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Tibetan Friendship Group Australia (Inc.)

Patrons: His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
Joan M Wilson OAM

## TFG CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2023



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 2023, the TFG has continued to support Tibetans in need thanks to the kindness and generosity of our sponsors. Our team is based of volunteers who work remotely to ensure that the TFG can continue to operate smoothly. This year our meetings have continued to be held virtually which has worked well, particularly as the committee members are spread throughout Australia.

This year we continued to connect with our sponsors through newsletters which is a great way to keep everyone up to date with the incredible work of the settlements.

We are very appreciative of everyone's support & kindness and wish you all a happy festive season with your loved ones.

### TFG FINANCES

Sadly, TFG has lost a few sponsors in recent years as many of our supporters are ageing and no longer able to continue. There is still a great need, however, of sponsors for children, nuns and elderly Tibetans.

A shout-out to our wonderful Tibetan Treasurer, Choekyi for all her hard work in keeping track of finances and sending funds to our TFG Settlements in India!

**TFG funds transferred from July 22 to June 23 total \$13,877.16.**

## TIBETAN PRAYER FLAGS

In case you ever wondered you don't have to be a Buddhist to hang prayer flags! Often you see them hung on verandas or outside homes. Motivation and intentions are what is important and they should be treated with respect. Hang them with a wish for all beings to be free of suffering and the causes of suffering, or for a positive intention of your choice.

Tibetan prayer flags are used to promote peace, compassion, strength, and wisdom. Tibetans believe the prayers and mantras printed on the flags will be spread by the wind and bring goodwill and compassion to benefit all beings. They consider prayer flags to be holy. The flags contain sacred texts and symbols and they should not touch the ground or be put in the rubbish. When disposing of old prayer flags, they should be burned so that the smoke may carry their blessings to the heavens. Traditionally they are hung on a straight or diagonal line between two objects and in high places such as the tops of temples, monasteries, stupas, and mountain passes.

Tibetan prayer flags come in sets of five, with one flag in each of the five colours. The colours from left to right are in this specific order: blue, white, red, green, and yellow. Each colour represents an element: blue symbolises the sky and space, white symbolizes the air and wind, red symbolises fire, green symbolises water and yellow symbolises earth.

### THE POTALA Pam Kamula TFG Secretary

I'm not sure how this fascination with Tibet started but I think it was in my early 20's, whilst travelling in India I found in the Delhi market an old scroll, looking a bit worse for wear. I took it to the V&A Museum in London as I lived nearby and they said it was a 19<sup>th</sup> Century thanka of 4-armed Chenresig, the Buddha of Compassion! Of course, I still have it now!

It wasn't until 2004 that I managed to visit Tibet. I was due to go in 2003 on my way to the UK but sadly it was cancelled the day before leaving due to China closing the border – I burst in to tears when the travel agent called me!! My husband said don't worry we'll go next year – and we did! Flying into Lhasa over the Himalayas from Kathmandu with Buddha Air was the most emotional experience- almost like I was going home. The fabled Potala, home of the Dalai Lamas, was high on my list and my first sighting of this amazing building, from the rooftop of the Jokhang Temple, rising organically from the hillside overlooking Lhasa, brought tears to my eyes. His Holiness had lived there! How must he have felt secretly leaving Lhasa, his home, and his people, not knowing if he would ever return?

The Potala, now a museum and visitor attraction, was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century as a seat for the Dalai Lamas. Traditionally the white part housed the religious areas and the red part the administration offices. I had very mixed feelings about visiting the personal rooms of the Dalai Lama, which are open to visitors – I felt like an intruder! From the rooftop however it was amazing to see Lhasa spread out below and imagine the young Dalai Lama looking down at his subjects far away and maybe wishing to go down and walk amongst them!



## TFG FUND RAISING STALL

After much deliberation the stall was held at Bellingham Market on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September. It was a fine sunny day and TFG had a great spot with lots of exposure. Many people were attracted by the Tibetan prayer flags, and interesting display of books jewellery, bags scarves etc. Some had been to Tibet and were interested to talk about the work of TFG and TFG brochures were on hand to supply information. All these goods for sale were donated by TFG supporters and the grand total OF \$1016.00 was raised. Also, a further \$500 was raised from donated items before the stall was held. A huge thank you to all those who donated goods and helped on the day. These funds will go towards a special project at one of the Settlements TFG supports in India.



