. Then, almost immediately, she began recovering and is now doing much better than she has for years. She can walk to the lavatory with a walker by herself and she is vibrant. Her new room is very bright. She gave the Tara poster painted by her sponsor to the Home so that it is displayed in an assembly area. Another shared area, the OPH prayer and assembly hall is in a **building with a failing roof**. That building also includes rental rooms that help fund the OPH. Several at the OPH asked that FOTSI contribute to the roof project if enough donors can be found and it is approved by the Tibetan Government and Mundgod Assembly. Chela was given a tour of the problem and later said we would help. Stay tuned! We also aid blind **Aku Pema** who lives at the OPH and we send general funds to the Home. One reason we can offer aid for the roof project is that other donors were found by the ORM to build a new ORM building, a project we were asked to consider last year.

Jangchub Choeling -- Sponsorships for Nuns

FOTSI sponsored **14 nuns of Jangchub Choeling Nunnery**, sending them **\$3,655 in 2015** and **\$3,290 in 2016** in sponsorship and extra aid. The nuns use this money for medicine, clothing, toiletries, books, food, and local travel. Most of them love their studies and are excited that 7 nuns from their nunnery will complete the exams for the Geshe-ma



Vens. L. Dolma Jupa & T. Norzom Greet Chela and Send Thanks to Donors

degree in 2017 and celebrate those degrees in 2018. Among the 7 are 3 sponsored by FOTSI -- **Vens. Tenzin Norzin, Tenzin Namdol, and Tenzin Dolkar**. We also sponsor **Ven. Lobsang Dolma Jupa**, who still remembers life with her family's animals, her two years in a nunnery in Tibet, escaping her homeland, crossing deep rivers with two other nuns, and reaching India when she was 18. **Ven. Sonam Tsekyi** left Litang, Tibet, in 2005 after problems with Chinese government harrasment.



Ven. T. Namdol & Ven. T. Dolkar

She stayed in Nepal for two years and then came to Jangchub Choeling, where she had to stay in a moldy old abandoned OPH room until the nunnery built new quarters. In late 2016, Chela managed, in spite of difficulties in getting cash, to be able to give small gifts of 500 Rupees each to 13 of the poorest nuns (see next page). Each year we also help with medical, shelter, education, and internet costs. **In 2015 we sent the nuns a total of \$10,020 for all purposes. In 2016 we sent \$7,580.**



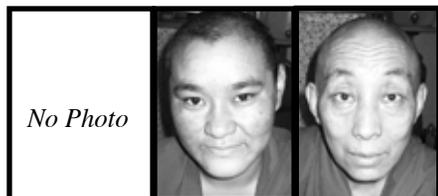
Ven. S. Tsekyi

In India -- Help for Nuns (cont.)

As we mentioned on the previous page, we gave small gifts of 500 Rs. each to 13 nuns. The first 12 shown below were chosen as needing extra help; the last nun is a cancer patient.

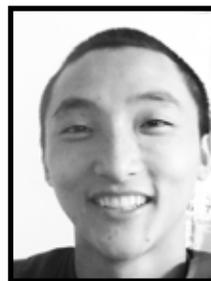


Vens. T. Dolma T. Datse, T. Dolkar T. Lhadon Y. Choedon D. Yudron T. Wangmo D. Lhadon P. Yangdon S. Choekyi
Ladakhi Ladakhi Nepali Nepali Nepali Monpa Monpa Bhutanese Bhutanese Bhutanese



No Photo K. Dolma L. Lhamo L. Dickyi
Bhutanese Tibetan Tibetan

Above where we have printed “Monpa,” we refer to a person of the Monpa Tawang ethnic Tibetan tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, India. Where we wrote “Nepali,” we here mean an ethnic Tibetan from Nepal. Where we wrote “Bhutanese,” the more correct description is “a Tibetan who lived in Bhutan.”



