



FRIENDS OF TIBETAN SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA (FOTSI)

Annual Report and Newsletter for 2022-2023 Projects in Mundgod and Other Tibetan Settlements



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Newsletter
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Food, Education, Health, and Cultural Survival for Tibetan Refugees in India



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Financial Report for 2022 (ref. IRS Filing, BDO (Boulder Office))

Use <https://www.sos.state.co.us/ccsa/pages/search/basic.xhtml>, type “FOTSI” and click on “Search.” Wait to see details. **Our 2023 Report will be in the 2023-2024 FOTSI newsletter.** We wait to check that the IRS, the state of Colorado, and our records all agree.

Income 2022

Donations	\$ 71,084
Interest/investment income/bank reward	\$ 1,115
Other Income (stock increase at sale, bank reward)	<u>\$ 86</u>
Total Income	\$ 72,285

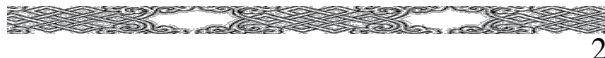
Expenses 2022

Program service (see details below)	\$ 59,552
Program service expenses (mail, wire fees, travel)	\$ 26
Fundraising (newsletter, mail, copies, software, printing, supplies)	\$ 577
Administrative (IRS report \$500, state fees, PayPal fees, etc.)	<u>\$ 597</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 60,752

Program Service Details 2022

Education (part of Program Service)	\$28,779
College/nursing scholarships, school fees (TCV); Dre-Gomang School (DGS); Sambhota School hostel food; nuns’ education	
Health/Hygiene/Emergency Aid (part of Program Service)	\$14,054
Representative Office Emergency Fund, monks/nuns medical for for themselves and laypeople, Gajang Hospital support	
Sponsorships/Group Support (part of Program Service)	\$ 16,719
21 people sponsored and 1 person aided through Rep. Office; 14 nuns sponsored and 21 aided; 23 monks sponsored and 1 aided; group aid for the Elderly Home; support for the Drepung Gomang Monastery, cultural groups, and a Tibetan health worker	

At year end 2022 FOTSI carried forward \$128,458, \$11,532 more than at 2021’s end. Much went out in early 2023. Early on as CFT/TSI and through 2006 as FOTSI, our program and direct service expenses exceeded \$353,618. Since then, adding only program service, we have sent more than **\$1,346,922** to residents of Tibetan settlements in India. As usual, **no salaries were paid to anyone in FOTSI.** We deeply thank all who donated for FOTSI’s operating expenses! **We know most of our donors are aging and struggling to cover their own expenses and sometimes those of relatives. We thank you all, from our “heartbone” as the Tibetans say, for your kindhearted generosity!**



In early 2023 as I was planning my return to the Tibetan Settlement in Mundgod, India, my excitement built about finally returning post-Covid. However, everything about the journey I last made in 2019-2020 had changed. Costs had increased, planes and schedules were different, and the difficulty of getting a new passport, new Indian visa, and the permit to visit a “protected area” (the Mundgod Settlement) was far greater. It was hard to make plans because His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s schedule in Bodhgaya, India, was not publicized and then changed several times, affecting both my plans and those of my Tibetan contacts as to when it would be convenient for me to be in Mundgod.



HH Dalai Lama, Bodhgaya, December 2023



With dates finally in hand, I booked my trip, which required 8 different planes, some being Boeing Max planes, and then encountered difficulty obtaining IndiGo tickets using my credit card. Apparently, the airline contacts the credit card company itself to see if all is legitimate. My American card did not permit such an investigation. Finally, I got my tickets through Expedia. After two days and three flights, I arrived in Bangalore. Officials slowed my entry into India, taking special care to review all documents (including my previous newsletter) that allowed me in and showed that I had a reason to visit a protected area. Previously I had been met by Tibetans in Bangalore who helped me take the train to Hubli. This time I flew with IndiGo directly to Hubli, carrying my one modest suitcase less than 33 lbs. as the airline prefers. Fortunately, after brief concern when the monks meeting me were a little late, I was overjoyed to see them approaching in their red robes with bright smiles.

I had permission to stay in a building at the Drepung Gomang Monastery and appreciated the help provided by the monk in charge, Geshe Lobsang Sangyas, as well as Geshe Lobsang Monlam and Ven. Jampa Gyatso, who cooked for me, and Geshe Jampa Tenzin, who later served as a guardian at night after many monks left for Bodhgaya.



Geshe L. Sangyas & Chela

On November 28 I met almost all of our sponsored lay people at the main Tibetan settlement office in



Geshe L. Monlam

Camp 3. It was a warm reunion; people spoke openly about health problems. Several older women who live alone described failing outdoor latrines with little lighting; others said their Indian toilets were dangerous slippery pits. Some problems were soon fixed with FOTSI’s donated funds; others have now been addressed or soon will be (pgs. 8-9). While in Camp 3, I visited the newly completed home for Sonam Dorjee, his ailing mother, and his sister, for which FOTSI provided much of the funding. Finishing this home took far longer and far more money than originally planned due to problems caused by the pandemic.



Geshe J. Tenzin



Ven. J. Gyatso & Chela



Sonam Dorjee & Family’s Finished Home in Camp 3

Next, I spent time with monks who have benefited from our medical aid. They wanted to share their experiences and thank FOTSI donors.

FOTSI's sponsored monks visited me and expressed gratitude to their benefactors (pgs. 21-24). A formerly sponsored monk, Geshe Tenpa Tsondu, whose sponsor helped him allay his stuttering, has joined the Indian Army and is a chaplain, or lama, for Tibetan soldiers. He shared a photo of them in a shrine also shown at the bottom of the newsletter's collage. I also visited the Drepung Gomang School, participated in a dental hygiene class, and met the abbot and monk administrators during exam time (pg. 20).



Geshe T. Tsondu & Tibetan Indian Army Soldiers

Because the government in Beijing has blocked the Tibetan border, it is almost impossible to leave Tibet. Tibetans in settlements in India are trying to save their religion and culture. To keep their monasteries and nunneries going, they are now inviting and welcoming ethnically Tibetan children from Buddhist communities in various Himalayan regions and countries, including Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, and areas of India like Arunachal Pradesh and the Mon District of Nagaland. Earlier, opening up to large numbers of Mongolian students did not work well since the Mongolian language is not related to Tibetan. Now, new students with cultures and languages like those of Tibet seem happy and are generally doing well. Tibetans traditionally celebrate a person's 80th birthday in a big way, and so when they discovered I was 80, they kindly celebrated me and FOTSI's help. More importantly, it gave them an opportunity to make that a joyful party that included over 100 new young monks. Older monks sprayed whipped cream from canisters in the air and towards some of the kids and then they sprayed out colorful spangles that stuck to the cream that had landed on the kids' robes. The boys loved that, and then they got balloons. All the young monks sang "Happy Birthday" in English, and later jolly music was played while older monks entertained them quite comically. The children had great fun and talked about the event for days.



Birthday Party



Happy New Monks & Their Mentor

On a more serious note, the Tibetan community joyously celebrated the 34th anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama winning the Nobel Prize. One special event included many Indian government and police officials, important Tibetan monks, officials of Mundgod's settlement office, and residents. Three special guests were asked to give talks: Deputy Commissioner Mrs. G.B.R Manakar of the Karwar region that includes Mundgod, the important Tibetan Buddhist lama Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche, and myself. I was invited due to FOTSI's longtime and increased aid during and following the pandemic and associated lockdowns. I was asked to give part of my talk in Tibetan. I not only spoke respectfully about the Dalai Lama, but also thanked the Indian people and government for all they have done for Tibetans.



Guests at HHDL Nobel Prize Event

Later I was asked, again representing FOTSI which has helped feed the students, to participate in and speak at the Sambhota Tibetan High School graduation. A FOTSI donor asked me to find out if the girls had problems obtaining sanitary napkins or other issues, as do girls in parts of Africa and other stressed areas. I met with a women's committee at the school on this topic and our discussion and its results were a success (pgs. 7, 14-16). Not only did I work with that capable group of female leaders, I also worked with Ms. Lhakpa Dolma, head of the Tibetan Settlement's Office, to give out money from FOTSI's Emergency Fund to seven older women and a 95-year-old man in need. See pg. 9.



Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche

After a tour of the Home for the Elderly in Camp 3, I met some of our sponsored people there (pg. 8) I also agreed that FOTSI would help fund repairs and an overroof for the building that stores all the food for the residents. The food is now in danger of spoiling in the rainy season due to roof leaks and pillaging by rats and venomous snakes. Since then, FOTSI has committed to funding the entire cost of \$6,000. I also visited the Doeguling Resettlement Hospital across the road from the Home and the new hospitals run by the Gaden Shartse and Gaden Jangtse Monasteries (pg. 27).