## PAINTING DONATED BY SOPHIE REEVES



This dramatic painting of Milarepa kindly donated by Sophie Reeves, a long time TFG supporter is painted on a mirror. It is 95cm x 65cm and is quite unusual. It was done about 20 years ago by a Mexican artist, Gustavo Bustos, who had visited Tibet and the Himalayas. He painted it for a fundraising event held by TFG at that time. It was sold for \$1800.00.

If anyone is interested to purchase this original painting and raise funds for TFG please contact Pam on: 0439 400 622



## TIBETAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGE (TCV)



Above on the left is a photo of one little fellow at TCV hard at work and the one next to it shows that the children also have fun!

The photo on the left shows the TCV children welcoming His Holiness the Dalai Lama on a much- anticipated visit!

## TIBETAN HOMES FOUNDATION

On the right it's visiting day and a student meets her sponsor.

Below – children will be children everywhere! Someone is a bit distracted in assembly!!



QUOTE FROM THF

“It is the beautiful home structure of the children’s upbringing which moulds every child to become a self-reliant and productive member of the community.”

## TILOKPUR NUNNERIES



The nuns at Tilokpur Nunneries spend a lot of time studying the scriptures as in the photo at left.

Those nuns who have the aptitude and opportunity take the Geshema degree which is the highest level of training in the Gelugpa tradition.

This year 7 nuns from various nunneries in India were awarded this degree – a great honour, requiring years of study.

The photo below shows the nuns receiving their degree.



## YONGLING CRECHE AND KINDERGARTEN



### PRESENTATION DAY

A little one receives an award and a Khata (white offering scarf) from the teacher.

## TIBETAN INSTITUTE OF PERFORMING ARTS (TIPA)

### ANNUAL YARKI FESTIVAL

#### Report from TIPA

TIPA commemorated its 64th founding anniversary on August 11, 2023, with the grand culmination of its annual summer festival and cultural competition, 'Yarkyi,' held between its two vibrant houses. The crowning event took place on August 25, 2023, when the Yarkyi cultural program was splendidly presented to an esteemed assembly of invited guests and the enthusiastic general public.

The auditorium was brimming with anticipation and excitement as every member of the Tibetan community waited eagerly for the unfolding of the captivating summer spectacle that is Yarkyi.

The seats in the auditorium were occupied to full capacity, showcasing the tremendous enthusiasm and interest of the audience in this cherished event.



## **AN APPEAL FOR MORE SPONSORS**

Our TFG settlements in India are always in desperate need of more sponsors for nuns, children and elderly Tibetans. If you have family or friends who are interested, please ask them to contact us. Here are several ways you can help.:

### **One Time Donation**

Make a "once off" donation to a TFG program in need of funds.

### **Regular Donations**

Make a regular monthly, quarterly or yearly donation to a TFG program of your choice.

### **Sponsorships**

Sponsor an older person or nun for \$25 per month or a school student for \$30 a month.

### **A Donation in Celebration**

Celebrate a special occasion by making a donation or ask family and friends to make a donation on your birthday rather than buy a gift.

### **A Donation in Memory**

Make a donation in memory of a loved one. TFG can send a card acknowledging your gift to their partner or family.

### **Bequest**

Leave a gift to TFG in your will. Your generosity will enable us to continue our programs in the future.

### **PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR DONATIONS**

CHEQUE: PAYABLE TO TIBETAN FRIENDSHIP GROUP AUSTRALIA (INC)

DIRECT DEPOSIT: CBA BSB: 062 173 ACCOUNT NO: 2802 0627

PAYPAL: VIA WEBSITE

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

MAIL: TIBETAN FRIENDSHIP GROUP AUSTRALIA (INC) PO BOX 1347, DEE WHY, NSW 2099

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**From all of us at TFG we thank you for your support and may 2024 be a year of good health and special times with those you love**