



Electricity

It gets dark early at this time of year – so we turn on our lights. Easy, and comfortingly dependable except in the worst winter storms when we may have to do without light for a few hours.

But imagine living in a village in the Himalayan foothills or in the northeastern corner of India. Power failures are a part of everyday life. In Humla, the remote northwestern district of Nepal where TRAS funds 30 children to go to school, the power fails constantly, sometimes for weeks on end. And in the remote villages of Tuting where Tibetan women are desperate to learn to read and write so that they can correspond with their children away at school, there is no electricity at all.

With little electricity, there is no heat in the school hostel in Humla. We have bought extra blankets and warm coats for the 30 children to help combat the numbing cold in the hostel. And the women in Tuting? They gather to learn after dark, because their days are spent working in their fields and looking after their families. And they are so determined to learn that they read by lantern, flashlight, or candlelight. We can't help them by installing electricity in their remote region – but we can support them by keeping the courses running and giving them our moral support.

In this issue you will see a list of projects supported by TRAS for children and youth in the Himalayas. We also highlight some of the children who need sponsors. Please help us bring the light of learning and the warmth of knowing someone cares to these far corners of the world where they have so little.

Book Club Alert!



TRAS has helped establish 21 small libraries – 20 through Voice of Children and 1 through READI Nepal (the highest and most remote library in the country!). \$264 will help develop and maintain a library for a year! That amount will purchase new books, keep up the newspaper and magazine subscriptions and pay a small honorarium to the librarian. Would YOUR book club like to adopt a

library? This year has been the first time newspapers have reached many of these villages, the first time many people have even seen a book!

*By candlelight*

Tuting Literacy Classes

Now that the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala has helped out the Tuting region in Arunachal Pradesh by appointing a settlement officer to look after the Tibetans in these 17 scattered villages accessed only by foot, the literacy classes have started up again. Enrolment is up to 192, with 50 on the waiting list! They are so keen! Men are joining the classes too. Lack of electricity doesn't stop them learning: they are studying by flashlight --- lantern--- and candle!

*By flashlight**By lantern*

Tried and True

You will notice in the list of projects that we have not taken on any new partners. The people we are already working with are dedicated, dependable and able. They know the needs; they know how to answer them. We would rather build on success until such time as they can take over and run things for themselves, or until a student has a skill and can get a job. Sometimes, it must be said, they become a little too dependent on TRAS and we encourage them to take the next step towards independence. Not easy – but they try. We have recently told the two Tibetan crèches which we have supported for years that it's time they figured out ways to support them themselves – and not only are they coming up with ideas, they have graciously accepted that the time has come for them to support their own children. They have thanked us for our years of help. Yes, we know the crèches are important services in their communities, helping women get back to work after childbirth – but the TRAS mandate is development leading to sustainability, rather than ongoing maintenance, so the time has come to phase out our support.

The TRAS Projects 2013-14

TRAS needs your support for these projects and thanks you in advance for your generosity.

TIBETAN PARTNERS:

Through the Tibetan Government in Exile's Department of Education, TRAS has two projects:

- 1. Nurses Training at good teaching hospitals in India. 9 students: \$5,170.**
- 2. Tutoring Adult Literacy: 192 students: \$2,350**

In the Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft Centre, which makes the colourful shoulder bags we sell, TRAS will be gradually phasing out support for the crèche over the next two years. Sadly, few Tibetan families arrive from Tibet these days, so numbers of toddlers are decreasing.

Dekyiling Crèche: \$1,650

NEPALESE PARTNERS:

Buddha Academy Boarding School (BABS), Kathmandu: This amazing school has taken in, cared for, loved and educated hundreds of destitute children over the past 20 years. At present the enrolment stands at 700! TRAS members support the infirmary and vocational training classes, and this year we have agreed to buy quilts and mattresses for the 50 newly arrived children. The school should house around 500, but how can they turn children away when the need is so great!

