

# PROJECT REVIEW

18 COMPLETED, 8 ONGOING, 9 UP AND RUNNING, AND 4 IN THE WORKS!

This has been a busy year at TRAS, with the Directors looking after 39 projects! This represents a great deal of work, not only for the TRAS office, but also for the individual Directors who undertake to see a project through to completion, and for our CIDA Project Manager, Linda Libront and her project review committee.

Each project proposal involves hours of careful work to ensure that the proposed action plan, timetable and budget are feasible. Once TRAS has agreed to support a project, a Letter of Agreement is signed by the partner abroad, and the first payment is rapidly on its way. Then follow 6-monthly reports and financial statements; questions are asked, concerns are dealt with, the next payment is authorized and so on, until the final report and statement are received. If all has gone

well, then the final payment is made to the project.



*Computer Training - Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, Dharamsala, India*

The Director in charge is responsible for seeing that each step is followed according to the original plan, and that the Board is informed regularly of the progress. Sometimes there are delays, occasionally there are problems. Heavy monsoon rains, sharp rises in the cost of building materials, change of local management, and misunderstandings can all delay the completion of projects - but with patience, compromise and good communication, things get worked out in the long run.



Of course, our larger projects are co-sponsored by CIDA, and extra

steps are added to the process to request CIDA's support. Up to 60 pages of supporting documents can be required before the CIDA project review committee agrees to sponsor a project! An extra six months can be added to the time it takes to start up a project - but it is time well spent, ensuring that your monies (your donations to TRAS and your tax dollars) are going to be spent in a worthwhile manner.

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# COMPLETED PROJECTS

## TIBET

*Pelshong Tibetan Medical School*, Shigatse, Tibet: \$40,500.(TRAS/CIDA) 6 year training for 45 students in traditional Tibetan medicine. **Completed in 1998**: students have returned to villages to practise. Survey of course effectiveness in progress.

## NEPAL

*Appropriate Agricultural Alternatives (AAA)*, Kathmandu, Nepal: \$89,769. (TRAS/CIDA) 3 year project to teach local farmers organic farming methods and successful techniques to eliminate dangerous overuse of chemical pesticides. **Completed in June 1999**, but a change in management has led to an incomplete final report. The interim reports indicate good outcomes

in teaching and in marketing the organic crops, but not all the funds have been spent. A request has been sent to TRAS for spending the balance – this will be assessed at the September Board meeting.

*Buddha Memorial Home*, Kathmandu, Nepal: \$10,000. Rebuilding carpentry and tailoring workshops used for vocational training for the school's students (street children and orphans). \$11,415. 1 year vocational training course in tailoring for 8 girls. Both projects were **completed in August 1998**.The workshops are in constant use, and the tailoring graduates were each given a sewing machine, to help them set up in business.



*Tailoring Workshop - Buddha Memorial Home, Kathmandu, Nepal*

## NORTHERN INDIA (*Tibetan Projects*)

*Community Health Workers' Training*, Dharamsala, India: \$24,723. (TRAS/CIDA) Continuation of our CHW Training at Delek Hospital. 36 CHWs over 3 years to be trained for placement in Tibetan settlements. **Completed in October 1998**. This is a most successful training program, with the graduates immediately employed, bringing decent primary health care to thousands of Tibetans.

*Vocational Training for Pre-Primary Teachers and Unemployed Youth*, Dharamsala, India: \$114,815. (TRAS/CIDA) 2 year project to train 50 teachers and 50 unemployed youth. Teachers are guaranteed jobs; youth will be trained in skills needed by Tibetan settlements and helped to set up small businesses in these settlements. The Pre-primary portion was **completed in June 1998**. There were several changes to this project:



a) the pre-primary teacher training was moved to South India from Dharamsala. This was done because the Tibetan Children's Village has an excellent training centre in South India which could be utilized for this new training. This made sense, but it did mean that only 38 of the 50 students could attend, the rest not being able to leave their families in the north. Then the schools to which these teachers were to return pleaded to have them back sooner, so the course was condensed to 18 months. 2 of the students contracted TB and had

to be hospitalized, but luckily were given a clean bill of health before the end of the course, and they managed to complete it. All 38 are now employed, and a survey of the principals of their schools shows that this training has made an enormous difference. The children's reading and writing skills have improved, as has their health. More extra curricular activities take place, and the teachers are more patient and much better able to teach this age group. There is a marked increase in the children's enthusiasm for school!

years of a child's schooling. With CIDA's blessing, 25 students began their training in August 1998, and are just starting their second year. There are 16 women and 9 men in the course, with 19 of them sponsored by TRAS and CIDA, and doing well.

