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Tibetan Friendship Group Australia (Inc.)

Patrons: His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Joan M Wilson OAM

TFG CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2024

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FROM THE TIBETAN FRIENDSHIP GROUP AUSTRALIA AND NOTIFICATION OF CLOSURE

Dear Supporters,

For decades, the Tibetan Friendship Group has been privileged to stand alongside you in a mission of compassion and solidarity with Tibetans in need. Thanks to your generosity and unwavering support, together we have raised thousands of dollars, every cent of which has gone directly to providing critical assistance to Tibetan communities. Your kindness was felt entirely by those it was meant to help. Your contributions have changed lives. From providing education and healthcare to supporting livelihoods and more, the impact of your compassion will resonate for generations to come.

After much thought and reflection, we have made the decision to bring the Tibetan Friendship Group to a close. This decision was not made lightly but stems from personal circumstances within our committee. While we are no longer able to continue this journey in the same way, we are immensely proud of what we have achieved together and deeply grateful to each of you for walking this path with us.

Although this chapter is closing, the spirit of TFG lives on in every act of kindness and solidarity you have shown. We encourage you to continue supporting Tibetan communities through other avenues and to carry forward the values of compassion and friendship that have defined our work. Should you wish to make a final donation through TFG please do so before 31 January 2025 and it will be gratefully received and receipts issued. Although this is our last official Newsletter, we will be sending one out in January to celebrate the work of TFG with some history and photos from past events.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your trust, generosity, and belief in this mission. Together, we have truly made a difference.

With deepest gratitude,

TFG Executive Committee

TFG FINANCES

The amount TFG has received and sent to Tibetan Settlements India in recent years has decreased steadily due to various factors but the funds we do send are always much appreciated. When you have very little any help is appreciated!

TFG funds transferred from July 23 to June 24 total \$11,391.00

VALE ANN ELIZABETH MELOCCO TRENOWETH 17TH MARCH 1935-11TH SEPTEMBER 2024 -A TRIBUTE FROM HER DAUGHTER SAMANTHA

Ann's father was born in the tiny town of Toppo in the far north of Italy. Her mother's family hailed from England but had been in Australia for generations. She was proud of her grandmother, Hannah, who'd travelled by camel along the Birdsville track. And even prouder of her father, Galliano, whose family business, Melocco Brothers, created the beautiful marble, mosaic and scagliola in the Saint Mary's Cathedral crypt, the State Theatre, the Commonwealth Bank in Martin Place and the Mitchell Library. Her Italian heritage was enormously important to her. And the bullying she faced as a little Italian girl, growing up on Sydney's north shore during World War II, gave her a finely tuned sense of justice and compassion.

As a young woman, Ann studied Italian in Perugia and cooking at East Sydney Tech (she was superb baker). She joined forces with a friend to open an employment agency, and she loved dancing to rock & roll music, swooning to the '50s crooners and watching movies at the Lindfield Picture Show. She met a handsome young photographer, Paul Trenoweth, and they married in 1959 and had four children, Samantha, Sean, Giovanna and James. Ann and Paul were great entertainers and created a joyful, welcoming home.

In the early 1970s, when she learned that there was a group of Sydney women (including Val Grogan and Joan Wilson) forming to support the Tibetan refugees who were streaming across the Himalayas into India, Ann didn't think twice about joining. She'd been 21 when she'd read *The Third Eye* by the dubious Lobsang Rampa, but she'd followed that up with some more reputable sources, including the Dalai Lama's *My Land and My People*. And Tibet was forever and always her great cause, and a great love.

