

Translated by Mrs Armelle ROY, AET sponsor and volunteer, and corrected by Mrs Sheila Ahles. Thanks to them!

Page 3

The President's message

Dear Sponsors, dear Donors and Benefactors

Two agreements, which have been considered as essential by the Central Administration in Dharamsala, have just been signed.

The first thing to consider is that the schools for Tibetan refugees in India were managed by the Indian Department for the Development of Human Resources since 1961. But since April 2013, they have been and will be gradually affiliated to the CBST and that for about 3 years. Thus, the basic school-leaving certificate will have the same value in Tibetan schools as in Indian schools. As a consequence, all students will have access to both universities and prestige university-level colleges under the same conditions.

Secondly, on April 20th 2013, another agreement was signed for 5 years, (and renewable every 3 years) between the prestigious university of Mysore (which will celebrate its centenary next year) and the *Dalai-Lama Institute For Higher Education* in Bangalore, which is managed by TCV (over 450 students in 2013). This agreement concerns the exchange of teachers and the exam equivalence in three streams - Literature and Art, Information Technology and Commerce - It induces the exam equivalence between the College and the Mysore university partners all over the world. It will also boost the implementation of a Chinese learning programme inside the College, so that "working" with China becomes easier, and the training of an elite group may become important one day when a turn in history gives Tibet the opportunity to handle its destiny on its own...

So, now more than ever, education is seen as fundamental by the senior officials of the Tibetan community in exile. It gives the possibility to all the refugees to benefit from integration and social improvement and it also ensures the continued existence of their culture and of the values conveyed. Therefore, our role as sponsors is more than just financial support, for the children as well as for their whole families, whose situation remains precarious. The members of the board of directors who visit the Tibetan communities regularly are aware of their precariousness.

It is also our duty to give a new dimension to our commitment towards this people, and we can do so by spreading the ideals of their rightful and peaceful fight. The Board of Directors of AET is working in this direction. All the more so since the Tibetans in exile mean to prove their everlasting gratitude for the support they receive, by their active contribution to the well-being and future of their own community, as well as by their own good work.

Virginie Savin, AET Président.

AET GENERAL MEETING. The meeting will take place on **SATURDAY 26th APRIL 2014** in PARIS 11° from 2.00 to 6.00 pm. Those who need to buy their train tickets in advance should take note of this date.

You can join AET on Facebook at this address:

<https://fr-fr.facebook.com/AideEnfanceTibetaine>

Actions for Tibet

Page 4

Photos :

Top: © Anne and Franck Savary. Jetsun Pema, between Kunsang and Kelsang

Middle: © Anne and Franck Savary. Anne in control !

Bottom: © Anne and Franck Savary. Your teeth thou shall brush...

AET sponsors in Ladakh

Anne and Franck are AET sponsors and both of them are dentists. For several years, they have been voluntarily using their skills in the service of Tibetan children... Sometimes, during their summer "holidays", you can meet them in Choglamsar where they work without respite, with a smile on their faces. Story by Anne and Frank :

Helping children to save their teeth :

If the motto of AET is « Help a people to save its culture », ours could be : « Help children to save their teeth », and these are not empty words...

In 2005, Mrs Jetsun Pema-la drew the attention of charity organizations to the very poor dental state of TCV children. This message was transmitted by AET, a charity through whom we sponsor a child. As dentists, we could not but be touched by this call and we offered to go on an evaluation mission that was accepted by AET. This was the beginning of a wonderful dental and human adventure.

Our first mission started in August 2007 in Ladakh and we actually saw for ourselves the appalling dental state for the children of the TCV in Choglamsar and its branch schools. But at the same time we discovered wonderful children, an amazing culture and a breath-taking but tough living environment. We thought we HAD to help them.

It should be pointed out that a small dental surgery with two dentists: Kalsang and Kunsang, already existed, but it no longer benefited from the help of charities. Years ago, Global Dental Relief had created this small surgery and set up a dental project which was unfortunately suspended in 2002. In other TCVs, such as Dharamsala, Suja, Mussorie, other dentists used to work, who were helped by Australian, Belgian or other charities.

So we thought that another dental dynamics should be recreated in order to improve the problem of tooth decay that was discouraging the 2 dentists and was simply too much for them.

So we contacted some former dentists of Global Dental Relief who were pleased to go back to Ladakh and we set up two yearly dental missions with technical support and supply of dental material, (thanks to the help of the Henry Schein French dental laboratory). We, the group of dentists, brought an innovative response thanks to a dental product called "Fluoplat" which is unfortunately available only from Argentina. This product stabilizes tooth decay in young children's teeth easily, painlessly and at a very low cost. It should be pointed out that we could find up to 8, 10, 12 cavities out of 20 teeth in 3 year-old children's mouths... This is an enormous amount and it is unmanageable in terms of standard dental care.

Page 5

Photos

Top : © Armelle Roy. And it makes Frank laugh?

Bottom : © Armelle Roy. Not even bothered !

At the same time, we focused on prevention: the educational message was transmitted by teachers, stressing the importance of brushing teeth with fluoride toothpaste and relayed by amalas who are more and more involved in the process. (A big "Thank you" to you - teachers and amalas!!!)

We approached other dental associations, especially foreign ones, in order to harmonize our work in the different TCVs and put pressure on the Central Tibetan Administration and the directors of TCVs so that sweets of any kind be banned in TCV canteens. That was done, and the situation is improving, even if the children now jump out of the frying pan into the fire: they may no longer eat sweets but they make a beeline for fatty salted biscuits...