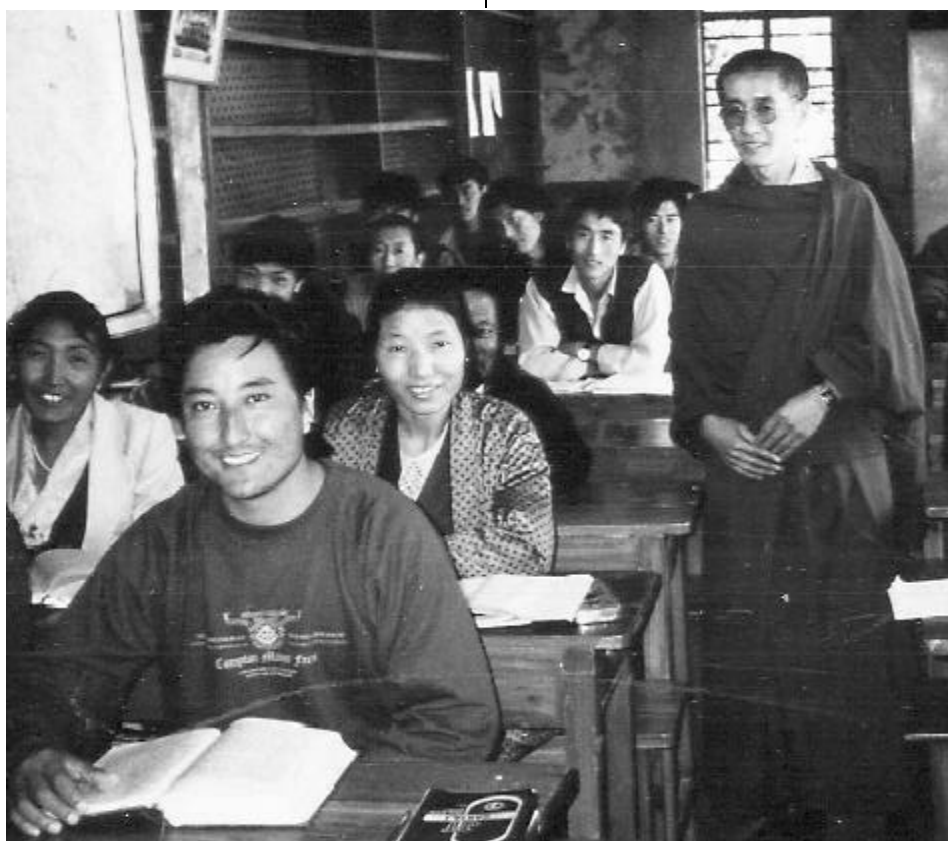
c) The unemployed youth portion went off track, in that the first 24 students selected were school graduates instead of the school dropouts for whom the project was designed. This was a straight lack of communication between one section of the Department and an-

munications! She had to agree, and since then, efficiency trainings have been put in place for all Tibetan Government departments. So perhaps some good came from the mistake. Mrs. Choegyial also was able to assure us that "Hotel management" and "Fashion design" were actually useful to the Tibetan community. The Tibetans have now opened two small hotels in Dharamsala and one in Kathmandu, so young people trained in hotel management will be very useful to them. Several settlements have tailoring workshops which cater to the tourist trade as well as to their own people. But Westerners are a different shape - or at least like their clothes to fit differently! So someone trained in fashion design could mean the difference between colourful ill-shaped clothing sitting unsold on shelves and a brisk trade in well designed clothing, Tibetan in origin but western in shape! **These two components of the project are on-going.**