I visited the Jangchub Choeling Nunnery several times and met most of our sponsored nuns and others we helped, including especially needy new or elderly nuns and many who received aid from FOTSI's medical fund. All the nuns who had not gone to Bodhgaya invited me to a gathering where prayers for the world were chanted. Then on Christmas Day, FOTSI's longtime medical aid, and my 80th year were all celebrated (pgs. 25-26). Before I left the settlement, members of the Camp 9 road repair committee visited me, thanked FOTSI for the aid we donated in 2023, and said they hoped their big project would begin in 2024. From visits with the expert Tibetan accountant who works with the Drepung Gomang Monastery and the Jangchub Choeling Nunnery, Tenzin Wangyal, I learned much about Indian government laws and procedures, especially regarding bequests, which will be useful in the future.



Birthday Party

FOTSI aims to help Tibetans in exile in India survive and save their language, culture, religion, and history. As part of that effort, I share news about the situation in Tibet to explain why they had to leave and how their very identity is under siege and threatened with erasure within a generation. The Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, TCHRD at <https://tchrd.org>, just released its 2023 Annual Report on human rights in Tibet, citing a deteriorating situation. Every FOTSI Newsletter has contained descriptions about the noose tightening around the neck of Tibet and Tibetans under mainland China's control. Here I again list major complaints with a few links for those who want more. The Internet is rich in these so I only list a few: 1) forced removal of roughly one million children from their parents' homes— <https://time.com/6253481/china-tibet-million-children-separated-residential-schools/>; 2) suppression of the word "Tibet" by China, using instead their word "Xizang," banning use of Tibetan language in schools, on blogs, and publications, as well as suppression of Tibetan writers and poets and even the sale of mani stones (stones with mantras carved on them). Some of this is described at <https://savetibet.org/order-from-chinese-authorities-no-more-tibetan-in-eastern-tibet-schools/>; 3) suppression of monastics in monasteries by installing human monitors, frequent inspections, replacing Tibetan Buddhist texts with books by the Chinese Communist Party, and more; 4) China's damage to the environment with excessive and polluting mining operations and dam building, such as the new dam on the Drichu River in Dege that will flood seven monasteries and a number of villages; 5) arbitrary arrest, torture, and even death involving rigged or no trials; and 6) cyberattacks on Tibetans and those who help them. (Even I discovered cyberattacks from China in my laptop after returning from India.)

The U.S. House passed the ***Resolve Tibet Act*** ("Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute") in February 2024. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has passed their version, so it will go to the Senate floor. FOTSI can't help Tibetans in Tibet. Please consider helping the ***International Campaign for Tibet*** (<https://savetibet.org>). Feel free to contact me with questions! ***THANK YOU for helping Tibetans! Tashi Delek! Have a healthy, happy Tibetan Wood Dragon Year 2151!***



With love, Chela

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



Geshema D. Choezom



Migmar Tsering



Sangpo Rinzin



Dickyi Chodon



Dr. Kyizom

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 2022-23** are shown and described here. All of these colleagues helped Chela during her 2023 trip to the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement in India and continue to do so.

Geshema Dawa Choezom (Ven. Tenzin Norzom) — Nun who facilitates FOTSI's aid to nuns and needy lay people
Lhakpa Dolma — Tibetan Settlement Officer (TSO); current head, Office of the Representative of HH the Dalai Lama in Mundgod (ORM)

Migmar Tsering — Secretary of Drepung Gomang Monastery who works expertly, tirelessly, and kindly with all

Geshe Lobsang Sangyas — Manager of our general monks' health fund who helps Chela a lot, and works at Drepung Gomang Monastery in various capacities

Sangpo Rinzin — Principal, Sambhota School in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement and Rector of the associated hostel (Aid for the school and hostel goes through the Tibetan Children's Education & Welfare Fund, Dharamsala.)

Kunga Lhundup — Secretary of DGBCA who helps Chela a lot when she visits India and via extensive email

Dickyi Chodon — FOTSI's social worker at the ORM and a major help throughout each year

Tamdin Dolma — Director, Home for the Elderly (OPH)

Dr. Kyizom — Doctor of Tibetan Medicine and a big help in many ways during Chela's visits to India

Sonam Pelmo — Representative Office Accountant

OTHER IMPORTANT COLLEAGUES INCLUDE

Geshe Lobsang Monlam & Ven. Jampa Gyatso — Gungru Khangtsen Health Committee leaders

Tenzin Sangmo — Representative Office Cashier

Ms. Simki — Tibetan Children's Villages (not shown)



TSO Lhakpa Dolma



Geshe Lobsang Sangyas



Kunga Lhundup



Tamdin Dolma



Sonam Pelmo



Geshe L. Monlam



Ven. J. Gyatso



Tenzin Sangmo

Office of the Representative (ORM) — In 2022-23 FOTSI Continues Working with Mundgod’s Tibetan Settlement Office (TSO) on Youth, Elder, & Medical Needs

FOTSI sent **\$19,787 in 2022 and \$27,274 in 2023** for all the aid projects it supports through the ORM. These projects provide sponsorship and aid to individuals and their families, as well as temporary, post-Covid catch-up support for Sambhota school lunches, bus fuel and maintenance. We also send the ORM funds for post-high school scholarships, emergency aid, the Home for the Elderly (OPH), and “Lhamo Tsokpa,” a group of residents dedicated to preserving Tibetan performing arts.

The head of a Tibetan Settlement used to be known as the “Representative” (of His Holiness the Dalai Lama), but now is called the “TSO” (Tibetan Settlement Officer). That can be confusing since TSO can also refer to the office whose staff runs the settlement. The ORM abbreviation is still used, but now the “Representative” represents the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) of the elected Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

This year it was especially rewarding for Chela to work at the Mundgod Settlement on several projects and participate in a special event with its **new TSO, Ms. Lhakpa Dolma**, who was appointed in April 2022 as the first woman TSO appointed by the CTA. Chela also benefited greatly from the assistance of **our longtime social worker** at the ORM, **Ms. Dickyi Chodon**.



Ms. D. Chodon, Chela, & TSO L. Dolma



Kids Boarding a School Bus

Last year Lhakpa Dolma wrote to us about how **incomes of the settlement’s residents had been disastrously impacted by India’s lockdowns** from 2020 into 2022, with the result that not enough funds for school lunches and bus fuel and maintenance costs could be raised. Now families are finally able to travel, and many are trying to get back on their feet by the selling of sweaters, small crops, and other goods outside the settlement. Nonetheless, they are not yet financially strong enough, so FOTSI sent crucial funds to help pay for lunches and school bus service (**\$4,730 in 2023**).



Sambhota Schol Lunch December 2023

In FOTSI’s 2020-2021 newsletter we reported that FOTSI had sent **\$6,960** to the ORM as a contribution for the construction of a badly needed new ORM office in Camp #3. The money was part of a **bequest by Shanti Bhadriah**, a great supporter of Tibetans and FOTSI. While visiting the new office in 2023, I learned that this donation was used for second floor windows and other essential structural components of the second floor shown here.



S. Bhadriah’s Gift Helped Build the 2nd Floor of a New ORM Office



ORM - Sponsorships and Extra Aid

In 2022 and 2023 FOTSI aided many Tibetan refugees — families, caregivers, young people, and elderly men and women in households and at the Old People’s Home (OPH). ***In 2022 the amount for all regular sponsorships and extra help was \$4,487, and in 2023 it was \$3,863.*** FOTSI donors sponsored and aided 21 people/families in 2022 and 22 in 2023.

Sponsees include ***Karma Dolma***, 55, who suffered traumatic experiences early in her life and currently has serious problems with deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Her doctors emphasized the importance of having an operation soon. Now, with FOTSI committed to helping her, this can be done in April 2024. She may need a



K. Dolma



Tsering Dolkar, Chela, & Penpa Dolma

new sponsor as we have not been in contact with her previous sponsor for some time. Let FOTSI know if you would like to sponsor her. ***Tsering Dolkar***, who works on her own small property, has managed to get through the challenges of the pandemic with her daughter Penpa Dolma helping. Penpa also cares for a family member with cancer.

At the end of 2023 FOTSI took on two new sponsees. One is ***Trinley Dolma***, age 78, mother of a nurse FOTSI sponsored in the past. This young nurse was supporting her parents and helping her sister who is still weak from severe antibiotic-resistant TB. When Trinley Dolma’s daughter was invited to come to the USA for some special training, she thought she could stay. However, now she is stuck in the midst of documentation problems and is unemployed. Fortunately she is supported by friends. She wanted to better help her family in Mundgod.