The Apolline Association started to renovate the Choglamsar dental surgery in 2011 and one of the dentists in our group completed its implementation last summer.

Nowadays, the two dentists have received the help of a dental technician (a prosthesis maker), Tsering Choenden, and they all work in a beautiful building with two dental laboratories. One day a week, this dental surgery is also open to outside patients, who come in large numbers.

In 2001, AET offered TCV Ladakh an outstanding mobile dental unit worth 3000€, so that dental treatment could be given in TCV branch schools such as Sumdo and Nyoma mainly attended by nomadic children.

To cut a long story short, since our first visit in 2007 and after 4 more visits, a dynamics was created. Everyone has made their contribution and nowadays our dentist friends Kalsang, Kunsang and Tsering have everything they need to significantly improve the dental state of Tibetan children. That is what we explained to Mrs Jetsun Pema la who honoured us with her presence last summer, and we also added that her 2005 message had been heard.

But in addition to this we would like to thank AET that gave us the privilege to meet wonderful, courageous, extremely kind people and children who affect us deeply and who will remain in our hearts for ever.

However, much remains to be done, but we "never give up!"

Anne et Franck Savary

ACTIVELY INVOLVED DENTISTS IN LADAKH

In July 2009, my husband and I met Anne and Frank, a Breton couple who are dentists and who spend their holidays ... checking the (very) decayed teeth of our Tibetan kids in Choglamsar and Agling. They have been coming to Ladakh since 2007 and they have finalized a process to eradicate the terrible tooth decays that sometimes affect all the teeth in some children's mouths. Those whose teeth are intact are few and far between!

To be followed on page 6

Page 6

Photos

Top: © Véronique Magne. Tenzin Woesser with the khata, on the left side of Patrick.

Top middle: © Véronique Magne. HH Dalai-Lama's visit : a shower of blessings !

Bottom middle: © Véronique Magne. Hard-working students in the library.

Bottom: © Véronique Magne. The librarian is Tibetan.

This protocol defined by Anne and Frank seems very easy to follow by the Tibetan dentists in charge of the dental care on the long run, and it takes very little time per child. However, after 4 years, we find that Anne and Frank are a little disheartened, though smiling and still extremely kind to the children who open their mouths without trembling and bravely spit into the bin.

This summer, they were accompanied by Jérôme Salmon, a dentist in Lyon who is coming for the 6th time. **Our three friends have a request to the sponsors who come and visit their children: "Please, do not give them sweets! Give them a toothbrush and toothpaste instead!"** Is it a dentist's joke?

Armelle Roy.

AET SPONSORS MEET THEIR GODCHILDREN IN LADAKH

Last summer's AET trip to Ladakh was organized by Gilbert Leroy and its success can also be attributed to the combined efforts of our friends: Tibetans with all the staff in Choglamsar, but also Zanskaris and Ladakhis. During this trip, AET sponsors could discover or rediscover a magnificent area. **Véronique and Patrick Magne** sent us wonderful photos that reminded us of each step of this trip, the programme of which can be a source of inspiration for every individual traveller.

« On July 23rd, 21 people started their trip to Leh, via Delhi, guided by Janine and Gilbert. We arrived on 24th in the morning and were welcomed at *Jigmet Guesthouse*, a small hotel run by a friendly Ladakhi family and we immediately felt at home there. During the first two days of acclimatization (Leh is at an altitude of 3500m) we visited the town and the surrounding monasteries: Alchi and Basgo, with a picnic under some apricot trees.

On Saturday afternoon, we met our godchildren at TCV Choglamsar and it was a deeply moving moment for everyone of us. Some sponsors and children were meeting for the second or third time, whereas for others it was the very first time they met. The next day, Sunday, we all went shopping at the Tibetan market, we had lunch together in a restaurant and we spent the afternoon resting in the guesthouse garden.

On Monday morning, we had an outstanding experience which was not scheduled: we went to welcome HH the Dalai Lama at the airport and stood among a guard of honour formed by all the Tibetan and Ladakhi population. Some people came from very far away - some had even walked for several days. »

To be followed on page 7

Page 7

Photos

Top: © Véronique Magne. Going straight to Sabu under blazing sun!

Middle: © Véronique Magne. Everything always ends up with a picnic.

Bottom: © Armelle Roy. A downpour of table tennis bats!

On Wednesday, we visited the TCV buildings: the library, the classrooms, the hostels for orphans or children whose parents live far away, then we had lunch in the home of some families. On that occasion, we met our god-daughter Tenzin Woesser's family, and enjoyed an excellent meal consisting of traditional momos, washed down with tea.

On Thursday, we visited the monastery of Lamayuru and then on Friday, the monasteries of Shey, Thiksey and Stakna, this time with the children. We all had a nice meal in a restaurant. For the next meeting with the children, on Saturday, we all went on a short trek, from Leh to Sabu, through the mountain and we had a picnic in Sabu.

And for our last day with the children, on Sunday, a big picnic had been planned. So we took the bus with all the necessary food and cooking pots, because the lunch was supposed to be prepared on the spot. But it is not easy to find a little bit of greenery and shade in the mineral

desert of Ladakh ... We eventually found a perfect place at the foot of Shey monastery, by the water. That day was full of joy, even if everybody knew that at the end we would have to say good-bye, because we were supposed to leave on the following day.

