Khang
Volume Three --- Tears of a Journey

10 • December • 2012
LETTER OF SUPPORT

Since our very first days in exile, the welfare of Tibetan children has been a special concern for the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). India’s first Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru told His Holiness the Dalai Lama that the real way to serve the Tibetan cause was to give Tibetans a proper education. He followed this up by giving real and substantial support. Residential schools for Tibetans were established for those who were old enough and nurseries for the infants and orphans. Efforts were made to ensure that Tibetans would receive an education and grow up in good health as true Tibetans.

We are happy to learn that the Educational Support Tibetan (ES-Tibet), a non-profit association that operates in full accordance with Swiss law, is dedicated to educating Tibetan refugees in India in order to improve their work perspectives once they return to Tibet. Selected Tibetan students after receiving a 5-year education at the CTA-run Tibetan Transit School are further educated for two years in English, Computer Skills and Chinese by ES-Tibet. We would appeal to interested parties to extend whatever assistance, financial or otherwise, that you could to help facilitate the success of this educational endeavor.

Yours sincerely,

Desang Tsering
Secretary to
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

April 21, 2009
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Re: Educational Support Trust:

This is to certify that the Educational Support Trust at Upper Sukkar, Sidhpur Dharamsala is a charitable residential organization which is fully devoted and engaged in educating the young Tibetan refugee adults from Tibet. Its prime concern is to provide educational opportunities to our young Tibetans who are over aged to attend regular school. It seeks to preserve our true Tibetan identity and also to keep our young adults tethered to our traditional and cultural roots through the medium of adult education.

I highly appreciate the valuable contribution of this educational venture in improving the lives of our young adults, thereby giving them a brighter and more meaningful future and consequently its positive contribution to our Tibetan community at large.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude and sincere thanks to the Educational Support Tibetan (ES-Tibet), Switzerland for its continued support to the Educational Support Trust, Dharamsala.

Thupten Lungri (Mr.)
Kalon
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Central Tibetan Administration
Gangchen Kyishong
Dharamsala-176215

Dated: June 15, 2010
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Tears of a Journey

My Journey to India

The brilliant sun was almost setting beyond the ranges of the majestic Himalayas. The beautiful day was fading into gloom as I packed my backpack for the trip of my life to India.

With a rucksack full of clothes and food, I strode out with a few unidentified people and my guide to catch a truck, covered with a piece of black cloth that would take us to an unknown place in the darkness. The truck was already carrying lots of boxes as we got on board and we squatted in the tiny gap between the boxes. Our bodies and packs needed to be squeezed as tight as we could, otherwise the police and informers would find us. One of my new buddies got carsick and vomited over my rucksack and my clothes and then the guide gestured to me to ignore it while I screamed unintentionally with a look of surprise.

We arrived at our destination, in a wild area; we set off sneaking like thieves in the narrow dark valley with a nearby military station at the border. The dogs were barking and a huge spotlight searched for us as we lay in a pond while bullets shot over our heads. It seemed to me we were filled with fear and we had walked into hell. Fortunately, the pond saved our tiny lives and we were able to escape from there.

Another day dawned with extremely strong wind and snow, and the climbing up the snowy mountains caused my pack to feel heavier with each step. In fact, our packages of food were gradually consumed and the rucksack was almost bare but my head was heavier than my backpack, due to lack of food and water on the trail.

In late evening, we crossed the border and reached the other side of the grandiose Himalayas and lay relaxed on the ground; licking the snow made us feel like sitting down to enjoy a splendid view of the mountains, their peaks jutting high above the clouds. As the night unfolded, we all observed that we were very close to achieving our dream. We shouted into the horizon with our hands beside our mouths and watched the moonrise as it got cooler. The sky was almost dark and we embraced each other, sleeping on the bare snow, until the break of dawn.

The following day our optimism was high, although our bodies were wasted from lack of food and the long and difficult journey. Coincidentally, some other refugees told us how to find the branch of the Tibetan Reception Center as we were ambling on the path toward Kathmandu in Nepal. At the Center, there were many Tibetan refugees shouting over the balcony to us, warmly welcoming us by clapping at our accomplishment as we
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entered the building. And then most of the refugees surrounded us to inquire where we were from and did we get in hot water on the road; then the officials questioned each of us as well when we registered at the main office.

There, everything was free and food and accommodation was provided for us. From there, the officials decided to separate us and send us either to schools, monasteries or pilgrimages after 15 days. It seemed as though we had achieved something that was more than we could have dreamed of in advance.

It was a magical journey and an unforgettable memory in my life to travel to India from Tibet, bringing with it more heartache and incredible circumstances than I could have imagined.

______Pema Tseten
In a chilly winter I was packing and ready to escape to India. Though, some strange feeling in my heart made me unable to separate from my homeland. It filled my chest with unbearable emotion. My incomparable uncle had been in political prison because of his struggle for justice in Tibet. Since he was jailed for twenty-one years and my mom gave the birth to me, I had never seen him in person.

Fortunately, two days before I left from my homeland, we received unbelievably good news from a Chinese official. They informed us that my uncle was transferred from his ex-prison to a prison here in my city. We all burst into tears with excitement because we had hoped for this day for many years, and finally it happened. The old prison where he had kept for so many years was in very bad condition and far away from my city. Since he has been moved to nearby city, it became more convenient for us to visit. In the past, we were allowed to visit him only one hour in a year and it took more than five days in a bus to reach there. In addition to that, it was very hard to get any news about him, like if he was seriously sick, the Chinese officials might keep it hiding.