T. Dolma

Dolma Tsering is now being helped by her son, Karma Sonam, now 35, who left the Indian Army after many years of military service. Dolma had two knee replacements last year and has recovered well. She is very grateful to her longtime sponsors. She requested that they and



D. Tsering, Chela, & K. Sonam



Goki

FOTSI switch her sponsorship to her 83-year-old brother, ***Sithar***, who has high blood pressure and diabetes. FOTSI will be sure to help him as well as and follow his sponsors’ wishes in all regards going forward. We also still support ***Goki***, 83, and his family—wife Lhaki, 82, and their son Tsering Dhondup who was hit very hard by TB as was Goki’s whole family some years ago. Their daughter Dolma Tsering died. They have been supported by the same sponsor as Dolma Tsering for many years and always express their gratitude when I meet them in India.



P. Sangmo

Among others we sponsor are ***Phuntsok Sangmo***, 60, who cared for her mother for years, has had TB twice, can’t do hard labor, and is now working with other Tibetans selling sweaters in big Indian cities. She has struggled to keep her house in one piece. We also help ***Dechen Palmo***, who had a heart valve operation in 2019 and whose husband is unwell. She appreciated a photo of her sponsor that Chela delivered by hand.



D. Palmo & Chela with Photo from Her Sponsor

ORM - Sponsorships, Aid, & Emergency Fund

Among the many Tibetans Chela met with at the ORM in the Mundgod Settlement was **Jampa Sangmo**, a relative of elderly **Sonam Tsering**, 85, who lives in Camp 1. Sonam is bedridden and so Jampa came to share about him and express her gratitude to his FOTSI sponsor and all of the donors for their longtime help and connection to Sonam. Sonam has prostate cancer and blood pressure problems. Several relatives are doing their best to help him. **Dawa Bhuti**, also 85, lives by



S. Tsering

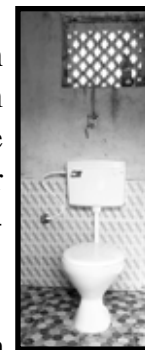


J. Sangmo Sharing about S. Tsering



D. Bhuti

herself in Camp 6. She was one of eight elders FOTSI helped with emergency assistance when Chela met with them in December (see below under **Emergency Fund**.) In early 2024 FOTSI sent funds to pay for a more accessible and functional toilet for Dawa Bhuti (who had an outdoor latrine in bad shape), and to help **Tsamchoe** get a less dangerous and more functional toilet as well.



Tsamchoe & the New Toilet

Sonam Dorjee, his mother **Tsering Youdon**, and his siblings finally have a



S. Dorjee & T. Youdon

finished home, after many delays due to Covid lockdowns and bad weather. They were selected by the ORM of needing the house as well as deserving it, due to all the help the family has given to the community, including Sonam's work for the DGBCA and Tsering's work at the Home for the Elderly. Aid for this home came from FOTSI through both the ORM and the DGBCA. As Tsering Youdon has been ill, the easy-to-live-in home is a true joy for the family. Sonam Dorjee and other Tibetans also helped pay for the home.



S. Dorjee, T. Youdon Family Home

FOTSI's Emergency Fund at the ORM has long aided those needing surgeries, suffering from drug-resistant TB, HIV, or disasters like damage due to floods and storms. **In 2022 we sent the ORM \$3,336 for emergencies, and in 2023 we sent \$1,805. Additional emergency funds went to the DGBCA to provide immediate aid during Chela's visit to India.**



8 Aided Elders with Chela, L. Dolma & Helper

In addition to aiding Dawa Bhuti and Tsamchoe as mentioned above, in 2023 FOTSI's emergency funds were given to seven other elders selected by the ORM— **Ngawang Tsering** (96), **Kyimo**, **Ngawang Dolma**, **Dolkar Ma**, **Kyizom** (84), **Palmo**, and **Tsering Dolma**, who had many medical issues and is the mother of sponsored **Kalsang Dorjee**.



N. Tsering



Kyimo



N. Dolma



Dolkar Ma



Kyizom & Chela



Chela & Palmo



T. Dolma

ORM Aid to the Home for the Elderly (OPH)

In 2022 FOTSI sent the OPH \$1,700 for general use, and in 2023 we sent \$2,500. Through the ORM FOTSI will fund an important \$6,000 project for the OPH in 2024. We plan to send half the money in April and half in July to cover major repairs for the food storage building at the OPH. Improvements will include a rainproof metal overroof designed for airflow to keep the building cooler. Holes allowing rodents and snakes easy access to the stores will be sealed, and the building made more secure. As all of the upgrades and repairs will better protect the stored food, all residents of the OPH will benefit and less food will be ruined or lost.

In March 2022 there were 56 residents at the OPH; now there are 53. The residents have many ailments, including cancer, hepatitis, and Alzheimer’s disease. All take medications. We currently sponsor one resident, ***Tsering Choephel***, but also help three other people who stay there. Tsering Choephel is 97 and has kept his room and the OPH environment well-tended for years. He has new glasses and is happy at the OPH. He has a lady friend there and is rarely separate from her. In his Christmas note to his sponsor he expressed his profound gratitude to his sponsor and FOTSI. Chela visited him in December and, as usual, he recognized her right away.



T. Choephel

Shanti Bhadrariah’s bequest to FOTSI sent enough money to the OPH to sponsor ***Tsokyi*** for the rest of her life, so although FOTSI no longer sponsors her, she loves to visit and enjoyed time with Chela at the OPH in 2023. FOTSI also sponsors ***Wangchuk Tsering***, who looks better these days, but still has serious psychological challenges, has trouble taking care of himself, and prefers to wander and spend most of his time in the local cremation ground. Some people, perhaps including Wangchuk himself, think that he is like legendary yogis in Tibet who did their spiritual practices in charnel



Tsokyi

grounds to focus on the realities of life and death. Some such yogis helped others by dealing with the the bodies of those who died from contagious diseases. Wangchuk is not an official resident of the OPH, but if he shows up at appropriate times and takes his medicine, he can eat meals and sleep there. Because he is “not official,” Ms. Tamdin Dolma, head of the OPH, does not have to continually keep track of him, which she is required to do for residents. This plan seems to work very well for both Wangchuk Tsering and Tamdin Dolma.



W. Tsering

Chela had a good conversation with Wangchuk when she visited the OPH. Through the DGBCA (pg. 24), we also send funds to resident ***Sonam Tso***.



S. Tso



Home for the Elderly in Camp #3 as Seen on a Stroll by T. Dolma, Head of OPH

Sponsored T. Choephel & His Lady Friend

Student Scholarships (ORM)

FOTSI College and Nursing School Scholars 2023-2024

Name	Major & Degree Sought	College, Location
<i>Sponsored students — new and continuing scholarships</i>		
<i>Ms. Tenzin Tsepak*</i>	B.A., 1st year	Sarah College for Higher Tibetan Studies, Dharamsala
Mr. Tsering Dhonden	B. Bus. Admin. (BBA), 2nd year	St. Joseph's University, Bangalore
Ms. Passang Tsamchoe	B.A., 2nd year	Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education, Bangalore
Ms. Tenzin Noryang	B.Sc., Nursing, 3rd year	Yenepoya University, Mangalore
Ms. Dolma Tsering	Post B.Sc., Nursing, completed; internship	Yenepoya University, Mangalore
Ms. Tenzin Chokyi	GNM Nursing & Midwifery, 3rd year	Nitte Usha Institute, Mangalore
Ms. Sonam Dolma	Career, 8th year	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Dharamsala
Ms. Ngodup Lhamo	B.Sc., Nursing, 3rd year	JSS College of Nursing, Mysore
Ms. Tenzin Yangkyi	B. Comm., 3rd year	Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education, Bangalore
Ms. Tenzin Tseyang	Post B.Sc., Nursing, completed; internship	St. John's Nursing School, Bangalore
Mr. Tenzin Tsetan	Career, 9th year	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Dharamsala
Ms. Tenzin Tselha	M.Comm. completed; intern	Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education, Bangalore
Ms. Ngawang Namgyal	B.A. completed; health issues	Online study preparation for masters program
Ms. Tenzin Nyidon	B.E. completed; internship	Visvesvaraya Tech. University, Belagavi



T. Dhonden



P. Tsamchoe



T. Noryang



D. Tsering



T. Chokyi



S. Dolma



N. Lhamo



T. Yangkyi



T. Tseyang



T. Tsetan



T. Tselha



N. Namgyal



T. Nyidon

We have verification that *Tenzin Tsepak*, marked with an asterisk above, is enrolled at Sarah College but do not yet have her photo. She is our only new student as we continue to support the 13 students shown above. Three of these students have completed all requirements for their degrees except internships. As they are paid little or nothing for their work as interns, FOTSI helps during that time.