Véronique et Patrick Magne

TABLE-TENNIS BATS FOR TCV CHOGLAMSAR

Some Tibetan children are playing table-tennis on concrete tables built in several places of the TCV. The young child sponsored by friends of our area is looking at them enviously. I ask him if he can play and he gives me a positive answer, adding that he LOVES it, but that he does not have a bat. An idea takes root, which I immediately share with my husband and our Swiss friends: what about buying table-tennis sets for all the family homes in Choglamsar? Some time later we talk about it with Mr Rabten who readily agrees with the idea, adding that there are more tables in the girls' and boys' hostels. We count the number of sets to buy : 26 family homes and 6 hostels. Will it be possible to find 32 table-tennis sets in Leh?

So we go to the nearest toy shop in Choglamsar and find 12 sets. Mr Rabten's wife makes a phone call and we should get the missing sets the day after. This is "Incredible India": Everything is possible; you just have to ask for it!

The day after, the bats are at the office and we only have to give them to the home mothers and hostel wardens, so that young people no longer look enviously at table-tennis players ... The new problem now is: Will there be enough tables? Nothing is perfect!...

Armelle Roy

Page 8

© **Armelle Roy. Ani-la and the 16 nomadic children.**

© **Armelle Roy. Their first ice-cream ever !**

FIRST SHOPPING DAY IN LEH FOR 16 NOMADIC CHILDREN

16 children went shopping for the first time in their lives! Our names are Armelle and Patrick and we are DR 25. Last summer, we arrived in Ladakh with a Swiss couple, Laurence and Raphaël. Together we brought a small sum of money donated by members of our families and friends, about 400€.

So we asked Mr Tenzin Rabten, the general sponsorship secretary, to share this sum between children in great need, as we do almost every year. But this year the sum is larger and he has a better idea: take some children shopping with us. Yes, this is a very good idea, and we agree to this right away. But how to choose among all the children? This is not an easy task. The first idea is to choose orphans or semi-orphans.

But one of the amalas, who knows her children well, thinks that most nomadic children, though not orphans, deserve more to be part of this group, because they have never been out of the TCV, they have never been shopping in Leh. And all the amalas of the 26 family homes subscribe to this idea. They choose 16 of the poorest ones.

The sum of money is divided into several parts: 3 taxis from Choglamsar to Leh and back, a meal at a nice restaurant for everyone, ice-creams and the shopping itself. Each child will receive 2000 INR. So we prepare 16 envelopes. We are supposed to meet in town at 10.00 am. There will be 4 of us and a secretary of the TCV, Ani la. The children are aged from 5 to about 16 years old.

We start with shoes, the most expensive article. Because these children will spend the winter in their families in the Jhangthang, the high altitude pastures where it is very cold, they need strong and warm shoes. The children are very shy, they hardly speak but they eye the shop windows intensely. As they all have different tastes, we go to several shoe-shops. They write their names on the envelopes, because some shoes are more expensive than others. After about an hour, all the kids have new shoes and are delighted, and so are we, because thanks to Ani la, the shopkeepers have given us a very good deal.

We then go to the ice-cream parlour and order chocolate ice-creams for all the children. Eyes are sparkling, the older ones say it is the first ice-creams in their lives. They say "It's cold, but it's good!" There are 16 children in this tiny parlour, but they make absolutely no noise. They keep their pleasure locked up inside.

To be followed on page 9

Page 9

Top © Armelle Roy. Some very tempting backpacks !

Bottom: © Armelle Roy. The nicest table !

Then we go to the Tibetan market for clothes. The children do not have the same needs, some want warm jackets, others thick trousers, or a watch, lots of them cannot resist a nice backpack for school things. The shopkeepers are all Tibetan and know Ani la very well, and their own children are students at the TCV. Their prices are very reasonable, and the children can buy several items.

After the market, Ani la takes us, walking in single file, to a wholesaler's where socks are at a rock-bottom price, but there are also nice, inexpensive T-shirts and tracksuits. The last rupees are spent and we add some if needed. But none of them take advantage of the situation.

All the children have brand-new clothes and shoes now, so it is time for lunch. We have booked in a big garden restaurant where a long table is reserved for us all, with tarpaulins to protect everyone from the sun. The children cannot believe such a place exists, however this does not mean that they make more noise...

Both Ani la and we are convinced that they will all choose momos, the traditional Tibetan raviolis that our own godchildren love so much! But what a surprise! No momos are ordered. They prefer thugpa, a delicious vegetable soup with fresh pasta, or other Tibetan dishes. No one is tempted to taste pizza or hamburgers. But they order drinks such as Coca Cola or mango juice or Limca, unknown in the TCV. As there is some money left for dessert, we order small fresh almond biscuits.

The time has come to go back to TCV. We take the last group photos and the children thank the generous donors. They all promise to write a letter and sign it.

When we meet these children again, a week later, they all wave to us with bright eyes, remembering the joy of their first day shopping.

We will definitely repeat the experience!

Armelle Roy

Address of the TCV Choglamsar

Some absent-minded sponsors still write to the previous address in Sonamling, their letters get lost, and never reach their recipients. So please note the present address and do not forget it:

Tibetan SOS Children's Village
P.O. Choglamsar
Leh Ladakh – 194101
(J & K) INDIA

Page 10

Actions for Tibet HELPING A PEOPLE SAVE THEIR CULTURE

Immediately after it was founded by Annie Sudrat, AET chose the path of concrete action: that of sponsoring, to help the Tibetans and their cause : for every child and every refugee family, who are too poor to finance their studies, there is a French sponsor who holds out his or her hand and becomes conscious of their existence. However, time is now running out, the situation is becoming critical.