Ven. L. Khechok



Monastery Chant Leader,
Geshe L. Ngawang #2 on
Invited Visit to Ladakh

Sponsorship and Aid for Monks

In 2015-16, most FOTSI sponsored monks were at Drepung Gomang Monastery, but some were from Drepung Loseling and Gaden Shartse in Mundgod. In 2015 (2016) FOTSI sent **\$7,522 (\$8,015) for our 30 sponsored and five aided monks, \$687 (\$1,135) for children** aided by the monks, and **\$2,574 (\$4,175) for medical aid** (pgs. 12-13). We also sent **\$2,375 (\$2,800) to Drepung Gomang (DG) Monastery**. This was helpful for those who are not sponsored.

Sponsored monk **Ven. Lobsang Khechok** of Dati Khangtsen is now 21 and has put his past ills, including Hepatitis B, behind him. He speaks English, learned at the Drepung Gomang School, and uses that to help fellow monks who need to see a doctor or go to the hospital. A monastery official asked him to play a role in a movie some visiting Russian Buddhists wanted to make illustrating good qualities engendered at the monastery. The movie is called, “Saffron Hearts” (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bY7vd28MabM>). Funding seems hard to find, so the film’s future is uncertain, but the trailer in the YouTube link above is lovely.

The DG Monastery’s chant leader, **Geshe Lobsang Ngawang #2**, was invited to Ladakh to share his advice and special vocal gifts with the monasteries and local people. It was an adventure, hard going at altitude, and “like being back in Tibet.” He felt so strongly about FOTSI’s aid for him, that he caught up with Chela almost at the train station to say “Thank you!” after missing her departure from the monastery. **Geshe Lobsang Ngawang #1** went to Mongolia on behalf of the DG Monastery. As he is now running the DG School that has many Mongolians, this was enlightening. **Ven. Tenzin Khendak** helps new children at the monastery as well as homeless animals. He will finish the extra 6 years beyond the usual Geshe degree, taking the exams in 2017. He speaks English and helps Chela a lot.



Geshe L. Ngawang #1



Ven. T. Khendak

Ngoendi's True Story (actual sponsored Tibetan, but some fake names for safety)



Ngoendi's Eyes

Ngoendi's relatives thought his skin was a bit green, so, sometime after his birth in 1966, they gave him this unusual name, which means something like "little green one." He was a wished-for first child, who was later to welcome 3 sisters. Mom Tashi and father Kanjur, worked hard with their animals in their village in Kham. They had cows, yaks, dri (female yaks), goats, sheep, dzo and dzomo (hybrid yak-cow, male and female), and horses. It was a hardworking but peaceful life, and young Ngoendi learned the art of herding with classic tools (slings of special type) that all nomadic and farm kids learn. He came to appreciate the relative ease of minding dzo and cows. Yaks have their own minds and wander and then you have your work cut out for you. Their yaks didn't fight, but he knew that other owners experienced problems with that. In general he thought it was great that yaks took care of themselves in the summer, but he knew that they, and in some cases dzo as well, didn't like to follow rules or obey boundaries. Like other nomads such as Tibetans!

As he was growing up, in addition to helping his parents, Ngoendi went to school in his village for 3 years, and life was peaceful and problem-free for him at that time, even though the Chinese had invaded and taken over the country. His village seemed temporarily spared the pressure of events. But he lived in a young boy's world and admitted when telling his story that his world was very limited and safe for him then and he was clueless about the rest of the country. Sadly, when Ngoendi was 12, his mother fell sick and died a week later.

So, in 1979, a year after Tashi died, Ngoendi and his father, along with 3 relatives went to Lhasa by walking and catching truck rides. After they reached Lhasa, now reachable by car from Ngoendi's village in 8 hours, his father suggested he become a monk in the Lhasa area. In 1979 Ngoendi joined the Gaden Monastery where he studied and learned to recite prayers, but stayed in touch with his father and other relatives. As time went on, Ngoendi's safe world began to crumble. By the summer of 1983 the food situation in Tibet, but especially in Gaden Monastery, was reduced to a handful of tsampa (barley flour) a day. He had a young relative, Phuntsok, similar in age to him, who lived near his village, and this boy and his relatives brought food to him when they learned of the extreme problems at the monastery. (Note: I heard this story in December 2016, at a breakfast table with Phuntsok and Ngoendi sitting there sharing with me! I told them that I myself had tried to reach Gaden Monastery in the fall of 1983 with fellow trekkers, but failed after a lot of argument with Chinese authorities, who claimed rain had washed out the roads and going there was impossible. I later found out that the Chinese police and perhaps the Army had killed the monastery's abbot and had beaten many other monks and had left them along the road, saying that anyone who helped these monks would be shot. Clearly tourists like us would have been a problem there at that time.)