In 2022 FOTSI sent \$11,349 for scholarships, \$9,949 to the ORM and \$1,400 to the DGBCA, and sponsored four students for post-high school education through TCV. In 2023 we wired \$10,811 to the ORM for scholarships, and \$2,880 through TCV for college students who had graduated from their high schools (pgs. 17 and 19).

Student Scholarships (ORM) (cont.)

FOTSI is sponsoring five nursing students through the ORM. We received **Tenzin Tseyang**'s graduation photo along with a lovely letter in which she thanks FOTSI and her individual and scholarship sponsors for "your incredible support," and concludes with, "Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your un-



T. Tseyang



K. Dechen

wavering support and belief in me. Your sponsorship has not only allowed me to pursue my dream but also enabled me to make a difference in the lives of others. I am forever grateful for your kindness and generosity." Another sponsored nursing student, **Dolma Tsering**, has completed the same degree. She wrote to us, mentioning that she is an orphan and very happy to get support. As noted above, both nursing graduates will be supported in 2024 during required internships. This year FOTSI's TCV-sponsored nursing students **Kunsang Dechen** and **Tsesum Dolma** graduated and continued studies, respectively (pgs. 17 and 19).

Tenzin Noryang and **Ngodup Lhamo** are both in the third year of B.Sc. degree programs, and **Tenzin Chokyi** is in the third year of a general nursing and midwifery program. All are doing well. Tenzin Noryang again shared her gratitude and that she has ten siblings and is from a farming family in Camp 1 of the Mundgod Settlement. Tenzin Chokyi wrote that she is an orphan and feels the weight of being alone. She shared enthusiasm about her work last year providing health services at several villages near her college and this year's work at several hospitals in a variety of wards, such as the ICU, orthopedics, surgery, and general medicine. She wrote a heartfelt thank you and expressed the depth of her need for help.

We continue our sponsorship of **Tenzin Nyidon**, a young woman who has completed a four-year bachelor degree program in engineering studies at the Visvesvaraya Technological University in Belgavi and is now doing a required internship. Previously she was at the GSSS Institute of Engineering and Technology for Women in Mysore where she specialized in cyber security. She had a hard time during the pandemic but kept up the required remote studies. Later she switched to her current university that was more convenient since it is not far from the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement.

Four of our Tibetan college students are enrolled in business courses. While in India Chela met student **Tenzin Tselha** who has just completed her M.Comm. degree and is being aided by FOTSI during her internship period. She is eager to start paid work so she can help her mother pay for medical care. She is shown here receiving her financial support.



T. Tselha Gets Funds

Tsering Dhonden, from a poor family like all of our students, is successfully embarking on his second year of a bachelor of business administration degree. **Tenzin Yangkyi** wrote a warm thank-you letter as we continue to support her for a third year of study for a B.Comm. degree. **Ngawang Namgyal** wrote a detailed and very grateful letter to the ORM and FOTSI for being able to complete her bachelor degree in the past. She suffered a severe health problem and could not begin her intended master's program. As she is recovering, she is now taking online courses that will help her enter another such program in the future.

Scholarships (ORM) (cont.)

Passang Tsamchoe is in her second year of a B.A. program at the Dalai Lama Institute in Bangalore. She is part of a homeless family that is also deemed one of the poorest in the Mundgod settlement. She has written several letters of gratitude to us and ORM.



Chela & T. Tsetan's Grandpa

Tenzin Tsetan is now in his eighth year at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), a very active cultural center. TIPA was founded by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in August 1959. Tenzin works hard at perfecting Tibetan performing arts, especially singing, for which he has won



T. Tsetan at TIPA



T. Tsetan 2005

awards, and helps his mother as he can. When Chela was in India, Tenzin Tsetan's grandfather gave the family's heartfelt thanks to FOTSI. We sponsored Tenzin Tsetan as a child, and part of that sponsorship went to members of Lhamo Tsokpa, Mundgod's performing arts group. Now we sponsor Tenzin for the years of training and performing experience the institute offers. He wrote: "Your generous support has played a significant role in shaping my journey this far and I'm immensely thankful for the opportunities it has provided me." FOTSI also sponsors **Sonam Dolma** in her eighth year at TIPA. She wrote us a letter and sent us a photo of herself in Dharamsala. Both Tenzin and Sonam said they have been at TIPA for longer than the ORM says. Perhaps students don't become official right away!



T. Tsetan Performs



S. Dolma

Tibetan performing arts are unique. The Dalai Lama has said that Tibet's ancient culture is a world heritage, "which is now facing the threat of extinction." He added, "Protecting ancient culture like this is the responsibility not only of the concerned nation, but also of the world community as a whole."

ORM - Support for Performing Arts (Lhamo Tsokpa)

To support Tibetan performing arts, **FOTSI sent a small amount through the ORM (\$315 in 2022 and \$565 in 2023) for "Lhamo Tsokpa,"** the Mundgod settlement's own performing arts group. We encourage help for this group! Lhamo Tsokpa has sent us varied photos of themselves performing. As Tibetan song, dance, and musical entertainment are very important to Tibetans, performances are frequent at many events. Groups from a majority of the villages (or camps) in the Mundgod settlement performed December 10, 2023 at the anniversary of the Dalai Lama's Nobel Peace Prize.



Settlement Residents Perform on December 10, 2023



Settlement Crowd Watching



Lhamo Tsokpa Performing

Tibetan Children's Education and Welfare Fund (TCEWF)

Supplementary Food for Sambhota Tibetan School Hostel

FOTSI has provided supplementary food since 2010 for students living in the hostel connected with the high school for Tibetan students in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement. The *Sambhota Tibetan School*, run by Tibetans for the last six years, provides classes for grades 1 through 12. Information about the secondary school is available at <https://sambhota.org/sts-mundgod/>. The cost is borne by local Tibetans, as well as Tibetan donors outside the settlement, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala, and a few donors of smaller amounts like FOTSI. The hostel houses about 100 students who have special needs or who come from Tibetan settlements where no adequate high school exists. ***In both 2022 and early 2023 we sent \$4,500 for food.*** In 2023, 33 different FOTSI donors made donations that added up to the total. As described on page 7, FOTSI also sent ***\$4,730 through the ORM in 2023*** to help pay for school lunches (and bus maintenance) for children in Mundgod's Sambhota Tibetan School system, since parents, still recovering from financial losses during the pandemic, could not adequately cover those costs. Residents of the Girls' Hostel and Boys' Hostel again sent us photos and letters thanking FOTSI for helping with the food budget each year.



The girls sent one big photo and the boys sent lots of separate ones, like the ones shown below. FOTSI also got many separate thank-you letters, two from among many are shown on the next page.



TCEWF — Sambhota Hostel Food Supplementation

"THANK YOU
DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN
TO COVER HOW
GRATEFUL WE ARE."

Thank you ama la ♡ for always providing us nutritious meals and always caring for us, we are very grateful to you.

Thank you for always supporting and helping Tibetan children and people who are in need.

Lastly we wish you long and healthy life.

- STS M girls hostel

Tashi Delek (Greetings!), I hope you and your family are well and doing great on your daily life. I am Tenzin Norbu from boys hostel. It's been around two years in the boys hostel and to be honest, the food we get here is far more or equal to food from our home-made one. Till now, I have really enjoyed the meals and the fresh and delicious fruits which is sponsored by you. I think everybody here really enjoys the meals and they always feel grateful for your kindness and compassion and those who donated from their heart to help others. With high temperature here the fresh fruits match well, it gives us extra stamina to study well and play sports. Me and my mates from boys hostel are always thankful and feel blessed to have a sponsor with such a big heart. You are a good example to many of us. Me and my mates are studying hard and in the future, we hope to be like you who is always there to help others. We would like to meet you so we can be able to share our gratitude at fullest to you. I will pray that you and your family members are in good health and successful in every field. Yours loving children, **Boys Hostel (STS Mundgod)**

During her visit to the school in 2023, Chela happily experienced the appreciation and gratitude of the students directly. The letters come with drawings around the edges in color, are heartfelt, and match the positive connection shown by the students in person.

To go along with the letters from the students, FOTSI received a letter from the new rector (as of 2024), Mr. Tenzin Dakpa, at the Sambhota School. He wrote to "Ama Chela Kunasz and all the members of FOTSI" as follows: "I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for your generous sponsorship of the supplementary diet program for our hostel students. Your contribution has made a significant impact on the overall well-being of our students with the essential vitamins and minerals that they need to stay healthy and energized throughout the day. This has not only improved their physical health but also their focus and concentration in their studies. Our monthly health check-up done by the school nurse reveals that most hostel students have experienced significant improvements in their health. The students are incredibly grateful for your support. So, I on behalf of the students and staffs, would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to FOTSI and its generous donors for the continuous support of our hostel students' supplementary diet program. Thank you once again for your generosity, and we sincerely hope you will continue your support. Your commitment to supporting the education and well-being of our Tibetan students is truly appreciated."