*Computer Training, Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, Dharamsala, India: \$17,600. Purchase of computers for training courses in computer literacy and desktop publishing. 60 students have graduated so far, 45 men and 15 women, with the first class of 12 students **completing the course in May 1998**. 10 more students will be trained in 1999, and there is a waiting list for future classes. (see photo - page 1)*

*Nurses' Training, Dharamsala, India \$4,116. Vocational training course in nursing for 8 young women in community hospitals in and near Dharamsala. They will run health education programs. \$2,856. Second hatch of nurses for same training. **Both trainings completed in March 1999.***

*Thangka Painting Training. Dharamsala, India: \$4,116. 3 year training in the art of Tibetan religious painting. Large market for this age old skill. **Completed in March, 1999.***



*Tibetan Language Teachers Training*

b) Fewer pre-primary teachers and a shortened course left funds available for further vocational training, and of several suggested by the Department of Education, TRAS chose to ask CIDA for permission to support another Tibetan Language Teacher Training. TRAS has supported 2 of these trainings in the past 5 years, since the Indian Government allowed the Tibetan schools to teach in the Tibetan language for the first few

other (Projects and Scholarships). As soon as TRAS realised that the vocational trainings selected didn't sound like the original list, questions were asked, apologies arrived and the next group of students are being selected from the school dropouts.

The Minister of Education, Mrs. Rinchen Choegyial, passed through Vancouver last March, and we told her we didn't think much of their internal com-

*Chagpori Tibetan Medical School*, Darjeeling, India: \$38,550. (TRAS/CIDA) Having built and equipped a pharmacy to process herbs for Tibetan medicines and trained the herb gatherers, TRAS contemplated a request to train 3 monks in pharmacy. Although the main portion of this project was completed, and the school is successfully teaching the ancient skills of Tibetan medicine, the financial reporting was unsatisfactory for TRAS/CIDA standards, in spite of many requests and suggestions from TRAS. It was therefore decided to terminate work with this partner.

*NERDA: Shillong Tibetan Settlement*, Shillong/ Meghalaya, India: \$17,400. Construction of 4 classrooms for middle school in Tibetan settlement in remote area of northeastern India. **Completed in April 1999**, going slightly over budget because of unforeseen problems. (TRAS thinks highly of NERDA's administrator, Col. Snaize, and therefore voted to send the extra \$2,180)

*Choglamsar Tibetan Settlement*, Ladakh. \$8,548. Dark, cold weaving shed was solarized by replacing one long wall with glass. **Completed March 1998**. It is now bright, warm and gives much better working conditions.



*Choglamsar Weaving Shed with new Solar Wall*

*Rinchen Zangpo Society*, Kangra, India: \$4,200. Teacher Training for 5 girls for the schools in a remote valley. **Completed successfully in February 1999**, and the girls are now teaching.

### **NORTHERN INDIA (Indian projects)**

*CHIRAG*: Nainital, India - 3 projects:

*Social Forestry*, \$114,950. (TRAS/CIDA) 12 villages involved in village tree nurseries, replanting denuded village forest plots with fodder and fuel trees to hold soil and provide for the population, management of newly grown forests and education re: care of forests. **Completed in March, 1998.**



*Village tree nursery and caretakers*

A very successful project, with thousands of trees nurtured and planted. The village forests are flourishing, the caretakers are doing an excellent job, and tree lopping for fodder and fuel is well controlled. Three interesting features:

a) the leopards, which hadn't been seen in the area for years, are returning (maybe not such a happy result).

b) the villagers successfully practised "social fencing". We might call it "virtual fencing" - it requires agreement from all villagers that they and their animals guarantee to stay out of the newly planted forests until the caretaker gives the OK. It worked!

c) the CHIRAG forester was surprised and delighted to discover that once the villagers and animals stayed out of a given area, the old root stock started growing vigorously again, often outstripping the newly planted trees!