Fortunately, after his friends brought food to him at the monastery, they and his own relatives quickly became aware that the situation was getting extremely dangerous. Many were saying, "We Tibetans need to go to India!" After getting this urgent advice, he left as if to go on a sacred pilgrimage to Mt. Kailas. He walked and caught rides when he could, sometimes going alone and sometimes forming a group with others. From Gaden he made it to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and, traveling on, finally made it to Mt. Kailas.

Ngoendi's True Story (cont.)

When Ngoendi reached Mt. Kailas, he heard about the damage to Gaden Monastery and the horrific events there. He did two complete circumambulations around Khang Rinpoche (Mt. Kailas), then went to the famous Lake Manasarovar and stayed there one day. After that he reached Purang and then the Nepalese border with Tibet. Before crossing the border, he stayed in the area for a few days and visited some very famous temples offering heartfelt prayers appropriate to this frightening time. Throughout his escape, starting as he left Gaden Monastery, he was in laymen's clothing.

He had managed to find a guide in a certain village as he had made his way closer to the border. The arrangement with the guide was that Ngoendi gave him money, and the guide used that money to buy a number of sheep and goats which the guide would then sell in Nepal. He also had been able to buy salt, a valued Tibetan commodity traditionally traded in Nepal. One or two kilograms of salt was carried on the back of each animal. As this animal trade had been the guide's livelihood for some time, he had a pass allowing him to cross the border with his sheep, goats, and salt on a regular basis, and the border police were used to him. Nonetheless, as there were four people trying to cross with the animals this time, they were nervous and did the crossing at midnight. They planned to pose as relatives or business partners if they were stopped. But in 1983, that border was not usually protected at midnight, so, to their relief, they crossed without incident. Thieves preying on border crossers look for money/valuables to steal; a herd of animals is not convenient booty.

After crossing the border, they walked with the animals for 5 days and reached a small airport. They stayed around there for a month until the guide had sold all the animals and salt for Nepali money. This special way to get out of Tibet and the name of a guide with a pass and knowledge of a tiny airport were secrets -- secrets that Ngoendi and his fellow escapees used to their great advantage. They had had no idea earlier that this was a way, at that time, to escape from Tibet. The guide actually gave some of the Nepali sales money back to him so he could buy a ticket on the small airplane and have extra for food and cash as well. The airplane he took from that tiny airport to Kathmandu was small, holding only 30 people. I first met Ngoendi in 1986 when he was 20 and unwell, 3 years after that plane ride. When I met Ngoendi the second time, in 1991, I remember him telling me that the plane trip definitely got his attention, as it was such a new experience for him. This year, Ngoendi said he remembered it as an easy flight, that he had not been scared, and that it was really great to reach Kathmandu in 2 hours instead of the 4 difficult months that walking would have required. He went to a Welcome Center in Kathmandu, Nepal, and got food and help.

In Kathmandu he worked at a Tibetan government handicraft center for 2 months and then went to Bodh Gaya for teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. There he met 4 other monks from Gaden Monastery in Tibet who had left Tibet separately and luckily met in Bodh Gaya. At that time Gaden Shartse Monastery did not yet exist in India, so 2 of them went to Drepung Loseling Monastery in Mundgod, and 3 went to Drepung Gomang Monastery. Since then, 2 have died, a third was ill for years and went back to Tibet. One is now the Discipline Master of Drepung Loseling, and Ngoendi, with a different name, is now a Geshe at Drepung Gomang. **Due to Chinese pressure, all refugee aid provided by the Tibetan Government in Exile to the Nepalese government for Tibetan refugees is now disallowed, although the UN helps to some degree in Nepal. But Tibetans are shot or otherwise gravely harmed trying to cross the border. The stream of Tibetans escaping Tibet to India has been reduced to a tiny trickle; no one knows the number for sure.**