Sincerely,

Tenzin Dakpa
Rector
STS Mundgod


RECTOR
SAMBHOTA TIBETAN SCHOOL, MUNDGOD
Camp No. 3, P.O. Tibetan Colony, Mundgod
Uttar Kannada - 581 411, Karnataka State

Sambhota Tibetan School - Girls' Issues, Challenges, and More



FOTSI's Lunch Food Aids Pupils

Sangpo Rinzin (photo on pg. 6), has been both the Sambhota School principal and the rector of the boys' and girls' hostels for years. In December 2023 he spoke to Chela of his gratitude to her and all FOTSI's donors for their years of help and especially their crucial post-Covid food aid. When Chela brought up teenaged girls' issues that a donor urged FOTSI to explore and possibly help address, Rinzin organized a

women's committee consisting of the vice principal of the Sambhota High School, the matron of the girls' hostel, the school nurse, and three high school teachers to discuss this topic with her. At the committee meeting Chela shared some "Freedom Kits," handmade, washable sanitary napkins that the aforementioned donor asked her to give them while discussing both their minimal cost and low environmental impact. Tons of these kits have long been sent to Africa so that girls do not have to leave school when menstruation begins because they lack the means to deal with their periods. That situation has prevented many women from getting enough education to escape poverty. The committee members responded that the Tibetan girls' were in a better situation than the African girls, and that there was provision, although limited, of sanitary napkins for the girls. They also said that they understood the bad environmental effects of disposable items such as sanitary napkins. It was agreed that the handmade, reusable sanitary napkins could be useful during travel, but the committee felt that the girls liked the products the school provides, wished the supply lasted more than two days a week, but could afford to buy them. The committee also pointed out privacy concerns with the skimpiness of stalls in the school's toilet facilities and distress that there was only one functioning basin. The school nurse pointed out a dilapidated door to a rest area for girls next to her office. In March 2024 FOTSI received a letter from the new high school principal, Mr. Namgyal Yemphel, saying that the nurse's door had been replaced, new plans were being worked out to provide sanitary napkins every day and dispose of them as properly as possible (long story here), and that a previously sanctioned renovation project for the girls' restrooms will include more toilets and more wash basins. When all is complete, the privacy of the stalls will be checked and improved if necessary. Former principal Rinzin had set much of this up before he left. Rinzin was sad to leave Mundgod, but had to leave and serve at another Tibetan settlement because of a rule requiring periodic rotation for those in positions like his.



Chela Celebrates with Grads

When Rinzin invited Chela to visit the school and help officiate at the graduation as a way to honor her and all the FOTSI donors, he shared about the many joys and challenges of his work. One big concern is all the old buildings on the school's land that were poorly built, have deteriorated in the monsoon rains, been abandoned, and



Rinzin's Protector

likely house dangerous snakes and other hazards. He said that a new teacher, living in a one-story cottage similar to his, was bitten by a dangerous snake and almost died. She did not return to her job. The students living on the school grounds in hostels live in upper stories in newer buildings. Rinzin has adopted two stray dogs that guard him and make a special sound when snakes are in his cottage. He said they had saved his life three times.



*Girls' Issues Committee
Look at Freedom Kits*



Derelict Building in School Area

Tibetan Children's Villages (TCV) — In 2024 FOTSI Is Sponsoring Nine Middle and High School Pupils and Three College and Nursing School Students

The *Tibetan Children's Villages (TCV) in India*, comprising eight boarding and three day schools, a summer camp, three vocational training centers, and three hostels (each housing about 200 students) constitutes a great educational community for poor Tibetan children-in-exile as well as those who have escaped from Tibet. See <https://tcv.org.in> for photos and information about this wonderful organization, begun in Dharamsala in 1960 by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his elder sister, Mrs. Tsering Dolma Takla, with continued support by His Holiness's younger sister, known as Jetsun Pema. These days TCV also helps many of its high school graduates get support to complete vocational, college, or training programs for Tibetan government work.

In 2023 FOTSI sponsored five students at TCV Bylakuppe and four post-high school students at colleges and nursing schools. As 2024 began, we continued sponsoring three Bylakuppe students (*Tenzin Zompa*, *Tenzin Konchok (7597)*, and *Tenzin Sangay*) through April 2024 when they will graduate from high school, and we maintained full-year sponsorship of a boy (*Tenzin Konchok (7603)*) in class 8, and three students (*Tsesum Dolma*, *Jinpa Tashi*, and *Pasang Khandro*) continuing their nursing and college studies, respectively. Post-high school scholarships are \$720/year; others are \$480/year.

We took on new full-year sponsorships for a boy, *Tenzin Tsephel Sangha*, in class 7, and a girl, *Tenzin Tsetan*, in class 11. We committed to new sponsorship beginning in May 2024, of two boys—*Tenzin Ogyen* in class 10 and *Tenzin Tsering* (who has the same name as one of our previously sponsored high school graduates) in class 7. At the same time we will also begin sponsoring *Ngawang Norbu* who will graduate from the Bylakuppe high school this year. All of these newly sponsored Tibetan children were without sponsors, so our help was needed for their continued support at school. In all FOTSI will help 12 students in 2024. *FOTSI sent TCV \$5,440 in 2023, and \$5,040 in early 2024.*

In 2022 FOTSI began sponsoring 17-year-old Tenzin Zompa at the TCV high school in Bylakuppe. Earlier we thought she would graduate in 2023, but as mentioned above, she will complete her studies in April 2024, as will Tenzin Kunchok (7597) and Tenzin Sangay, whom we supported so they could finish high school. Last year's newsletter shared news about them. Here we again post their photos along with those of all sponsored TCV students for whom we are continuing support in 2024. On the next page we introduce our five newly sponsored students and share excerpts from a few of the student letters FOTSI received expressing gratitude to all the donors who helped in 2023.



Tenzin Zompa



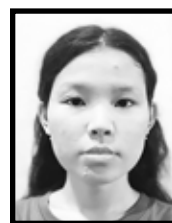
*T. Kunchok
(7597)*



Tenzin Sangay



*T. Kunchok
(7603)*



Tsesum Dolma



Jinpa Tashi



Pasang Khandro

TCV Students (cont.) — Newly Sponsored Students

Newly sponsored TCV student **Tenzin Tsetan**, a sweet girl who will be 18 in mid-April, is now studying in class 11. She is from a destitute, broken family originally in the Dhondenling Tibetan Settlement in Kollegal, Karnataka State. Her favorite subject is English, although she is also studying math, general science, social studies, and Tibetan. She was originally accepted into the TCV school system in 2013 but had no sponsor by 2023, so FOTSI began sponsoring her last year. She especially enjoys reading short English story books. In a December letter she wrote, *“I am grateful to you. Thank you for being my sponsor. God bless you at any cost and enjoy every moment.”*



Tenzin Tsetan



Tenzin Tsephel Sangha

Among the four TCV students FOTSI began sponsoring in 2024 is **Tenzin Tsephel Sangha**, age 14, who is studying in class 7. His best subjects are Tibetan and Hindi. He shares “Home #17” with other boys in his class, and studies English, math, and social studies. He just arrived at TCV last year and enjoys his new school friends, as well as basketball. He likes reading, drawing, and English songs. His father works as a teacher at a monastery school, supporting his wife, two children, and Tenzin’s grandfather. Struggling financially, Tenzin’s father requested Tenzin be accepted into the TCV school, which was granted.

Tenzin Ogyen will be 16 in June and is studying in class 10. He was born in a Tibetan settlement in Odisha, India. He is healthy and smart and very good at sports. He wants to be a physical education teacher. He loves singing and social studies and is curious and delights in finding, learning, and experiencing new things. His studies include English, Tibetan, math, and social studies.



Tenzin Ogyen



Ngawang Norbu

Ngawang Norbu is 18, and without a sponsor to help him for the last year of high school. His parents try to earn a living by selling sweaters in big cities. Like the students described above, he no longer had a sponsor. He has three siblings; his parents work hard to support their family but have struggled, especially since the pandemic. He is in a commerce stream and is studying English, Tibetan, accounting, entrepreneurship, and economics. He stays in the “Commerce Boys Hostel,” and is very grateful to have a sponsor now.