Let us reflect upon the action of AET

At the meeting of the Board of Directors, on September 28th, there was a debate resulting from another meeting earlier this summer between the committee of our French National Assembly and the main charity organizations working for the Tibetan cause and the Tibetans. AET was represented by Gilbert Leroy. We are deeply aware that **all the organizations should work together and unite their efforts to help Tibet.**

First step: a new subheading can be found on our website in the section EVENTS. It is called **Other Tibet News**, and comes after the news about the actions of AET Paris and the Regional Delegations. In this subheading, you can find a selection of events about Tibet; for example the conference called "China and its Western satellite countries" or the projection of the film by Mickael Perlam "*Tibet: Beyond Fear*" in two Parisian cinemas, as well as Tibetan days of action days in Bron, near Lyon, or in Le Vigan, in the Gard Département, where AET tried to send some sponsors as representatives.

Do not hesitate to keep AET informed, by sending a precise description or even a poster that can be displayed on the website, in order to make the work of volunteers easier. At the last General Assembly, a large number of sponsors requested various news items.

We thank the Arte TV Channel which again broadcast the film by Shi Ming and Thomas Weidebach "*Kampf um Tibet*" / "*Struggle for Tibet*" Rugya Adak, the nomad from Lithang who was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment, can be seen on the screen proclaiming his indignation and his loyalty to HH the Dalai Lama. In this film, the floor is given at some length to Li Jiangling, a Chinese historian who is a political refugee in the USA and a specialist on Shoah and Tibet who denounces the economic aims of China; to Weiluo who predicts an inevitable war over water, as well as to Wang Lixiong, friend and husband of Tsering Woesser.

More news about the famous blogger **Tsering Woesser** : the French publishing-house "Indigène" have announced the forthcoming release of a 50-page- book called "**Self-immolations in Tibet – Shame on the world**". Ask for a copy in your bookshop!

Two copies of the film about the self-immolations produced by the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) are available. They were delivered to AET headquarters by one of the administrators who left to India last summer and can be viewed at AET headquarters (in English).

The last self-immolations in Tibet :

Tenzin Sherab, 31, May 27th

Wangchen Dolma (F) 31, June 11th

Kunchok Sonam, 18, July 20th

Karma Nyedon Gyatso (Nepal) 37, August 6th

Shishung, 41, September 28th

Yundrung, 27, September 29th

They are mentioned by name, so that they do not remain only numbers.

Page 11

1 Top © The poster of the Rail club of Meaux

2 Bottom © Boris Lelong 's CD cover

This is how life goes at AET

Welcome to Sara.

At the beginning of May, Cyril Ledent handed his resignation from the position he had been holding at AET for many years and some sponsors must have been surprised to no longer hear his voice on the phone. The Board of Directors thanked him most warmly for these numerous years spent among us and wished him good luck for his future job. At the end of the membership (recruitment?) campaign launched by AET, and after a 2 month-trial period, the new Management Assistant is Sara Caillère. Our apologies (We apologize) for any inconvenience caused to any of you.

Thank you Armelle

Our dynamic Regional Representative for the Doubs has just retired from her full-time job. Consequently, Armelle Roy will devote her skills and energy to the service of AET even more than before. She herself proposed, without any pressure from any of the administrators, translating the whole *Tashi Delek magazine* into English for our Tibetan friends, who feel frustrated not to be able to read it. This is quite a considerable ask and we thank her for her decision.

Some events organized in support of AET projects

The Rail Club of the Meaux Region

A big "thank you" to Mrs Bourdic, an AET sponsor, thanks to whom the Rail Club of the Meaux Region transferred the profits resulting from the railroad network and model exhibition to an AET project. This exhibition took place in the VIP Lounge of the Meaux city hall during the weekend of June 22nd and 23rd, and on this occasion Mrs Bourdic held a stall selling Tibetan handicraft.

Meeting with Boris Lelong

This meeting was organized on Sunday 29th September, on a barge named Le Calife, on the river Seine in Paris. This barge was kindly loaned to AET, free of charge. The meeting proved to be a

success for the 60 or more sponsors who gathered to attend an exceptional conference in an exceptional setting. The original theme, the music and songs of Tibet, bears witness to a living culture. The exchange with the audience was very warm. Boris Lelong's CD can still be purchased at AET office.

To be noted on your calendar !

- The project entitled “ **Five objects for a project**” will commence **as soon as you receive your Tashi Delek magazine nb 76**, in connection with the Christmas Hamper Campaign. AET has selected 5 handicraft items to be sold and all the profits resulting from the sale will be dedicated to elderly people.
- As part of the Christmas traditions, the Works Council of Dassault-Aviation has accepted to host the stands of the AET handicraft exhibition on December 2nd and 3rd. In 2013, the Works Council contributed to the purchase of new mattresses for TCV Suja.
- A small inset on page 12 reminds us of the theatrical presentation that was already announced in TD nb 75. This event is organized by Martine Parlarrieu, who is Secretary to the Board of Directors and the new Regional Representative for Paris. The profits from this event will also be part of the project for elderly people. It will be held on **Sunday 8th December** in Paris.
- On the occasion of **Losar 2014**, (but a little in advance) on **Friday 7 February** Martine invites you to attend a concert (Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner...). Just turn the page to see the “invitation”!