*Sustainable Energy* \$207,676. (TRAS/CIDA) 20 villages (2,500 people) involved in construction of rainwater cisterns, biogas plants, smokeless chulas (updated traditional cooking stoves), provision of pressure cookers, training of local builders. **Completed in April 1998**. This was a huge project, and in spite of the Indian Government withdrawing its support part way through, much of it was completed. About 90% of the planned biogas plants were completed, and all the rainwater cisterns. The pressure cookers were not a success, but the smokeless chulas were. They are well accepted, being a cheap and healthy upgrade of a traditional stove.



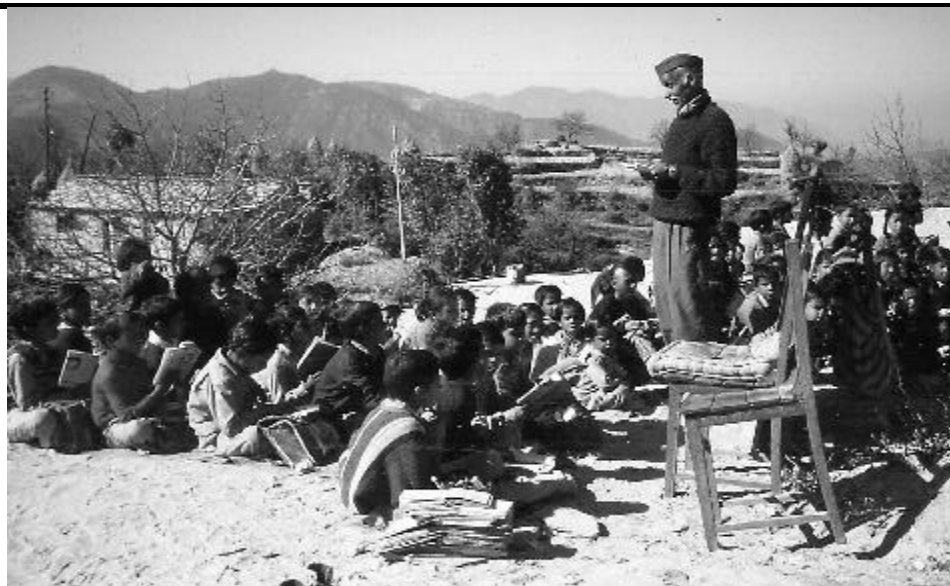
*A smokeless chula is healthier and more efficient!*

*Mother and Child Care*, Phase 2. \$82,224. (TRAS/CIDA) Programs to help women and children - 500 children in daycare and kindergartens, extra teachers to supplement primary education for 1,650 children, adult literacy classes for 220 women and women's action groups for 750 women in 22 villages. **Completed in February, 1999.**

The women's groups have done well, often being able to interest the men in improving their villages. Literacy classes have helped, although the heavy burden of work the women shoulder did not leave them much time for learning. Two village libraries were opened, stocked with Hindi equivalents of "Harlequin" romances, to get the women interested in reading. They were then more likely to pick up the pamphlets on health and childcare! Unfortunately, the demise of the USSR meant an end to supplies of very cheaply printed Hindi books!!

### **SOUTHERN INDIA** (*Indian projects*)

(NB- Although Mysore is south of our main project area, Sister Victorine,



*An extra Primary School Teacher, Mother and Child Care*

the Administrator, is an old friend of TRAS. She helped many Tibetan children in the early days, and does more with a dollar than anyone we know! We now help with vocational training for poor Indian village children.)

*Incarnation Convent Vocational Training Project for 12 Teachers*, Mysore, India: (\$8,095). **Completed in May, 1999.** Sister Victorine's proteges always do well and find jobs - she wouldn't let it be otherwise!

## **E-MAIL MAKES A DIFFERENCE!**

Of all the innovations which have come our way since TRAS began, nothing has made such a difference as E-MAIL! Letters to and from India take weeks and weeks - 6 weeks to 2 months being standard, and then one missing piece of information would take another 2 months to collect. Then came phone calls - not always reliable, but a vast improvement in an emergency. FAXES seemed marvellous - except that many never arrived, and lines were so often busy. But with E-MAIL we can correspond with our partners within minutes! Questions fly off and are answered the same day. Misunderstandings are cleared up, instructions can be given, actions taken. This literally means that projects can get under way months faster and it is far easier at both ends to keep them on track.