Tenzin Tsering, without a father and mother and cared for by two uncles, was admitted into the TCV school at Bylakuppe in 2023. He is 13 years old and studying in class 7. He is very happy to be staying with 22 other boys in “Home #17.” He is learning math, social studies, Hindi, English, and Tibetan. His favorite subject is social studies. Another boy with the same name was also recently sponsored by us and graduated from high school last year. ***In 2023 contributions from 19 donors sponsored nine TCV students. In 2024 contributions from 17 donors sponsored 12 students.***



Tenzin Tsering

TCV Students (cont.) — Sponsored Students and Activities

Kunsang Dechen was born in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement. Because of her family's poverty, she was accepted at the Bylakuppe TCV school from which she graduated in 2019. She has completed a general nursing program at Apollo College in Mysore, where she was a top student. As a result, she is beginning a two-year post-B.Sc. nursing course in 2024 with a scholarship. She will no longer need our help, but she wrote a lovely thank you letter to FOTSI that ended with, "I am forever grateful for everything, Your daughter, Kunsang Dechen."



Kunsang Dechen

Most of the TCV students wrote letters to FOTSI that arrived in Boulder when Chela was in India. **Tenzin Konchok (7603)**, age 14 wrote that he is "studying hard" in class 7. **Pasang Khandro** is studying for a B.Comm. degree at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education in Bangalore. At age 6 she made the journey from eastern Tibet to Lhasa to Nepal. She sent us kind wishes and thanks. **Jinpa Tashi**, who was born in Tibet and suffered many hardships crossing the Himalayas into Nepal, is pursuing a bachelor of business administration degree. He wrote, "I would like to thank you for everything that you have done for me til now." **Tsesum Dolma** completed a science stream program at TCV Bylakuppe and is in her second year of a B.Sc. nursing program at the Indiana College of Nursing in Mangalore. She wrote about studying for her exam in January 2024 and her "great experience and opportunity to assist our senior doctors with taking care of patients." **Tenzin Konchok (7597)** graduated from TCV Bylakuppe in 2023 and wrote to us, ending with:

A handwritten note on lined paper with a drawing of a mountain peak at the bottom. The text reads: "Lastly Thank you for making a difference in my life and our school community. Thank you once again more for your invaluable support, and Merry Christmas!"

Lastly Thank you for making a difference in my life and our school community. Thank you once again more for your invaluable support, and Merry Christmas!

FOTSI received a 2023 newsletter from the Tibetan Children's Village Bylakuppe School that has a detailed description of all the special activities for students last year. The school year began with required Indian Government exams for 10th and 12th grade students. All 48 students in the 10th grade passed, and 218 out of 219 seniors passed and joined colleges and professional courses in India. Over 200 students participated in a traditional Tibetan cultural presentation of singing, dancing and music that raised funds for the school from the public. Every month all the classes presented skits and papers relating to "sociability, ethics, and emotions" that emphasized different qualities such as gratitude, kindness, and tolerance each time. The students also volunteered their services in diverse capacities at the local home for the elderly. From March to November, students had the opportunity after school to study logic and debate from teachers ("Geshes") of the Sera Jey Monastic University. In late May graduation was celebrated, and as is the tradition during the holy month of Saka Dawa, students gathered together to read Buddha's teachings from the Kangyur. Summertime featured a special day of games, two weeks of supervised yoga ending with a display by seniors, celebration of HH the Dalai Lama's 89th Birthday on July 6, and later, the school's 43rd anniversary. A "positive parenting" workshop was attended by 132 parents/caregivers. Both the "English Day" and the "Tibet Our Country" events featured student debates, songs, theater, study projects and exhibitions. In October sophomores were taken to Mysore and seniors to Bangalore for "Career Exposure" events, while the track and field competitions were a highlight that included all levels of ability.

Drepung Gomang School

The *Drepung Gomang School (DGS)*, run by the Drepung Gomang Buddhist Cultural Association (DGBCA) and connected with the Drepung Gomang Monastery, offers a variety of classes to young monks arriving from ethnic-Tibetan areas near and in India as well as from countries with a strong Tibetan Buddhist community like Mongolia. Subjects include Tibetan language skills, math, science, and Buddhist studies. For the last few years very few have escaped from Tibet, as we wrote on pg. 4; sometimes a few students from other countries arrive. For the Tibetan lay children of the local Mundgod Tibetan Settlement, there is usually a summer session during which Tibetan language and Buddhist topics are taught in a relaxed and fun way. Normally, summer is a time local Tibetan families welcome the opportunity to do extra work while the kids enjoy courses helping them preserve their traditional culture.



DGS Pupils, Teachers, DGBCA Officials 2023



DGS Teachers, Administrators at a Meeting with Chela

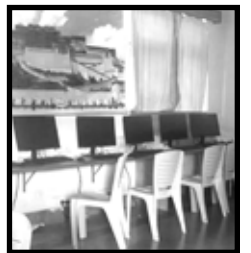


Happy Pupils

Many FOTSI donors began helping the DGBCA and the Drepung Gomang School in 1978 before FOTSI existed. FOTSI sent the school **\$8,590 in 2022 and \$10,465 in 2023**. Much of the increase in 2023 was due to our sending more than usual for the teachers at the school, a number of whom are lay people who, like everyone in the settlement, had relatives who were badly affected by the lockdowns during the pandemic. In 2023, as in 2022, representatives of the Sambhota Tibetan School and Tibetan Government-in-Exile visited and collaborated with the school. Chela visited and had several informative meetings with DGBCA administrators and teachers.



Two major projects were completed at the school in 2023. These included a complete upgrade, including new shelves, furniture and 15 new computers, of the computer skills classroom. Many of the existing old computers were dysfunctional. Another project replaced the stone that covered the assembly and play areas in front of the school. Before the new stone was installed, cracks could cause falls and grass grew everywhere attracting snakes. The stone is shown in the school photo at the top of this page, but its lovely red and orange/yellow color does not show there. Chela again worked with the school's teachers as they gave a class on dental hygiene and gave out toothbrushes and toothpaste.



New Computers



Students Take Exams



Dental Hygiene Class in 2023



Summer School at DGS—Parents, Teachers & Kids



Teacher Helps Pupil Teacher S. Dorjee



Drepung Gomang Monastery (DGM)

In 2023, FOTSI sent the monastery \$650. We rejoiced that this Tibetan Buddhist monastery was finally able to resume its worldwide tours to begin replenishing its coffers after it had given away much food to its Indian neighbors during the Covid pandemic. The monastery had been unable to support itself through its worldwide tours when it was under lockdown during the pandemic. Much appreciated short visits and teachings from the more famous lamas of Drepung Gomang, such as His Eminence Kyabje Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche, resumed even earlier in 2023. FOTSI was formally honored several times



Abbot/Khen Rinpoche Geshe Jigme Gyatso has tea with FOTSI's President, Chela Kunasz, to Honor our Group's Longtime Support

with meetings, tea, and meals that included the Drepung Gomang Abbot, Geshe Jigme Gyatso, and monastic administrators of both the monastery and the Drepung Gomang School. Our donors have been helping the monastery, its monks, its school, and its aid to the wider Tibetan refugee and Indian community for more than 40 years—even before FOTSI officially existed.

Sponsorship and Aid for Monks

The \$650 FOTSI sent to the DGM in 2023 helps all the monks, mainly with food, housing, and a portion of their medical expenses. FOTSI also sent aid for individually sponsored and aided monks, including both those needing help and those helping others. *In 2022 FOTSI sent \$7,950 to 24 monks, and in 2023 \$7,360 to 22 monks.* All are



Geshes T. Tsering & J. Dorjee

at Drepung Gomang Monastery except one at Drepung Loseling and one at Gaden Shartse. Two of FOTSI's sponsored monks, brothers **Jigme Dorjee** and **Tenpa Tsering**, were joyful that they both became Geshes in 2023. Geshe Jigme Dorjee had the special pleasure of sharing that he became a Lharampa Geshe, a great accomplishment his sponsor did not know he was pursuing. Geshe Tenpa Tsering will again help the monastery by participating in a fundraising tour in 2024.

Sponsored Geshe **Lobsang Sangyas** serves as a member of the "Drepung Lachi," an administrative organization of senior monks from all colleges of Drepung Monastery (including Gomang and Loseling). This group did a great deal of work to arrange many aspects of the event at which HH the Dalai Lama gave teachings to tens of thousands of people at Bodhgaya, India, in late December 2023. While there, he helped inform and befriend many Indian school children who attended. Another longtime sponsoree is Geshe **Lobsang Ngawang Chewa** who has spent much time and energy assisting the well-known reincarnation, His Eminence the 13th Kundeling Tatsak Rinpoche (pg. 4 and collage), all over the globe.



Geshe L. Sangyas & Students in Bodhgaya



Geshe L. Ngawang

Sponsorship & Aid for Monks (cont.)