Page 12. A Concert in support of AET

Top © Armelle Roy. Offerings for Losar

An invitation to celebrate Losar 2014

Dear sponsors and supporters

As you may know, it is often difficult to bring several friends together and organize a party. However I will ask you all, Tibetans, friends and supporters to exceptionally answer my call to celebrate Losar 2014. We can all meet together to support our Tibetan friends, in Tibet or in exile, and send them our warmest greetings and best TASHI DELEK for their New Year.

FRIDAY, 7th FEBRUARY, at 08.30 pm. Neither rain nor snow should prevent you from attending the beautiful concert of sacred music which will be graciously given by the vocal ensemble “Jubilate Deo”, with 30 choir members, soloist and organ. Conducted by Laurent Vauclin, this programme will include the music of Mendelssohn, Brahms, Bruckner and Bach.

Following the music and songs of the Himalayas which we discovered last September on Le Calife barge, what a wonderful musical evening in store!

Along with the members of the Board of Directors, I am looking forward to sharing this evening with you in the **Church St André de l'Europe, 24 bis, Rue de Saint Petersburg, Paris 8° (metro Liège-Europe, Place Clichy)**. Admission : free **(at your discretion)**.

The date of the concert is not the exact date of Losar, but I trust you will understand that, between the musicians' timing and the booking of a suitable hall, for a minimal cost, it is not that easy to make the dates coincide....

Please pass this information around to as many people as possible, and come in large numbers!

Sara and I will be happy to send you the posters and flyers to help you and us in promoting all the events.

Many thanks

See you soon!

Martine Parlarrieu

December 8th, theatre performance in Paris in favour of AET.

Situated close to the Luxembourg and Panthéon, the **Maison Fraternelle, 37 Rue Tournefort, Paris 5°** (Métro Monge) will host the **Compagnie des Z'humbles**, whose actors support AET and will perform two short plays: "**A marriage proposal**" by **Tchekov** and "**Les Boulingrins**" by **Courteline**.

Afternoon tea with a musical accompaniment will be served during the interval, and also a sale of Tibetan handicraft.

You can book your seats by sending a cheque to AET postal address: **20€ for an adult, 10€ for a child above 12**. Please make cheques payable to AET.

About Losar 2014

The date of Losar is usually calculated by astrologers according to the lunar calendar. So the date is always different, and varies between January and March. Next year, the Tibetans will start the year of the **Wood Horse 2141** on March 2nd, 3rd and 4th 2014. The first year was that of the beginning of King Nyatri Tsenpo's reign, in 127 BC.

Page 13 EXTRA HELP FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

Top : © Martine Giraudon. Two old-age ladies in Agling refugee camp (Ladakh)

Middle : © Martine Giraudon. Cash distribution in Agling, with Tenzin Rabten

Bottom : © Martine Giraudon. In Choglamsar, the day after, with SonamYoudon

It was as a result of an urgent request from the Tibetan authorities that AET was obliged to increase the price of the sponsorship for school children and University students. The amount was approved by all the members of the General Assembly held on the occasion of AET's 30th

anniversary. However AET wished to keep the price of the sponsorship unchanged for elderly people. It is 20€ per month. But the Campaign called “Extra help for elderly people”, which started last summer, should help to collect the missing funds caused by the price inflation in India and by the cost of extra medical expenses due to old age. One of AET administrators went to India last summer and met some of the old people. He sent us this short report.

Elderly people are Tibet’s living memory and AET considers it its duty to help them. As soon as they were able to, the Tibetans have provided the basic needs for their old people. Mr Tenzin Rabten is the person in charge at TCV Choglamsar and he is known to everyone visiting it; when asked about old people, he reminds us of the distinctive characteristics of his area: the management of Old People’s Homes and elderly people in general is the task of the Department of Home of the Tibetan Central Administration, whereas in Ladakh this management was transferred to TCV in 1975.

There are about 400 elderly people all together, 39 of whom are at Choglamsar old people’s home, which can be visited (as soon as you leave the village main road and take the road to SOS TCV School, it is on the left side) and 17 former nomads are at the old people’s home of Nyoma, higher in altitude, in the Jhangthang. The rest of the old people, sometimes severely physically affected, live with their families who are scattered in the different refugee camps. Every month, Mr Rabten-la and a bursar distribute 300 Indian Ruppees to each old person as pocket money. The rest of the allocation is devoted to clothes, food and medicine. As soon as hospitalization and surgery or housing improvement are concerned, it is necessary to raise specific funds.

I was present at such a distribution on the morning of July 17th, and Mr Tenzin Rabten asked me to take photos to be sent to the old people’s sponsors the following winter. As many of them are unable to read and write, they have to leave their thumbprints as signatures. Younger handicapped or retarded adults, who are unable to earn a living, are also included in this category. When I was in Agling with Mr Rabten-la, some TCV secretaries had also accomplished the same task in other areas around Choglamsar. As for those who did not arrive in time, they can always come to the TCV Choglamsar and settle the situation later.