It was money well spent when TRAS became computerized and "e-mail literate", and we feel the same about our partners. India is suddenly moving fast into the computer age, even in Buddhist monasteries, even in Sister Victorine's convent - and boy, does it make life easier for us at TRAS!



*Sister Victorine's Vocational Training Class*

# ONGOING PROJECTS

## TIBET

*English Language School, Lhasa, Tibet, \$4,830.* A one year English course for 15 young people x 3 years. Without knowledge of English, many job opportunities are denied the Tibetans. This course is going well, and the students are very hardworking, picking up a good command of English in a short time.

## NEPAL

*King Mahendra Trust – Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), Sikles region, \$381,802 (TRAS/CIDA)* 3 year integrated rural development to assist remote villages balance needs of local people, environmental protection and tourist invasion. Village tree nurseries, reforestation, organic farming and kitchen gardens, day care centres, income generation, adult literacy classes, mothers' groups, trail improvement and ecotourism campsites. This most successful project will be completed in November 1999. Directors Frank and Lynn Beck (currently volunteering their medical skills in Nepal) visited villages in this desperately poor, remote region before and after ACAP involvement, and were stunned by the improvements they saw. Healthier, brighter people, better food, clean streets, clean water, safer trails and vigorous forward-looking village committees contrasted strongly with the rundown look of villages which chose not to join the ACAP experiment.

*Himalayan Education Project for Young Canadians, ACAP. Sikles, Nepal. \$38,179 (TRAS/CIDA).* Overseas development education studies for Grade 11 students, trekking to the ACAP villages. Each student committed to giving 6 lectures in Canada upon return. The first phase of this project has been featured fully in previous newsletters. The



*Toilets in the making, Kulu Valley*

students continue to give talks, educating many Canadians about overseas development and the work of TRAS. The second group of students (who will go to Nepal in March 2000) has just been selected, after a rigorous screening process. They are as enthusiastic and committed as the first group, and TRAS is excited to work with them and impressed at the calibre of young people interested in this project.

## INDIA (Tibetan projects)

*Vocational Training for unemployed youth and Tibetan Language Teacher Training (see page 3).* These

components will be completed in October 2000.

*Little Flowers Creche, Dharamsala, India. \$1,500 per year, reviewed annually.* This amount supports a creche for 45 toddlers, the children of the Tibetan Government-In-Exile workers. The Centre, in the Government compound, allows mothers to work and be self-supporting

*Tibetan Homes Foundation Old People's Home, Mussoorie, India: \$350 p.a.* Annual grant to maintain living quarters for elderly Tibetan exiles. **(Indian projects)**

*SHARE: Kulu Valley, India: \$40,312. (TRAS/CIDA)* Construction of toilets, Phase 2. Construction of 250 basic toilets in steep terrain, to improve personal hygiene and health and the cleanliness of water supply. Health education provided to the villagers. This project was delayed by the disastrous landslide which hit the area last year, but is now going well. It should be completed in March 2000.

*Incarnation Convent, Vocational Training projects for Mechanics (\$11,571) and 12 Nurses (14,095) Mysore, India..* These will be completed, respectively, in May and August, 2000.



*Sister Victorine's Nurses in Training, Cochin, India*

## NEW PROJECTS

Well, not so much “new” as “add-ons”! When we know we are working with reliable partners, who are helping us to help the poor and the exiled, we are happy to take on more work with them.

**CHIRAG** has asked for an extension to the successful Mother and Child project. It was hoped to have it self supporting by now, but that was an unrealistic dream. TRAS will support it and a health component, along with an all-important review process of the operation of CHIRAG. It is a truly wonderful venture, founded by an altruistic Indian who retired to this area to help the local villagers. It has done wonders - but what will happen when he retires from this second “career”? TRAS and CIVA (Canada India Village Aid, also founded by George and Inge Woodcock) are jointly helping CHIRAG work out a management plan so that the good work will continue in an efficient, well controlled way. \$100,474 (TRAS/CIVA/CIDA) TRAS’ share is \$16,140.