- 1. BABS vocational training (tailoring, carpentry and electrical) as part of the curriculum for all Grades 9 and 10 students, plus a full time three-year tailoring class for older students: \$14,877**
- 2. BABS bedding for 50 new students: \$1,421**



READI Nepal, a small volunteer NGO in Humla, northwestern Nepal, is determined to bring education and health care to the dalit (low caste) and minority children from poor families. 30 children are housed in a rented hostel in Simikot, the tiny capital, and go to school. TRAS has paid for two teachers from the school to be trained in modern methods and the hostel cook trained to prepare local food (rather than expensive imported goods). A small library has been opened – they would love to expand it with more books. The children are doing exceptionally well in the year-end exams. Sensibly, READI is not enrolling more children at present, but taking things slowly, to make sure the project is on a sound footing. They have started trainings for the parents in income generating schemes, and are thinking about opening a small café and building a more suitable hostel that would also provide rental rooms for tourists.

READI Nepal Education, Health and Income Generation: \$18,546

INDIAN PARTNERS:

Voice Of Children, the project run by two Indian NGOs in the Nainital and Almora districts, is having an impact on 20 villages. The minimal staff and their volunteers are turning things around for hundreds of children through early childhood education, classes for drop outs, bridging classes, tutoring, uniforms and supplies for the poorest, and many educational workshops on health and children's issues. They advocate for the rights of the child, particularly for vulnerable girls, for education for all, and for proper health care. This year they have branched out to provide literacy classes for women in 4 villages (at their urgent request) and career counselling for older students, and are helping 4 of their staff earn Masters degrees in social work online. TRAS is supporting three projects for Voice of Children:



VOC Children

Voice Of Children Education: \$21,068

The 20 small Voice of Children libraries in villages around Nainital and Almora are doing well and have asked for further support. TRAS has agreed to help them develop for three years, by which time they must figure out ways to continue on their own. Already three of the villages have taken control of their own library, and the NGOs running the project have started collecting books from city folk for the villages.

Voice Of Children Library Development: \$4,800

After the devastating floods in June wiped out whole villages and thousands of people, VOC rushed to aid many families with emergency supplies. Now they want to go the next step and prepare for future disasters. This project will provide winter clothing for 340 children in the 3 worst affected villages who lost everything, but more importantly will train 50 young people in search and rescue techniques. Public education sessions will be conducted in all 20 villages (through the women's and children's groups) on disaster management and ways to keep safe in this region of earthquakes, landslides, floods and forest fires.

Voice Of Children Disaster Preparedness: \$5,582

In Padamchen, Sikkim, Lama Paljor's school is so popular, he has had to take in 25 more children. TRAS has agreed to continue providing hot lunches for a further year, while Lama Paljor works on plans to build a greenhouse to provide much needed vegetables. Land has been acquired next to the hostel, and an experienced woman hired to run the project.

Sikkim School Nutrition: \$4,433



VOC Libraries

The Tibetans are Coming!

Exciting news! The first contingent out of the 1,000 Tibetans whom Canada is planning to welcome over the next three years is almost on its way! Just over 200 Tibetans from Arunachal Pradesh will be arriving in Canada mid-December. The Canadian Government has invited them to come, but is completely leaving it up to the Canadian public to do the work of looking after them. Each person or family has to be supported for one year by a

'group of five' Canadians. So please talk this up with all your friends, churches, and service clubs – and see if we can't arrange for more Tibetans to be welcomed. Only 24 out of the initial 200 are coming to BC in this round, many helped by the Tibetan Cultural Society of BC and its friends. Surely we can do more to help! Contact resettlementvancouver@gmail.com for more information.

Sponsorship Report

We are hoping to find sponsors for these three children, one in Nepal at Buddha Academy and two in India at Tibetan Schools. These kids are just a few of the many TRAS is asked to help. If you are able to brighten the life of a child by letting him know that someone cares for him and will pay for his education, please contact the TRAS office (details on back page) and Russil Wvong, Sponsorship Director, will be in touch with you. The cost of sponsorship is \$440 per year. Thank you!

Note: photos of children born in Tibet or near the border are not published, but will be sent to the sponsor.

Buddha Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal

The sponsorship secretary writes, "**Nawang Pemba** is a boy of eight years old from a remote village called Thami in Mustang, Nepal. His parents (Wangchuk and Sonam Palmo) are farmers in the village and have four children including Nawang. Raising a family of 4 children is very difficult for seasonal farmers such as the parents of Nawang. Thus his family seeks help for his educational support. Nawang is the fourth child. He has 3 older brothers; two of them are monks in the village. Nawang seems very happy to be admitted in Buddha Academy School. We are now looking for a sponsor." A photo of a very cheerful Nawang will be sent to his sponsor.