P 14 EXTRA HELP FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

Photos

© **Martine Giraudon. TseringWangdu and his sponsor’s mail. In Dhobi.**

© **Martine Giraudon. Kunchok Choephel, 80 years old.**

© **Monique Piat. At Kalimpong old people’s home, Sikkim.**

At the Department of Home of the Tibetan Central Administration in exile in Dharamsala, I was glad to meet again Mrs Dolma Shosur, assistant secretary in charge of Old People’s Homes (OPH) which means about 15 of them in India, in Nepal and in Bhutan. These OPH are of various sizes: in Dharamsala, there are 156 old people, whereas only 25 in Chauntra, and the largest one is in Mundgod, South India, with 200 old people. In Herbertpur, near Dehradun, the OPH has a capacity of 120 beds, and accepts only men, all of whom are former Tibetan soldiers in the Special Frontier Force (SFF) of the Indian army.

AET sponsors are frequently surprised by the difference in numbers between men and women in Old People’s Homes. There should be more women, because they are supposed to live longer than men, they think. However Mrs Dolma Shosur explains that in 1959, lots of monks took up arms and became soldiers but never got married. On the other hand, women are more

autonomous and prefer to live on their own, entering Old People's Homes as late as possible. Lots of them also died prematurely because they were weakened by a harsh way of life in exile. For example, in Jampaling Old People's Home, in Dharamsala, there are 46 women compared to 110 men, nearly all of them former monks and former soldiers.

With a smile, she adds that couples happen to form in the course of time in these OPH and a marriage party is celebrated which adds a bit of spice to everyday life.

Health is one of the main focal areas as far as old people are concerned and among the 76 staff in the 15 OPH, nurses are vastly superior in numbers. The cost of any kind of surgery, for example that of a knee-replacement, is well over one lakh (100 000 INR) and the budget has to be managed wisely.

Many old people also live in their own houses, alone or with their families who support them because they have no job and no retirement pension. Some old people may also have a dependent person to care for, as is the case of the old woman from Tezu whom I sponsor, and who looks after her son who suffers from TB and is unable to work.

Compassion is the common denominator among all these old people who are preparing for their future reincarnation, and who meditate on the meaning of life according to Lord Buddha. They also pray for us, their sponsors, and one day I was told that old people's prayers were particularly beneficial because of their strong power.

Martine Giraudon

P 15 Current AET projects

Photos :

1 Top © Martine Giraudon. NorbuTsering, after his surgery.

2 Bottom © Martine Giraudon. In Parabling, roads and paths full of potholes.

Every month, the AET Board of Directors meets to study the feasibility of the development projects that are suggested either by the members in charge of the Tibetan community in exile, or by the members of the Board of Directors themselves who visit the refugee camps in India or in Nepal (at their own expense) and bring back project files.

If you wish to finance a project of your choice, please mention it in your mail. Every year you will receive a tax receipt since AET donations are tax-deductible and you can deduct up to 66% to a maximum of 20% of your taxable income. Thank you for your unfailing generosity.

Recently financed projects

Additional financing in Ladakh (India)

6 toilet blocks have been completed. 3 more need to be financed in Choglamsar and 4 more in Hanley. A German association has financed half of these costly installations, for which AET is sending an additional 11 000€. In addition a jeep was purchased in Choglamsar, AET has already financed 6000€ but a further 4000€ had to be added.

Extra Help for Old People in India

The Tibetan Central Administration recently informed us that they encounter difficulties in providing financial help to needy old people, who live either in their own houses or in Old People's

Homes. Therefore, AET decided to launch a campaign in their favour, which was announced in TD 75. On May 15th, the Board of Directors voted a first contribution of 10 000€.

Extra help for 5 College students in India and Nepal.

AET is aware of the difficulties of College students with low incomes and various actions have been taken : 1000€ were sent to **Tsering Wangmo** to finance his 3rd year and 600€ to **Diki Dolker**. Both girls are studying nursing in Nepal. In India, **Yangzom**, who wishes to become a physics and chemistry teacher, needed an additional-sum of 300€. 460€ were sent to both **Tenzin Donsel** and **Tenzin Wangdu**, who are respectively studying Commerce and Art.

Extra help campaign for school children in Nepal

AET is sending 6000€ altogether: 1500€ for each of the 3 big schools where AET sponsors students, and 1500€ for the other schools managed by SLF. In addition, AET is sending 500€ for the renovation work at Namgyal Higher School in Katmandu.

AET's participation in the treatment of NorbuTsering (India)

In Kullu-Manali Valley, AET have already helped financially this young secondary-school student who has had brain surgery and who is also greatly supported by his sponsor. The 500€ sent were taken from the health funds of AET.

Participation in the works in Parabling, India.

With the sum of 4,000€ AET is financing the sub-soil drainage and the reinforcement of roads in the refugee camp of Dhobi, Himachal Pradesh, (where there is an OPH).

Page 16 Current AET projects

Photos

Top © Martine Giraudon. New mattresses for TCV Suja

Bottom © Martine Giraudon. SonamDolma, in Choglamsar

AET's participation in the financing of the staff office building in MajnuKaTilla (Tibetan district in Delhi, India)

AET decided by vote to send **4500€** to finance the extension of the out-patient clinic at the camp of Samyeling in the Tibetan district of MajnuKaTilla, in Delhi.

Campaign for Bangalore University (Southern India)

AET is in a position to send **3000€** once again. The last report about Bangalore University, along with recent photos, dated April 2013, can be consulted on the site in the section ACTION.

2013 Projects still in need of financing

Purchase of classroom furniture for classes XI and XII at TCV Suja (India)

The distinctive characteristic of TCV Suja is to take in a large number of students coming directly from Tibet. It was authorized to open classes XI and XII and consequently needs 210 desks and 210 chairs, for a total of 5 500€.