For a time, Ann was president of the TFG and the settlement that was always closest to her heart was Tilokpur, the first Tibetan Buddhist nunnery in India. Mum sponsored two young nuns from Tilokpur. The first, Monlam, is a senior nun today. The second, little Thinley, who was only five and dozing off in prayers when Mum first met her in India, now lives in America and is a much-loved member of the Trenoweth family. Ann attended every one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's talks here and considered it a great honour to have been granted audiences with His Holiness on a number of occasions. She was not a Buddhist but she felt a special connection to His Holiness and to the Tibetan people. A photograph of the Dalai Lama smiled across at her from beside her bed until the day she died. Not long before she died, Ann wrote down some memories of her time with the TFG. She ended it with: "The Tibetan community in Australia, and around the world, have been extraordinarily generous and welcoming to me and to my family. And I thank them from the bottom of my heart for all they have given us." Ann died peacefully in September with family by her side.



Ann in her younger days and Nuns at Tilokpur Nunnery performing a puja in Ann's memory

SETTLEMENT NEWS

DELEK HOSPITAL



TB CLINIC

This year TFG donated \$2000 towards the TB clinic at Delek Hospital. This included \$1000 donation from a loyal TFG supporter and funds raised from a market stall selling donated goods. The clinic treats Tibetans and non-Tibetans alike.

From Delek Hospital:

“Tuberculosis has been one of the biggest public health challenges in the Tibetan population in the past. To control the burden and eliminate TB in the community, Delek initiated a TB control program in the early 1980s and a separate TB block was built, where we have both Out-patients and In-patient isolation rooms for those with highly infectious and drug resistant TB. Delek Hospital is also an officially Designated Microscopy Center (DMC) for the National TB Elimination Programme (RNTCP) under the Government of India”

JAMYANG CHOLING NUNNERY

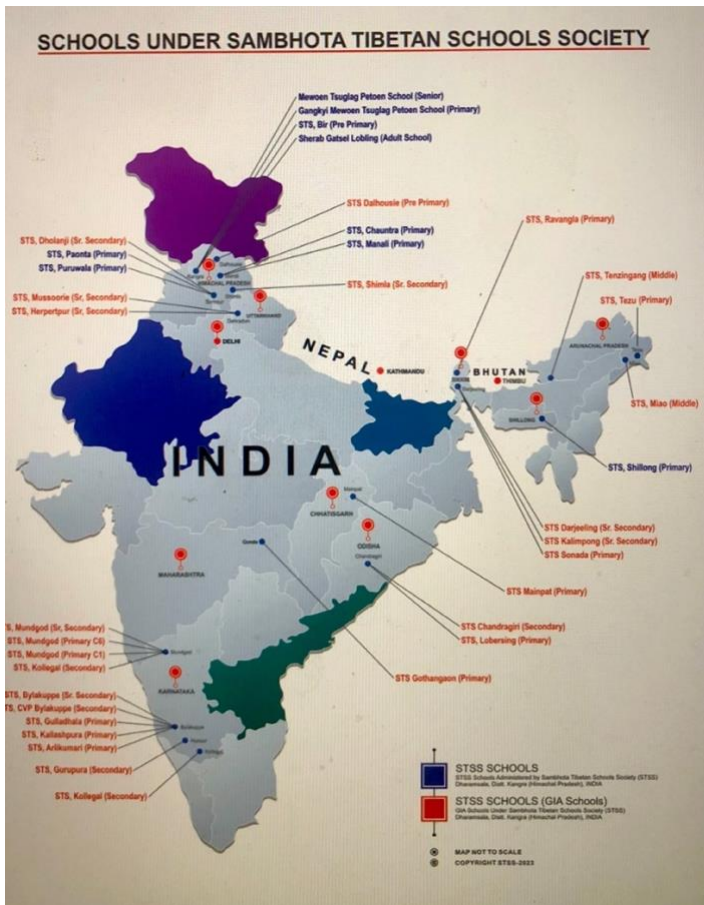


CELEBRATING LHA BAB DUCHEN

Lha Bab Duchen The Festival of the Descent from Heaven. “On this day the Lord Buddha descended from the heaven of thirty-three gods on three golden gem-decked ladders to the human realm. This day is considered to be very important because it is believed that any virtuous or negative actions performed are ten million times greater on this particular day of the year.”

