

Trans Himalayan Aid Society

CIDA APPROVES FINAL PAYMENTS FOR TRAS PROJECTS!

Three large TRAS/CIDA projects have been completed this year and TRAS is delighted to have received notice of CIDA's third and final payment for each of the programs.

The **Buddha Academy in Kathmandu** runs vocational training programs in tailoring, carpentry



Carpentry training at Buddha Memorial

and electrical work. In a region where hand-made articles are still prevalent, these trades are sought after, and the graduates have little trouble finding work. 200 students benefitted from this project, and the training is now incorporated into the regular school curriculum as well as in the fulltime vocational training.

Also in Nepal, the **Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP)** brought clean water, good governance, conservation management, tree nurseries, agriculture, women's empowerment

and literacy to 14 villages. The program also led to financial benefits from the creation of well-run campsites and lodges for the trekking business in this popular area. This was a huge project which has had enormous positive impact on the villages. Men and women have benefitted from trainings in agriculture, reforestation, kitchen gardens, goat rearing, nutrition and health. Adult literacy classes, savings and credit training, daycare centres and income generation schemes are empowering women to become equal players in their communities. The project has been lauded as a model for integrated rural development.



Trail building in the Annapurna area.

In northern India, TRAS/CIDA funding has helped **SHARE** to initiate efforts to clean up the environment, lower infant and child mortality rates, reduce prevalent diseases and encourage better health in 40 villages in the Kullu

Valley. TRAS first helped SHARE to build latrines. At first slow to be accepted, there are now nearly 1,000 latrines built and the villagers are building their own with no financial aid. Through SHARE, over 750 families have joined a health plan and are benefiting from monthly health worker visits! 3312 children and 400 infants have been vaccinated against childhood diseases. Now local doctors are taking over. A pilot project in waste management has led to cleaner villages, garbage separation, municipal banning of plastic bags and the purchase of a plastics crusher.

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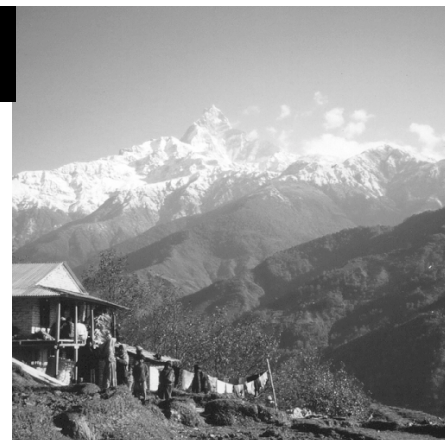
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Conflict in Nepal

The conflict in Nepal has now been raging for 10 years. According to Nepal's Informal Sector Service Center, over 12,000 people have been killed since 1996, approximately 36% by Maoists and 64% by the state. Between 2002 and 2004, the number of people displaced from their villages reached more than 38,000.

As a humanitarian organization, TRAS sees the effects of such a conflict on its projects. Buddha Memorial Home tirelessly works to house, feed and educate the increasing flow of poor, lone and orphaned children displaced to the city from their villages. Nagarik Aawaz has a long waiting list of displaced, traumatized youth eager to join the Displaced Youth Volunteer Program. Young 'conflict widows', displaced to the city, often with young children, after their husbands have been killed by one side or the other, seek support from Nagarik Aawaz, as do displaced families, the elderly, the wounded and others affected by the war.

For those of you who would like to learn more about the conflict in Nepal, come to TRAS's **Nepali Film Festival** on April 9 (see page 3), or search the internet. There are many informative sites, including:



www.nepalnews.com
www.kantipuronline.com
www.pdfnepal.com

www.nagarikaawaz.org.np/
www.inseconline.org
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

www.economist.com,
www.hrw.org
www.ifj.org

From the Himalayan Kitchen

Nepali Cuisine

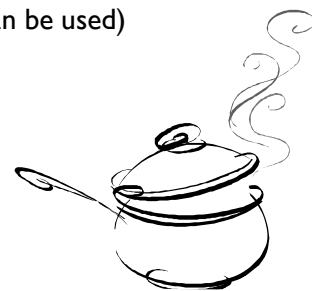
Nepali staples consist primarily of rice, wheat, corn, and lentils coupled with fresh vegetables and some meat. A typical Nepali meal is dhal (lentil soup), bhat (steamed rice) and tarkari (vegetables) and perhaps a little meat..

Enjoy dhal as a soup or over rice with a garnish of fresh chopped cilantro.

If you don't have time to cook your own dhal, try Abi Sharma's delicious version at Café Kathmandu, 2779 Commercial Ave.