Purchase of 56 mattresses for the OPH of Katmandu, Nepal.

This project is for the Old People's Home managed by the Tibetan Women Association for which AET have already financed several projects. The total cost is **2500€**.

News of projects already financed by AET

The different Tibetan boards thank the sponsors and donors by sending photos and reports.

The project of water pumps in Kollegal, South India.

This 2012 project concerned the 22 villages of Dhondeling Camp with a population of 5104 inhabitants. Up to that date, the only drinkable water was rainwater. You can read the recent report on the AET site in the section ACTION.

Campaign for the Ngoenga School, India.

The last transfer of 6100€ is once again allotted to the salary of the assistant-physiotherapist Dawa (600€) and will finance the sponsorships of 9 young people for about 5 months. It is evident that 27€ per month for sponsoring a handicapped person is far from being enough, because of all the necessary expenses. The school has also provided a brief description of the young people there, which can be read on the site.

Sonam Dolma's surgery (India)

One of our administrators has met her in Choglamsar, Ladakh. She lives with her family, not at the OPH. She gets the appropriate moral and physical support, but she has difficulty walking on crutches and she rarely gets out of her bed.

The mattresses at TCV Suja(India)

These mattresses were financed jointly by Dassault-Aviation works council and AET and have been delivered to Suja. They are beautiful, and according to the AET administrator who went there, all the children are very happy and will make them last as long as possible. They are really luxurious mattresses, I promise you!

Pages 18 NEWS FROM SOME SPONSORS **Seven friends of Tibet in Sikkim**

Photos

Top © Monique Piat. At the refugee centre in Darjeeling

Middle © Monique Piat. In Ravangla, this jeep was financed by AET

Bottom © Monique Piat. Meeting with Mr LobsangDhundup and JampaNobling

AN “ALMOST OFFICIAL” TRIP

During the general meeting of the Regional Delegations on April 14th 2013, our President Virginie Savin asked us to see about a request for a project from the Settlement of Ravangla, Sikkim. We were also supposed to bring back some letters from children to their sponsors.

There, we were warmly welcomed by Mr Lobsang Dhundup and Jampa Nobling, the coordinator, and this on two occasions.

Mr Lobsang profusely thanked all the sponsors for their support of the children and the Tibetan people. This was a highly emotional moment

The official settlement car, financed by AET, was loaned to us to get to the airport. We also met sponsored children and we gave them the gifts on behalf of their sponsors. They also gave us gifts in return and we forwarded them on our arrival in France.

Laurent Quillet is writing the account of our trip (see next paragraph)

Monique et Bernard Piat, Regional Delegation 86 (Centre of France)

Seven friends of Tibet in Sikkim

Delhi, April 13rd, 2013. On our arrival in India, the temperature is 40°. There are 7 of us, 3 couples and a single person, and we are heading to Sikkim where we are supposed to meet the children we sponsor. This is our fourth trip to Ravangla Settlement, except for 3 of us who are coming for the first time.

The day after, we take the domestic flight to Bagdogra, where Jampa Nobling, the AET coordinator in Ravangla, is waiting for us. After visiting the famous tea plantation of “Makaibari”, we take the “toytrain” in Kurseong. This small Himalayan train, classified by Unesco, takes us to Darjeeling. There, we visit several monasteries, a museum, a zoo, and then we continue to Kalimpong, where we meet up again with some old friends who invite us for breakfast with tea, cakes and other treats.

On May 2nd, we arrive in Ravangla. We always stay at the same hotel. Shortly after our arrival, we are invited and welcomed by our godchildren and their families: this is a highly emotional moment, with a profusion of hugs and exchanges of kata. The young girl sponsored by Bernard and Monique is far away in Bangalore, but her family is there to welcome her sponsors.

We meet the chief of the Settlement who also welcomes us warmly, all the more so as Bernard and Monique are Regional Delegates and appointed by AET to convey the association’s good wishes.

Page 19

Photos

Top © Monique Piat. View of Mount Kanchenjonga

Bottom © Monique Piat. Thupten and the three of us at the Gochapass.

It is never easy to enter into an intimate relationship with these families, but after meeting them several times, things are changing significantly. Moreover, the Indian society is also changing drastically, with the emergence of a new money-making middle class that travels, goes on holiday, travels around their own country. The consumer-society has caught up with them (or the other way round) and for our Tibetan friends, what a change too!

Firstly, from a material point of view, the inside of Tibetan houses has changed a lot: the earthenware stoves, that were on ground level, have been replaced by gas stoves. The furniture is now similar to ours and the women farmers' clothes are totally different from those worn by their parents. Mobile phones are to be found everywhere and the mobile phone coverage is improving. The language used for texting is English - this language will soon be used in France too, though our friend Bernard has started studying Tibetan on his own, which delights our guests: what little he can say is, for them, the proof that their language and their culture are alive and of some interest.

For several days, we share meetings, meals, visits, walks and exchanges of gifts with the children and their families and all that is immortalised on photos. Every time we are invited, Tibetan salted butter-tea is served, which is undrinkable for most but other drinks can be ordered too!

The following days, we go and visit places of outstanding interest and beautiful monasteries on the way to **Yugsom**, where the group splits in half. Four of us will trek in the **Kanchenjonga range** for nine days and the other three will go to Gangtok to discover the beauty of the capital of Sikkim and its surroundings.