Ven. J. Choeden
1999



Geshe J. Choeden
2023



W. Trinley

Jampa Choeden first arrived as an emaciated refugee monk from Tibet decades ago. Now, as a Lharampa Geshe, he teaches other monks at an advanced level, and he no longer needs FOTSI's aid. He still assists new young monks from Nepal, with help from Wangchuk Trinley and other Tibetans. Most of those young monks seem very happy and are doing well, but 12 out of about 60 returned to Nepal, as they are free to do.



Young T. Khendak

As a child, **Tenzin Khendak** herded animals in Ladakh along with his friend **Tenzin Changshai**. After Khendak came to the DGM, he completed the extra six years of Geshe Lharampa studies. Yet he has kept his roots and often helps animals and children. Now he is serving as a Chanzoe (major administrator) and accountant for the Drepung Gomang Monastery. He is busy all day dealing with vendors and contractors who sell the monastery goods and services, and he needs to be fluent in many languages. He is far from both the peaceful pastures he loved as a child and the deep philosophical and spiritual studies in which he excelled. But his current work is essential for his fellow monks. His friend Tenzin Changshai, who had also come to DGM, is a Geshe and serves in a leadership role, guiding the young monks in his living group, Ngari Khangtsen.



Geshe T. Khendak (lower right) with
Abbot (center) & other Chanzoes

Karma Tsultrim crossed the Himalayas from Tibet to India as a young teenager with a terrible eye injury that could have killed him. In India he had six surgeries that included removal of broken facial bones and replacement of the useless eye with a glass one; FOTSI covered the hospital costs. He has thrived and reached the age of 40, and he is considered to be a bright star among young Tibetan philosopher monks. He is currently in charge of his living group, Lhopa Khangtsen of Gaden Shartse Monastery, which now includes many new young monks from north India and various Himalayan countries. In addition, during Chela's visit to India, he introduced her to the **new Gaden Shartse (Monastery) clinic/hospital** with hopes that FOTSI might be able to help their innovative work and plans. See pg. 27 of this newsletter for more.



Chela at Gaden Shartse Hospital with Geshe
Karma Tsultrim (at right of photo)

Three sponsored monks—Geshe **Ngawang Rabjam**, **Ngawang Choesang**, and **Jampa Tenzin**—spend most of their time in meditation retreat. FOTSI donors who sponsor them appreciate that very much. Geshe Jampa Tenzin kindly took time from his retreat to spend two weeks staying at the monastery building where Chela lived during her 2023 visit when the usual monk guardians went to Bodhgaya for HH the Dala Lama's teachings. Other sponsored monks have taught, helped with construction, and worked in poverty-stricken areas. Geshe **Jamphel Lodro** stays in Siliguri and teaches there. Geshe **Lobsang Ngawang Chunga** has taught chanting at remote monasteries.

Sponsorship & Aid for Monks (cont.)

Many monks that FOTSI has sponsored for decades have now matured and acquired diverse insights and skills. Like many sponsored nuns, too, they now use those skills and resources to help others. We originally helped most of our sponsored people because they had escaped Tibet and arrived in India with pressing health and nutritional needs. Some, reacting to the stress of their situation plus illnesses they had harbored from their difficult life in Tibet, became ill some time after arrival in India. An example was **Geshe Ngawang Choesang**, who manifested latent leprosy he had acquired in Tibet due to exhaustion from helping others who arrived injured or ill.



Geshe N. Choesang Meditating



Geshe N. Rabjam

Ven. **Ngawang Rabjam** needed a crucial back surgery. Ven. **Tenpa Trinley** arrived in India almost blind and very vitamin deficient, but, in spite of a fall while working on the Drepung Gomang School's third story, he has recovered and helps the community. Ven. **Lobsang Sangyas** (pgs. 3, 6, and 21) was also unwell for some

time when he first arrived. Because of the difficulties they overcame, many sponsored monks use their monastic training and life experiences to help others. Newly sponsored monk, Ven. **Lobsang Topgyal**, has benefited both from FOTSI's help and guidance from Geshe Lobsang Sangyas. It is great to know that the monks of Gungru Khangtsen *have again said special prayers for all FOTSI donors and for Everett Brown*, as wished for by his wife when he passed away.



Geshe T. Trinley & Ven. L. Topgyal

For years, both cared deeply for Tibetans and helped as they could.

Health Aid for Monks

In 2022 FOTSI sent \$2,915 for health aid for monks. This included funds for Gungru Khangtsen monks of Drepung Gomang Monastery and for other monks in the Mundgod settlement. *In 2023 we sent \$2,670.* These were general donations for medical aid in addition to funds sent to specific sponsored and aided monks, which they used to help themselves and colleagues.

In 2023 much of FOTSI's medical aid focused on those with diabetes, hepatitis B, digestive problems, and injuries. There was one tuberculosis case, and help for two major surgeries was needed. Ven. **Palden Gonpo**, age 51, a very thin monk who has suffered from difficult-to-control diabetes for a long time, came down with tuberculosis just before his planned December departure to attend HH the Dalai Lama's teachings in Bodhgaya. That was disappointing for him, but it was fortunate that his TB was caught before he mingled with tens of thousands attending the teachings. Chela visited him in the TB ward at the DTR Hospital.



Ven. P. Gonpo, DTR TB Ward



MRI for Geshe N. Oesung

Geshe **Ngawang Oesung**, age 57, had a difficult 2023 as he struggled with diabetes, needed an emergency appendectomy, and later had a complex lip surgery to replace dangerous cancer followed by a difficult skin graft on his lower lip. He wanted to show Chela his graft. Chela and his friends all hope the swelling will diminish.



*Geshe N. Oesung
Soon After Lip Skin Graft*

Health Aid for Monks (cont.)

Ven. **Ngawang Damchoe**, age 45, also had a difficult 2023; he needed treatment for hepatitis B, and then he had two major operations. Surgeons first removed a gangrenous section of his intestine and later followed up



Ven. N. Damchoe Feeling Better, Thanks FOTSI

with a second surgery to reconnect the intestine. His surgeries and initial recovery period took place at a large Indian hospital outside the settlement.

Chela visited him in December after he had returned to the settlement and was completing his recovery at the DTR Hospital (pg. 7). He was happy that everything was going well and grateful for FOTSI's help.



Ven. N. Damchoe & Chela at the DTR Hospital

Ven. **Tenzin Wangdak**, age 15, broke his leg, but it was well casted and he is recovering. In addition to **Geshe Ngawang Oesung**, other monks for whom FOTSI helped cover diabetes treatment were **Geshe Ngawang Tenzin**, **Vens. Tsultrim Gyatso**, **Lobsang Shakya**, **Thupten Dhondup**, **Sonam Wangchuk**, and **Palden Gonpo**.



Geshe N. Tenzin

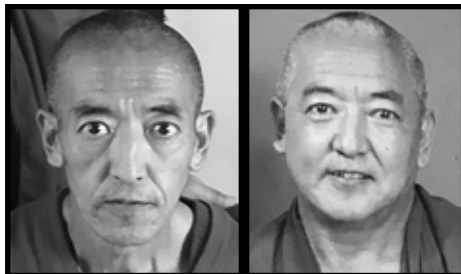


Ven. T. Dhondup

Thubten Dhondup also is getting treatment for high blood pressure. We helped **Geshe Jigme Dorjee** (photo pg. 21), as well as Ven. Ngawang Damchoe, get treatment for hepatitis B.



Ven. T. Wangdak



Ven. J. Gyatso 2020 Ven. J. Gyatso 2023

Chela was fortunate to have the head of the Gungru Khangtsen Health and Emergency Fund, **Geshe Lobsang Monlam** and his assistant, **Ven. Jampa Gyatso** (pgs. 3 and 6), cook for her for the five weeks of her stay in the Tibetan settlement. In 2020 FOTSI's funds helped Ven. Jampa Gyatso recover from a long bout with intestinal problems and tuberculosis from which he has now recovered. Sponsored **Geshe Tenpa Thinley** shared more with Chela about

the fall he had in 2022 that resulted in a compound fracture with his leg broken in five places. The doctors inserted a long metal rod that worked well, so after much physical therapy, he is fine. When Chela was in India in late 2023, she had many happy meetings with most of those aided by our health fund, especially with the monks of Gungru Khangtsen.



One of Several Meetings with Many Monks Thanking Chela and FOTSI Donors

Aid to Lay People via the DGBCA

The Drepung Gomang Buddhist Cultural Association (DGBCA) has helped us get aid to lay people for years. In **2022 FOTSI sent a total of \$1,120** through the DGBCA that included funds for **N. Jangchub** (at a donor's request), and for **Sonam Tso** at the Home for the Elderly. In **2023, we sent a total of \$2,270** that helped eight elderly laypeople selected by the Tibetan Settlement Office (pg. 9) (\$300), paid bills for **heart patient Lham Yangchin and her infant Tenzin Palzom born with a hole in her heart** (\$1850 at donors' wishes), and aided Granny Sonam Tso (\$120).