Tibetan Homes Foundation in Mussoorie, north India was one of the first homes set up for Tibetan children when the Chinese took over their country in 1959. TRAS has a long history of helping to establish this excellent institution, renovating homes, building classrooms and vocational training workshops. TRAS members have sponsored many children there. Unfortunately Sangay's sponsor is no longer able to support him, so TRAS is looking for another sponsor for this lad. A photo will be sent to his new sponsor.

How to Donate

For project donations or to sponsor a child, you may send a cheque made out to TRAS to the office (see back page). You may pay by credit card by phoning the office Tues, Wed or Thurs at 604-224-5133, or if you wish to donate online, please go the TRAS website www.tras.ca and click on Donate Now. Thank you!

"**Sangyal Tsering** (nicknamed Sangay) was born in eastern Tibet on July 12, 1998. He has one older sister. His mother has died. His father is a farmer. When Sangay turned 6, he did not go to school in Tibet. There is no possibility of learning one's own language, culture & tradition in the schools in Tibet as everything that is taught is what the Chinese want to teach & also they charge huge money in the schools. Due to such reasons his father had decided to send him to India to receive a normal Tibetan upbringing with the opportunity of an education. He came with his father to Dharamsala. The escape journey from his hometown to Nepal was a tremendous experience for the child, walking through most of the journey, hiding from police & facing the wrath of the harsh weather. Ultimately he was one of the fortunate ones who made it through, otherwise there are several children who do not complete this journey but die on the way. He is now happy, enjoying school and doing well. Sangay is now studying in Grade 6. He is healthy, cute and hardworking, and loves playing football."

Dekyiling Tibetan Handicraft Centre near Dehradun, north India, was set up in 1980 to accept Tibetans coming from Bhutan to find a welcoming place to settle in exile. TRAS helped by building the large weaving hall which provides the main source of income in the settlement, and imports the colourful, shoulder bags the weavers make.

"**Tenzin Dasel** is a young girl of 8 years old, born in Dehradun on July 17, 2005. Her parents came from Bhutan when young with Tenzin's grandparents. She has 2 younger brothers.

She is studying in Grade 3 at the Dekyiling School. Her grandmother is working in the handicraft centre and her parents join with other winter business people to earn for their family. In summertime there is no work, although sometimes her father gets temporary work on construction sites. Like many other Tibetans, their main source of income is what they earn during three winter months of sweater selling around India. Parents find it hard to cope with payment for their children's education, and a sponsor would ease the family burden enormously."

TRAS

Supporting health and education for children and youth in the Himalayas

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Hello and Farewell

TRAS welcomes a new Office Manager

Robin Goulding holds a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations from the University of British Columbia and has extensive administrative experience in various sectors. She has had a passion for international development ever since her first trip abroad in high school, and has since done an internship with a women's rights organization in the Middle East, raised funds for waste management projects run by youth in Nairobi, Kenya, and currently volunteers with a Vancouver organization that supports refugees who have suffered trauma. Robin is very excited to join TRAS as the Office Manager and to support the efforts of the Board of Directors in achieving TRAS' very important mission in the Himalayan region.

As mentioned in the September newsletter, office manager Armila Shakya left TRAS at the end of August and we wish her well in her new career.



Tashi Chozon retires from Buddha Academy

Our many sponsors who have supported children over the years at Buddha Academy in Kathmandu will want to join us in thanking Tashi for her dedication to and love for the hundreds of destitute children who have been lucky enough to find a home at Buddha Academy over the past 20 years. Tashi and her late husband, Dorje Namgyal, nurtured the Academy from its humble beginnings to the impressive institution it is today. She leaves a well-run school, playing a huge role in helping the less fortunate in Nepal. We are happy that the assistant director, Mr. Mahabir Lama, and Tashi and Dorje's son, Tenzin, and the excellent staff will continue to keep

the Academy flourishing. Tashi has written to say, "I would like to thank your organization TRAS, all the Board directors and the wonderful people I have worked with during my years at BABS. It has been a pleasure working with you. Thank you for your trust in me. Please give my love and many thanks to all your board members and sponsors". We wish Tashi all the best in her retirement.