Nepali Dhal (Lentil Soup Prepared with Spices)

2 cups black lentils (yellow or red lentils can be used)
 1 cup onion, finely chopped
 1 tsp turmeric
 1 tsp ground cumin
 1 tbsp ginger, minced
 3 crushed garlic cloves
 4 tbsp cooking oil
 6 cups broth or water
 Salt and Pepper



Rinse lentils. Soak in water overnight. Drain and rinse. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large saucepan. Add onions and cook until translucent. Remove. Add remaining oil. Fry turmeric, ginger, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper for 30 sec. Add lentils and onions and stir for a few minutes. Add broth and mix well. Bring to a boil, cover the pan and simmer for 45-60 minutes or until the lentils are tender (red lentils require less time) and a desired consistency. Remove from heat. Serve hot with rice or roti .

Nepali Film Festival

Sunday April 9; 1:00—6:30 pm at Langara College, 100 W. 49th Ave, Vancouver

TRAS, the Nepal Cultural Society of BC (NCSBC) and Langara College Continuing Studies are co-sponsoring **Vancouver's first Nepali Film Festival** on Sunday April 9. The one-day festival, featuring 4 films by contemporary Nepali filmmakers, is a fundraiser for TRAS projects supporting health and education of children and youth in Nepal.

Andolan Jaari Chha captures, on hidden camera, scenes of street-level protests in Nepal and their clampdown by armed forces.

Numafung tells the story of a young Limbu woman in rural eastern Nepal

struggling between the confining traditions of an arranged marriage and rapid modernizing processes.

The Killing Terraces explores the causes and tragic human casualties of the ongoing conflict in Nepal.

The light-hearted and inspiring **Bhenda Ko Oon Jasto** follows young Nepali pop musicians as they travel to rural Nepal in search of the origin of a folk song that they famously sang in a modern version.

Together, the films provide a complex, in-depth look at socio-economic conditions in Nepal today. All films have English subtitles.



Numafung



Bhenda Ko Oon Jasto

1:00 pm: Screening 1 **Andolan Jaari Chha; Numafung**
3:30 pm: Intermission *Himalayan displays, handicrafts, refreshments*
4:00 pm: Screening 2 **The Killing Terraces; Bhenda Ko Oon Jasto**
(plus a short film by the Vancouver Nepali community)
6:00 pm: Question/Answer Period

Tickets: \$10 per screening or \$16 full day (\$7.50/\$12 low income; seniors: students)

Langara College Continuing Studies, in person or by phone: 604.323.5323 (also at door)

Cafe Kathmandu -2779 Commercial Drive (cash only)

People's Co-op Bookstore -1391 Commercial Drive (cash only)

Videomatica -1855 West 4th Avenue (cash only)

Ten Thousand Villages -1204 Commercial Dr., 2909 W. Broadway, Vancouver (cash only)
 -1387 Marine Drive, West Vancouver (cash only)

Information: TRAS: www.tras.ca, 604-224-5133 or Jennifer Hales at nepalifilmfest@yahoo.ca

Nepal Facts

	<u>Nepal</u>	<u>Canada</u>
Population	27,676,500	32,805,000
Infant mortality rate (per 1000)	66.98	4.75
Life expectancy at birth	59.8 yrs	80.1 yrs
Literacy	45.2 %	97 %
Unemployment rate	47 %	6.8 %
Population below poverty line	42 %	15.9 %

Sponsorship

Threads of Destiny

There is an expression that comes from my parents' homeland, Estonia, the country they fled as refugees in 1944: "saatuse solmed", meaning literally, threads of destiny. I say these words whenever I wonder at the interconnectedness of all of us and everything. I said them when, 12 years ago, I first saw a picture of Tenzin Sangmo, a baby exactly my son's



Sangmo, aged 1, with her mother Dadon, shortly after their arrival from Tibet

age, in her mother's arms, newly arrived in Dharamsala after a perilous journey over the Himalayas from Tibet.

As a sponsor I have experienced a two-fold gratitude. Gratitude to be able to help Sangmo and her family, and gratitude to learn, in return, from their physical and

spiritual courage, from the beauty and richness of their culture, and from their boundless love and reverence for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. These teachings have come to me in the many letters, drawings and photos Sangmo and her family have sent over the past 12 years. And as one child became three, I began to dream of meeting them one day.

The words "saatuse solmed" came to me again on a misty July morning in Dharamsala last year as my daughter, Anna, and I were embraced by our "family" on the steps of the Tsuklakang, the Dalai Lama's temple, all of us too overcome with emotion to find words to express it. "One lovely door opened" it is said, "opens many doors"; and indeed, many unexpected joys followed that beautiful first meeting: making new friends at the GuChuSum school where our ESL skills were so appreciated; attending ten days of teachings by His Holiness; and seeing people everywhere, working passionately to ease the burdens born by Tibetan refugees.