The **Lhasa school** added on a kindergarten, with great success. The first class started in **October 1998**. TRAS is supporting a 3 year program. \$4,452.

**Institute of Buddhist Dialectics** asked for funds to purchase an IBM pentium computer and scanner, having discovered that many of their students were returning to offices equipped with IBM rather than Macintosh (with which they had equipped the classroom). TRAS agreed to pay for these, so that the training could give the students what they needed. \$4,320.

**The Department of Education** (Tibetan Government-In-Exile) asked for a further batch of 5 nurses and 7 thangka painters to be trained. \$6,909 and \$14,000 respectively.

**Buddha Memorial Home**, Kathmandu, has set up tailoring(\$16,334), carpentry(\$12,680) and electrical(\$9,496) trainings for 52 students, to be completed in 2001.

**Sister Victorine** has set up a further 2 year teacher training project, for 20 students (\$6,540)

## IN THE WORKS

TRAS has received a sudden flood of requests for **computer training** – from **Dharamsala** to set up computer classes in the Tibetan high schools, from NERDA for the Tibetan Settlement in **Shillong**, to set up community computer classes for high school students and adults, and from SHARE in **Manali**, to train village youth in computer skills to give them a chance at the job market in Manali. All worthy initiatives, and TRAS is working on a combined project to send to CIDA. (\$60,000)

An ex-TRAS sponsored young man, now the Settlement Officer at the Bir Tibetan Settlement, has written to request modest funds to turn an old but sound godown (warehouse) into a fitness centre for the local youths. There is nothing for them to do in this off-the-track old tea plantation, and some have predictably got into trouble in the local Indian town. Far better, the Officer thinks, to occupy them healthily with games and a library. \$3,200. TRAS awaits the “OK” from the Department of Home, which helps us decide where the most pressing needs are.

NERDA wants to continue **upgrading the school**. \$15,326 would pay for renovation and construction of 3 classrooms, dining hall, kitchen, 2 storerooms, 4 staff quarters and 12 latrines. Col. Snaize, who runs NERDA, is so frugal and an excellent administrator!

ACAP wants to continue the good work it is doing in **integrated rural development**. TRAS is keen to assist, if we can get CIDA backing again. This would be a \$300,000 to \$400,000 project, over three years.



*Lhasa Kindergarten Class, Tibet*

## THE PLACE OF TIBETAN WOMEN IN SOCIETY

In a 1998 proposal to CIDA, TRAS stated that there is no gender bias against women in Tibetan society and that in each component of this project, women had equal opportunity with men to apply for vocational training. CIDA questioned this, obviously feeling that TRAS was incorrect in its surmise that women are equal with men, and suggested that TRAS might do some gender bias training with its Tibetan partners in India. Our members might be interested in the TRAS reply to CIDA, based on TRAS' personal knowledge and a report written by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's Women's Desk for the Tibetan Women's Association. This report can be read in full on the internet. ([www.grannyg.bc.ca/tibet/tibet.html](http://www.grannyg.bc.ca/tibet/tibet.html))

Historically, Tibetan society has been matriarchal and matrilineal, with property passed down through the female line. In certain Tibetan groups, polyandry was practised, giving the women a powerful position in the family. Tradi-

tionally, Tibetan women enjoyed a higher social status than their counterparts in many other societies. They played an active part in the affairs of family and society. In the recent past, Tibetan women have proved themselves to be able administrators and courageous warriors.

Before 1949, Tibetans engaged in a mixed economy consisting of agriculture, animal husbandry and trade. Both men and women engaged in all three pursuits. In trade, women held the major decision-making authority. A woman's economic contribution to the household was considered significant. Extensive social and economic equality meant no sharply defined division between the kind of work done by men and women.