SAMBHOTA TIBETAN SCHOOLS SOCIETY

Excerpt from a letter of gratitude from Sambhota Schools Sponsorship Coordinator:
 “We would like to thank everyone for their support and kind heartedness, which has Provided invaluable resources and opportunities to children in need.
 To enhance educational programs, and empowering them to build a brighter future.”



Map showing schools under the Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS)

A LOVELY MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION

“On behalf of all the student beneficiaries and the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for the incredible impact your esteemed organisation has had in advancing educational opportunities for the Tibetan refugee community. Your unwavering support has gifted countless students the invaluable opportunity to pursue education and transform their lives.

It brings us immense joy to share that many students who benefited from TFG's generosity have excelled in their respective fields of study. Some have returned to serve and contribute to our community's growth, while others have built stable and fulfilling livelihoods, furthering the Tibetan cause and ensuring its continuity.

The success of education within the Tibetan diaspora stands as a testament to the dedicated efforts of philanthropic organizations like TFG. The gift of education is undoubtedly one of the most meaningful contributions to our people, and for this, we remain profoundly grateful.

While we are fortunate to have the support of many donors and sponsors, the Tibetan Friendship Group of Australia will forever hold a special place in our hearts.”

TIBETAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGE (TCV)



CHILDREN'S DAY 2024 AT TCV

Here are children at TCV Lower School celebrating Children's Day with a Mini Athletics Event. You can see on their faces what fun they are having! Events included races, relays and many other games.

As described by TCV: "The energy and enthusiasm were contagious, and everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, enjoyed the games. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to showcase their skills, cheer for their friends, and experience the spirit of teamwork and sportsmanship. The day was not just about competition, but also about having fun and creating memories that we will cherish for a long time!"



TILOKPUR NUNNERY



These photos show the entrance to Tilokpur Nunnery, the nuns performing sacred rituals with various instruments and below sacred texts used in teachings.

BUDDHIST TEXTS

Through the ages, Tibet's ancient texts have received careful handling and storage as sacred texts; they were printed by hand from wood blocks, wrapped in silk covers, and stored on shelves behind the main altars of the shrine rooms in monasteries and temples.

The earliest Buddhist texts were passed down orally in Middle Indo-Aryan languages called Prakrits, including Gāndhārī language, the early Magadhan language and Pāli through the use of repetition, communal recitation and mnemonic devices. These texts were later compiled into canons and written down in manuscripts.



BUDDHIST DIGITAL RESOURCE CENTRE (BDRS)

This non-profit organisation, preserves, documents and disseminates Buddhist literature and according to their website is the largest online archive of Tibetan and Buddhist texts in the world. Using digital technology, they are able to preserve the cultural treasures of Buddhist Libraries

TIBETAN INSTITUTE OF PERFORMING ARTS (TIPA)



Many visitors to TIPA

TIPA has received many visitors in the last half of 2024 including a special group from the Vietnam Buddhist sangha. Also visits from members of the Tibet Australia Council, and the German Aid to Tibet group from Germany. The Artistes have been kept very busy preparing and staging performances for all these different groups to display their many talents.

A DELEGATION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN TIBET COUNCIL (ATC) VISITS TIPA

FROM TIPA

“On November 12, 2024, at the request and coordination of the Department of Information and International Relations of the Central Tibetan Administration, a delegation from the Australia Tibet Council, a Tibet support organization affiliated with the Office of Tibet in Australia, visited Dharamshala. The group, led by Executive Director Dr. Zoe Bedford, arrived as part of their official visit.

Upon their arrival at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), they were warmly welcomed and given a brief introduction by the institute’s director. Following the introduction, the artists presented a cultural dance performance for the visiting delegation. The members of the group expressed their deep appreciation and admiration for the performers and their artistic talents. “



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

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EMAIL: tfgpresident@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.tfg.org.au

From all of us at TFG we thank you for your past support and wish you a peaceful Festive Season. May 2025 be a year of good health and special times with those you love.