Our heartfelt thanks to TRAS, to Bente Rehm for connecting Ratna Tara Mission and TRAS, and to Rinchin Gelek and Tenzin Phulchung of the Ratna Tara Mission for bringing our families together. May the threads of destiny by which we are joined form a

tapestry of hope for a better world for all our children.

Linda Kuttis-Kraulis
TRAS sponsor



Sangmo, in July 2005

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

From time to time, TRAS needs volunteers to help us with various tasks.

If you can help with any of the following please contact Debbi at the TRAS office (either by phone at: 224-5133 or email: tras@portal.ca)

- Newsletter mail out, (daytime)
- Newsletter layout
- Data entry, receipting and updates for our sponsorship program
- To help with events such as the film festival and a speaker series

Your help will be greatly appreciated!

Expedition with a Mission

Spiti August 7th – 31st 2006

Trek Escapes announces a special 24-day “**Expedition with a Mission**” to the remote Spiti Valley of northern India, which will be accompanied by TRAS past president and sponsorship director, Marion Tipple.

The **expedition** will travel overland from Delhi to Spiti, through the spectacular Himalayan scenery of Himachal Pradesh, visiting Shimla, the old British Hill Station, ancient monasteries, nunneries and remote communities.

The **mission** is to visit and help the Munsel Ling Tibetan Children’s School which TRAS has been supporting since it was in-

augurated by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama in 1996 and where we have an ongoing child sponsorship program. A portion of the trip cost will be donated to a TRAS project at the school.

From Spiti, the expedition continues through the rugged mountains of Lahoul into Ladakh with opportunities to explore the countryside on day hikes. Return is by air from Leh to Delhi.

Cost: From Vancouver all inclusive: \$6300. Land only: \$4050
For more information and a detailed itinerary, please contact: Jane Patrick at Trek Escapes. janep@trekescapes.ca



Tabo is one of the ancient monasteries of the Spiti valley that will be visited on the ‘Expedition with a Mission’ to Spiti this August.

Postcard

Tabo Monastery

At an elevation of 3050 metres, on a plain in northern India, at the southern end of the Spiti valley, just before it narrows to a gorge, stands the ancient monastery of Tabo overlooking the Spiti River. Founded by the great teacher and translator, Rinchen Tsang Po, the king of the Kingdom of Guge in 996, it is second only in importance to Tholing Monastery in the nearby Guge Kingdom.

Built according to the concept of the Mandala, Tabo is actually a complex of 9 temples, 23 chortens, and monks’ and nuns’ chambers, surrounded by a high mud wall. The main temple, containing the statue of Saravid Vairochana, is at the centre, surrounded by 32 statues in a perfect three-dimensional mandala, which expresses a particular system of cosmic evo-

lution. The walls of the Dukhang (main hall) are decorated with exquisite paintings dating from 996, some of which depict the life of Sakaymuni Buddha. 36 almost life-size clay statues arise from the walls. Adjacent to the monastery, the hillside is riddled with caves previously used as dwelling units by the monks. Some still contain remnants of paintings.

In 1996, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, celebrated Tabo’s 1000th birthday with a Kalachakra Initiation attracting thousands of people. Today, little has changed from more than a thousand years ago. Chanting starts at 6am, followed by morning pujas (prayers). Tantric rites are performed by the lamas in the temples and young monks are educated to continue the traditions.

Heinrich Harrer 1912 - 2006

When China invaded Tibet in 1950, most people had hardly ever heard of Tibet. Avid mountaineers, however, had long dreamt of the Himalayas as their ultimate goal. One of those, was Heinrich Harrer, born in Austria in 1912. Harrer, having conquered the infamous Eiger North Wall, was invited to join the German Nanga Parbat Expedition in 1939 under the leadership of Peter Aufschnaiter.

No sooner had the group completed the necessary reconnaissance in what is now northern Pakistan, than war broke out and they were taken prisoner. They ended up in a camp in Dehra Dun in India's foothills of the Himalayas. Harrer and Aufschnaiter escaped and although they suffered unspeakable hardship, finally arrived in Lhasa on January 15, 1946.

A wealthy family gave them shelter and food while their fate was decided by the authorities. They were objects of great curiosity and many visitors came to see them. Amongst the nobles, some spoke

excellent English and the two fugitives were invited to their homes, given new clothes and some money, and were treated most kindly. Finally they were granted asylum.

They showed their gratitude by making themselves useful. Aufschnaiter was commissioned to build an irrigation canal; Harrer, who was still recuperating from their long trek, offered to build a fountain in their host's garden. They were asked to do a survey of the town and build canals to control flooding.

They were often invited to the home of the Dalai Lama's parents and became very friendly with Lob-sang Samten, a brother of His Holiness who told them of the lonely life his young brother was leading in the Potala. The Dalai Lama was curious to meet these two foreigners and in time a friendship developed. He astonished his western friends with his eagerness to learn of the outer world and surprised them with the mass of very diverse



knowledge he had acquired in newspapers and books.