For this trek, our guide is ThuptenTsering, whom we meet again for the third time, along with his "top-chef" cook Pempa. Our 9 day-walk takes us through Himalayan forests covered with brightly coloured flowers: rhododendrons, azaleas, orchids, etc... And when the altitude is such that nothing can grow, the flowers are replaced by snow-capped mountains, breath-taking summits, lakes, animals such as blue sheep, antelopes, yaks, and birds as multi-coloured as flowers and we meet other trekkers with whom we make friends.. Of course we occasionally encounter some difficulties but they are quickly overcome.

Page 20

Photo © Monique Piat. The photo of friendship !

We all meet again in Ravangla where those of the other group tell us about their wonderful stay in **Gangtok**. Georges, Danielle and Dany were hosted by their godson's family. They shared moments of friendship, joy and laughter, especially while cooking momos and other typical food.

We spend our last moments with the families and have our last meals together. And it is the final moment before leaving. The last exchange of gifts, the last tears, the last smiles, the last laughter. Last kata, last photo. And we leave, our hearts full of emotions and our minds already full of memories.

Back to Delhi, to the Tibetan district. This 5 week-trip to India ends up with the visit to Agra and its famous Taj-Mahal in the company of a French-speaking guide and we are completely enchanted!

So what else is there to say about this trip?

As far as we are concerned, the most important was to meet our godchildren and their families, and to tell them that they are always in our thoughts and in our hearts, that we were very pleased to see that they are fine and happy, and that, though they are not in Tibet, they live in a rapidly developing country, where they will be able to find work and live a life of free women, while keeping their culture alive.

Laurent Quillet. /Trip to Sikkim from April 23rd to May 24th 2013

Tashi delek. It is always with great pleasure that I read your magazine and sometimes share it with others. You ask us to tell what has become of our former sponsored children.

Thanks to AET, I started sponsoring a 12 year-old **Yungdung Lhamo** from Dholanji. I went to Dholanji and met her when she was a school-girl, then to Mussorie when she was in College and then to Dharamsala when she was given a job in the Tibetan Government in Exile.

Time has gone by, and Yungdung has recently given birth to a young baby-girl, Tseyang Yiga Lhamo. I am going to Dehradun next summer to meet her. Her names Tseyang and Lhamo were given by a lama and her parents added "Yiga", which means "joy in the heart", the joy of the parents before their lovely daughter.

I thank all the volunteers of AET who made possible the existence of this frail but real link between them and me...

Brigitte Rollet (mail to AET)

Many thanks for passing on to me the mail from my former godson Gejor Tenzin, from whom I had had no news since the sponsorship came to an end. I feel glad and relieved to know about the (happy) fate of this young man - I was going to write "child"!

I am going to write back to him, to learn more about this friend at the other end of the world. Thanks to you, two mountains will be able to meet again.

Monique (Forum of the site)

This young man, who is full of gratitude towards his former sponsor who he was fortunate enough to meet once, now works in an office, helping his community, exactly as she had dreamt for!

Page 21 Speak English to communicate

Photo © Martine Giraudon. Through the rain-drops !

Last summer, for too short a time, in my opinion, I went to meet my two godchildren, a boy and a girl whose names I do not want to give, and whose faces I do not wish to show, as well as the

boy's brother. The three of them are from a nomadic Khampa family. They walked and travelled for a very long time before finally being admitted in a school: TCV Suja, in India, in March 2011.

The boy's younger brother is sponsored by a charity in Luxemburg, and when his sponsor came to meet him in the spring of 2012, she did exactly as I did, she also looked after the other boy.

When the three of them arrived in India, they were illiterate, but now are excellent at Maths. They had a great time when they discovered the rules of *Sudoku* with me, and I left them a good part of my grids.

Most of the children who come from Tibet have no family in India, which is why the school tries to find them "uncles" and "aunts" in the refugee camp, i.e. people with whom they can stay at weekends (children can go home on the second Saturday of each month) and during the holidays (about 10 days in June and 3 months in winter). These "uncles" and "aunts" have no blood ties with them, but they are from the same area in Tibet, sometimes from the same village, which reassures them and enables them to express themselves.

As far as talking is concerned, I would like to share the enormous pleasure the three of them gave me the last day, before my departure. Together we had been shopping, we had shared meals and long walks, in the middle of nowhere but in a breath-taking landscape and in pouring rain. With their subtle delicacy, just as I was expressing my deep satisfaction at their tremendous improvement in English, a language they started learning only last year, they told me how frustrated they had felt when we met for the first time because they had been able to talk only with great difficulty, and frequently having to rely on Lobsang Tenzin, the sponsorship secretary to translate.

They told me how hard and steadily they had worked, how determined to progress they had been. And last summer, they were able to talk, they talked a lot, a lot, and so did I, of course! I found it wonderful to be able to communicate so well, through a language that was foreign to the four of us!

Martine Giraudon

I am the sponsor of KaldenTsering, from Suja (..) and I have contacted Lobsang Tenzin.

I intend first to go trekking in Tibet and then to visit my godson in Suja, India. My idea is to go to Dharamsala and then Suja in the company of other sponsors. So I am letting you know of my request well in advance, I do hope my project will succeed.

I could also make two separate trips, a year apart, if it is too complicated to get both an Indian visa and a Chinese visa.

I thank you in advance for the contact details of the two sponsors who have tried to travel to Lhasa.

Nicole Bierry, nicolebierry@gmail.com (Forum of AET site)