Socially, divorce and remarriage (even for widows) were acceptable. Arranged marriages were the norm, except that the daughter remained at home, joined by her husband. On the death of the household head, the daughter (not her husband) would head the

family estate. The possibility of remaining unmarried was open and acceptable to both men and women. Becoming a nun was a matter of choice. At no point in history were Tibetan women subjected to foot-binding, veiling, dowry or concubinage.

At the time of the Chinese invasion in 1959, the Dalai Lama had already decided to instigate change in the way Tibet was governed, moving from a feudal system to modern democracy. Although he did not have time to initiate this change in Lhasa, within weeks of his arrival in India, he set up his Government in Exile, and from the first insisted on equal opportunity for women to become members of the Kashag (the Tibetan Parliament), thus extending their influence from the home to the governing of his people in exile.

There were several well educated women in Tibet before the Chinese takeover (many of whom, like their brothers, had been sent to India for an education). After the exodus to India in 1959, these women took positions of authority in the exiled community, and continue to do so. But the Government in Exile is also full of younger women, who received the same education as the boys within the school system India set up for the Tibetans. Tibetan women in exile enjoy equal opportunity in education and jobs. There are now, in India and Nepal, female school principals, doctors, teachers, heads of government departments, heads of sections within the departments. The present Minister of Education, a woman, was mentioned in the proposal, but she is only one amongst many, at all levels of government and in private enterprise. The excellent travel agency which TRAS uses in New Delhi is owned and operated by a Tibetan woman.



*Tibetan Womens Association Members, Dharamsala, India*

*(Continued on page 9)*





*Government Administrative Assistant  
Dharamsala, India*

When Tibetans first arrived in India, one of the first jobs open to them was road building, backbreaking work which the Indians did not want to do. The Tibetan women worked alongside the men in this fearsome work. When the Indian Government offered jobs in the Indian Army to Tibetans, women were accepted along with men, and some of the front line troops of the Indian Army in all recent border fighting have been Tibetan women.

Within Tibet itself, the Tibetan nuns are as vocal and as courageous as the monks at denouncing the cruelties of the Chinese regime - and certainly they are imprisoned and tortured equally with the monks. The Tibetan nuns in exile are a proactive group, working hard for higher education and better health care for their community.

In February, 1998, TRAS was honoured by a visit from Mrs. Rinchen Dolma Taring, a noblewoman of Tibet, the founder of the huge Tibetan Homes Foundation in India (and "mother" to thousands of Tibetan orphans and hundreds of old people); a trusted adviser to the Dalai Lama. When she was shown the comments of the CIDA Committee, her jaw dropped and she rocked with laughter that anyone would think that Tibetan women are downtrodden or unequal. It just is not so!

## SPONSORSHIP

### Joan Ford

The two children featured in the June newsletter were immediately sponsored by a longtime TRAS member (thank you!) And now I hope that someone will be moved to sponsor this winsome trio. The fee is \$120.00 per year for each child.

They live in the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement in South India, and are looked after by their grandparents while their parents are off for months sweater selling. The trading instinct which seems to be inherent in Tibetans has led many Tibetans into this sweater selling business. From the time they first arrived in India, many enterprising Tibetans unpicked old woollen garments, knitted them up into new sweaters and set off all over the country selling them. At least it brings in a little money.

This family of 7 is dependent on the sweater selling expertise of the mother and father. The eldest child, Wangmo,

is a loving little girl of 4. She attends nursery school and learns nursery rhymes, singing and playing.

She has a younger brother, Kunsang, aged 3 and a baby sister, Dawoe, 1 year old.

*Kunsang - age 3*

*Dawoe - age 1*

Please contact the TRAS Office if you are interested in helping this family.

*Wangmo - age 4*

## TRAS EXECUTIVE

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### Trans - Himalayan Newsletter (published quarterly)

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Yearly Membership donation (\$20) ----- \$ 20

*Possible Additional Donations:*

Monthly Donation of \$25 for the "Child Development and Education  
 Project" at a residential school -----

Monthly Donation of \$10 for a child in a "Family and Community  
 Development Project" -----

Donation to the Old People's Fund, which supports a "Self-Help Project"  
 for the elderly and infirm -----

Donation to the general fund or other specific area of your choice -----

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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