Sonam Tso Gets Help

Sponsorship, Medical, & Special Aid for Nuns of JCN



Sponsored Nuns (top row, left to right): Vens. S. Tsekyi, T. Deetaen, N. Jampa, L. Dolma Jupa, G. Choedron, L. Choeden2, T. Tsomo, L. Dolma Gapa, K. Choedon, D. Choetso, and L. Choeden. Bottom row, left to right: Geshemas D. Choezom (aka T. Norzom), Tenzin Dolkar, and T. Namdol

In 2022 we sent \$6,930 to the nuns of Jangchub Choeling Nunnery (JCN). In 2023 we sent \$7,050; \$3,115 supported 14 sponsored nuns, \$3,535 funded FOTSI’s medical fund for them, \$200 was for educational needs, and \$200 was for the nuns’ aid to laypeople in their community. In November 2023 FOTSI sent an early wire of \$2,300 from 2024’s allocation for sponsored and poor nuns through the DGBCA so that Chela could give this out in Indian rupees when she was at the JCN in December as wished by all concerned. That wire included \$300 for poor nuns and \$200 for the 2024 education fund. We sent out thank-you letters written by the nuns (some in English, some in Tibetan) and recent photos to donors who sponsor nuns. We applaud JCN’s first fundraising tour group’s arrival in the USA in April 2024.



Eight Sponsored Nuns Hold Their Letters December 2023



As mentioned in Chela’s letter (pgs. 4-5) it has been almost impossible for people to leave Tibet, so the influx into the Tibetan settlements in India has dropped to almost zero. In order to keep their culture and religion going, Tibetan nunneries and monasteries in India have been increasingly accepting new members from the Himalayan regions such as Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and northern regions of India such as Arunachal Pradesh and the district of Mon in the state of Nagaland.



Many of those new residents of nunneries and monasteries are from poor families and often speak languages related to, but not the same as, Tibetan. Some may arrive with problems that their relatives could not solve.



Among the poor nuns FOTSI recently aided, there are a number of young girls who need financial aid for grammar school fees and books. All girls under age 12 at JCN (and a few older students with no previous education) must attend the local Sambhota School in Mundgod to gain basic Tibetan and English language, arithmetic and other skills. Some girls also need medical treatment. On this page are photos of five of the 13 young nuns who got aid from FOTSI during Chela’s December visit to JCN as well as a photo of our sponsored ***Geshema Tenzin Dolkar*** with two young nuns she is mentoring.



Geshema T. Dolkar & Mentorees

JCN Nuns' Aid - Special, Medical and More

FOTSI's funds for poor nuns given out in late 2023 helped Tashi Yangzom, 45, deal with a serious ear problem, and a newly-arrived 27-year-old nun from the district of Mon who has had epilepsy since she was seven. Her mentor, our sponsored Geshema Tenzin Namdol, has been helping her find sources for the medicines that helped her previously. We also helped a new 18-year-old nun, a sweet young woman who seems to be mentally ill. Everyone supported the idea that Chela let TSO Lhakpa Dolma know that finding and funding professional help for this new nun was needed. Others FOTSI aided included Ven. Namgyal Lhamo, 40, who broke a previously injured leg badly last year. **Ven. Yeshi Lhamo**, 36, who had a bad ulcer and got aid from FOTSI's medical fund last year, was also among poor nuns getting help in late 2023.



Ven. Y. Lhamo

Among the five older nuns we recently helped was **Ven. Lobsang Yangkey**, 53, who escaped from Kham, Tibet, 23 years ago, and Tsewang Dolma (aka **Ani Gyaltsen**), 88, who started out as a cook for the JCN after she arrived from Kham, Tibet, 30 years ago. Although she cannot read, she joyfully participates in the nuns' activities, prayers, and classes. She is especially beloved by the nuns of Jangchub Choeling.

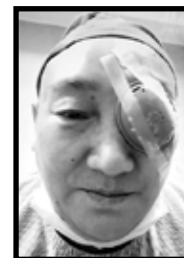


Ven. L. Yangkey



Ani Gyaltsen

FOTSI's medical fund has helped nuns pay for breast cancer treatments and various surgeries, at least one of which helped restore a nun's hearing. In fact that nun is now the disciplinarian (or "Gegu" in Tibetan) of the nunnery and leader at JCN. This aid has also helped nuns pay for heart disease treatment, hepatitis B and C treatments, Covid treatment, eye treatments, stomach and sinus ailments, dental services, and glasses.



Vens. L. Choeden & T. Choeden



Ven. L. Choekoe Surgery



Ven. T. Lhamo

Photos on this page show examples of JCN nuns' recent use of FOTSI's Medical Fund: **Ven. Lobsang Choeden** just after her eye surgery, **Ven. Tsultrim Choeden's** treatment at a city hospital for a kidney infection, **Ven. Lobsang Choekoe's** throat surgery, **Ven. Sonam Sichoe's** time in a



Ven. S. Sichoe



Ven. K. Dolma

hospital for treatment of breathing problems, **Ven. Tashi Lhamo** turning in her reports, tests, and bills to request financial aid for treatment of abdominal pain, and **Ven. Karma Dolma's** dental treatment.

When Chela was at the JCN in December, Geshema Dawa Choezom showed her stacks of detailed bills for medical treatments that FOTSI had helped pay. She also emailed Chela photos of a young lay woman, **Tenzin Norzin**, who needed two major brain surgeries. Recently \$400 of FOTSI's funds sent to the JCN to help local lay people pay for medical treatment was given to Tenzin.



T. Norzin Before & After Surgery

Hospitals & Clinics in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement

In the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement medical help is available at *basic hospitals at the Drepung Loseling and the Gaden Jangtse Monasteries and in clinics run by the Drepung Gomang and Gaden Shartse Monasteries.*

The hospital associated with Gaden Jangtse (“Gajang”) is one of the newest. **FOTSI sent \$800 to Gajang Hospital in 2022 and \$700 in 2023.** Dr. Lobsang Tenzin, a monk in the Gaden Jangtse Monastery and energetic founder and early fundraiser for the Gajang Hospital,



Staff of Gajang Hospital with Chela



Dr. L. Tenzin in San Diego

traveled to Europe and the USA to raise awareness about Tibetans in settlements and the new hospital. While in San Diego, he and other Gajang monks met Buddhist families, many of them Vietnamese Americans, blessed their homes as they wished, and sent their donated funds to the hospital. One of Chela’s friends asked, on behalf of some who had met the Tibetan doctor, if she could locate him



Gajang’s Dentistry Services Room

and help them continue to support the hospital. Chela was asked to find a “Tibetan monk in India” based on a photo of him in San Diego! This was a challenge, but it ended successfully. Some early donors, as well as others, send donations for this hospital, and FOTSI now can wire it directly. She visited on December 6, 2023 and was impressed with the hospital’s dental services, lab equipment, staff, and organization. That month there was no 24/7 doctor present, so there were no resident patients. However, a physician who provides care supported by the facility’s



Ultrasound in Use

diagnostic capabilities is there regularly. A special aspect of both the Gaden Jangtse and Gaden Shartse Hospitals is that their administrative and medical staff includes monks from their respective monasteries who are well trained and provide skilled care. The staff members on the bottom row in the group photo are all monks. Everyone at the hospital expressed gratitude to the donors who help them provide care for Tibetans as well as many Indian villagers who live near both Gaden Hospitals.



Gajang’s Lab Testing Area



Medicinal Flora

Sponsored monk **Geshe Karma Tsultrim** of Gaden Shartse Monastery urged Chela to accompany him to the new **Gaden Shartse Hospital**. This hospital also has no in-patients yet. They have a dentist, a nurse, and trained monk assistants, and will add staff and increase services going forward. They are unique in offering medical service that includes the use of flowers and medicinal plants and have large photo displays of such flora. They hope FOTSI will support their operation



Gaden Shartse Nurse at Work

in the future. The **Doeguling Tibetan Resettlement (DTR) Hospital** offers very good basic services for local people and visitors. It is run by the Health Department of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala along with local management. The photos of Ven. P. Gonpo on page 23 and of Ven. N. Damchoe on page 24 were taken at the DTR Hospital. For major medical needs and sophisticated scans and tests Tibetans must go to hospitals in Indian towns and cities such as Hubli, Dharwad, and Bangalore. FOTSI’s aid helps Tibetans cover costs at these sophisticated treatment centers.