Sadly dark clouds gathered over Tibet with the threat of a Chinese invasion and Harrer left with a heavy heart. His book "Seven Years



in Tibet", first published in 1953, gives a detailed account of his experiences and put Tibet firmly on the map. It encouraged many people all over

the world to take an active interest in the fate of this unique country and its people.

Dorothea Leach
TRAS patron

Heinrich Harrer died on January 7, 2006 at the age of 93. He also wrote **Lost Lhasa: Heinrich Harrer's Tibet, Return to Tibet** and **The White Spider**.

Lhasa. Changing Face - A City in Transition

A photographic exhibition by
Marion Tipple
TRAS Director

March 16 - 30, 2006
The Moat Gallery
Vancouver Public Library
350 West Georgia, Vancouver

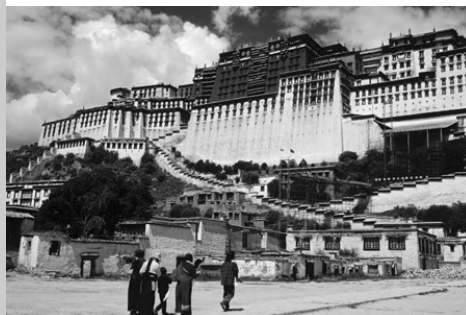


Photo by
Marion Tipple

Fundraising

Thank you for your generous response to the President's appeal in our December newsletter!

We raised over \$15,000 in donations, which have been matched by an anonymous donor - resulting in \$30,000 of funds which will help to support the projects we are committed to next year. These include: Vocational Training at the Buddha Memorial Academy in Kathmandu; Nurses Training programs in Dharamsala and Bangalore; the Lhasa Yuthok Kindergarten in Tibet; the Dekyling Creche (daycare) in India; the Little Flowers Creche in Dharamsala; and the Manali Environmental Education for Youth project.

As well as project donations, we received renewals of sponsorships for 210 children from our members. The children are located in 12 settlements or schools, with the majority of those sponsored at the Buddha Memorial Academy in Kathmandu.



We are most grateful for your ongoing commitment to helping children and youth in the Himalayan region and we look forward to reporting our progress to you in future newsletters.

2nd Annual Himalayan Evening

On **Friday, April 7th, 2006**, *The Himalayan Connection* at **Argyle Secondary School** in North Vancouver presents: "**A Himalayan Evening.**"

The evening begins at 6 pm with a delicious vegetarian Nepali dinner served by Argyle students. Local mountaineer and holistic practitioner, Brian Finnie, will then take you on an audio-visual journey along the sacred pilgrimage route to

Mount Kailash in the Himalayas. Throughout the evening, an exhibit of student artwork from Buddha Memorial (the TRAS artwork project) will be on view and Tibetan and Nepali crafts will be on sale.

This event marks the second year of an alliance between **Argyle Secondary School in North Vancouver and Buddha Memorial Academy in Kathmandu**. Proceeds from the event will sup-

port Buddha Memorial (www.bmch.edu.np/), a longstanding TRAS partner.

Last year, this event sold out, and raised over \$1000 for Buddha Memorial Academy.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and may be reserved by calling Brian Sheffield at 604-990-3571, or by emailing bsheffield@nvstd44.bc.ca.

Would You Like to Help TRAS Fundraise?

Students at Argyle Secondary School have discovered that fundraising can be fun for everyone! If you would like to get on the fundraising bandwagon, please call us at 604-224-5133. Here are some ideas:

- Organize an evening and invite a TRAS director to give a slide show and talk
- Hold a dinner (Indian, Nepali or Tibetan food) with entry by donation
- Organize a craft fair and sell TRAS Himalayan crafts
- Organize a Himalayan film night with your friends, entry by donation
- Hold an event/ fundraising drive to sponsor a child or support a TRAS project
- Donate to TRAS in memory of a loved one



Continued from page 1

CIDA is impressed with the success and sustainability of the projects and commends TRAS for its work.

TRAS extends a huge thank you to CIDA for its support and to our donors who have made TRAS involvement in these projects possible!

Share immunization program



If you have been kind enough to name TRAS in your will we would love to know so that we may extend our appreciation to you and acknowledge you as a legacy donor of TRAS.

NOTICE of TRAS

(Trans Himalayan Aid Society)

44th Annual General Meeting

7 PM Tuesday May 23, 2006

Lutheran Campus Centre
5885 University Boulevard
University of British Columbia
Vancouver

Handicrafts — Refreshments

All members are invited to attend.

(check www.tras.ca for updates)

TRAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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