When my grandma advised me that I should visit my uncle before I separated from my home, I felt that I achieved the most valuable goal in my life, which was to see my real uncle’s face after twenty-one years. My other uncle, grandpa and I went to visit him with carrying a big bowl of hot steamed Momos which we made. Before I reached the main gate, tears of anguish were rolling from my eyes endlessly and I couldn’t control myself. Once we entered the gate, several police man lead us to a dark tiny room where we waited to see my uncle. While we were waiting, I had a look around the place where they have kept my uncle and I noticed that it was very lonely and fearful place.

Within a few minutes my uncle appeared in that dreadful room with heavy shackles on his hands and two officers tightly grabbed him behind his back. My heart was filled with great anger at the merciless way that they treated my uncle and I desperately wanted to spit on their shameless faces. Finally we were allowed to sit around the table and suddenly his smooth voice called me to sit beside him. I eagerly moved near him and tightly hugged him with all my energy. I could feel the words that he wanted to tell us by his compassionate heart and I was amazed at how exceptional he was. When we were ready to take out the hot steamed Momos, the police officers suddenly called my uncle’s name and said that the time was up. We pleaded with them to let us give him two or three more Momos but they didn’t accept. At that time I really felt that my whole system was blocked and I couldn’t speak out my words from my inner heart. I still can vividly visualize how he was taken by those unthinkable thugs and how his determined
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figure gradually disappeared from me. My heart sank into a muddy field.

Even though I am now far away from him in a different country, I can still feel his protection. Honestly, I feel proud of my uncle because he has dedicated his most precious life for his country and justice. I strongly, plead to people around the world to save Tibet and its people from the darkness of Chinese government.

____ Sonam Choedon
In our life things happen regularly. Some of them give us lots of happiness and peace, but some of them give us the opposite of peace and happiness. Actually, no one wants to follow sorrow but it is nature of law and no one can escape from it.

For me the hardest thing happened in 2005, one winter morning at the station. In my memory it happened yesterday; I left an old couple, who were very important people in my life. The last time I saw their wrinkled faces full of unhappiness, each of the wrinkles showed how hard they worked. I had to leave them. Maybe that was the last time I would see them because they are old now. I spent my childhood living with them and leaving them is very hard to accept but I have to, it is the law of nature. I saw tears come out from their eyes and I could not control myself and cried lots. In my mind I have lots precious things and my world has become dark. I cannot see anything and it’s a very difficult time for me.

Things like this happened not only to me, it happened to other people who lost their own country. It is very hard to leave a relationship. I’ll never forget this winter time in my life.

_____ Tsedon
Happiness doesn’t depend on material things

Since the whole world is our class, we can learn things in any circumstances. Once when I was in another place, I went out along a very long street in a city. I was tired and wanted to eat something. Then I entered a big window restaurant; it was a beautifully styled and decorated restaurant. There were all kinds of food and drinks. It was a cuisine restaurant. I ordered my starters and main course at same time and relaxed in a comfortable sofa. The place was really strange, and it seemed I had never been there. While I was waiting for what I ordered, I noticed that everybody in the room was miserable. When I looked at each and every one of them very carefully, it was clear that they were not poor but rich.

As soon as I finished the meal, I went out to the street and examined every nook and corner of the market. The things I could see were similar everywhere. I walked through many crossroads and roundabouts where people were obviously busy, the cars and buses were running up and down and looked like an ant’s nest. I thought that the residents in the sleepless town must have a restless life. Actually, they had to be happy because they had all the things they needed, though their faces were absolutely serious and stressful. Then I wondered whether they were not satisfied with their lives or was it the nature of human beings. The thought, “Why is there more sorrow and less pleasure in this universe?” had come to me constantly.

After many hours of walking, I arrived in a place which was totally different from the previous. The houses were quite old and the people were a bit poor. There were no good shops and restaurants as well, but some small shops and restaurants with a few types of food and items. At the first sight of the village, I felt sympathy and pity, indeed, it was an incredible atmosphere. I was very surprised to see the people’s laughter and cheerfulness, even though they didn’t have enough things to eat and wear. They were living just simple lives and were contented and satisfied with whatever they had. Then I realised that these people who lived in the village were much happier than in the developed city.

This is why we cannot be happy merely dependent on material things or power. There is nothing that can make you fundamentally happy except your own thinking and concepts. This is a fabulous lesson that obviously tells us to appreciate all the things around us and not to be greedy. This means to be satisfied with whatever I have. But still I have a huge question that is “Why can’t most of us do that”?  

“Happiness comes from not being greedy”

— Choedup
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Falling leaves are not just for Autumn

Since childhood I have known the law of nature: falling is merely for autumn. It seems the pale, yellowish green leaves automatically disappear or die away when the autumn comes. Consequently, I always believe that there is nothing to regret when a life withers away. For example, a tree didn’t have any idea how to control the falling leaves during the autumn.

It was spring when I went into a small wood and suddenly a leaf fell gently onto my hair; then I took it down and looked. It was as green as jasper. At that time a flicker of fear swept over my heart. Unexpectedly a green leaf falls in the spring. Oh, falling leaves are not only in autumn!!!! Originally, I considered that life was just like a long road in which I could walk along slowly and listen to the beautiful music again and again. Never would I have to bother with anything that I did not care for particularly. Likewise, I missed uncountable chances and I gave up more than I have included: time, love, aims and so on.

Look at the shadows that walk rapidly under the sunlight, they don’t have any regret for they believe life is a perfect process. Those past years to me seemed to come together slowly and being alive seemed a kind of passive affair but not active one. These kind of people never use their time to create something meaningful and instead they like to wait for things just to happen. When young they consider that life is a long journey and that all their troubles can be overcome. Like that leaf in spring which is leisurely and carefree and looking attentively towards the autumn. But, like the leaf don’t live life in a mediocre way.

Last but not least, I can confidently say that wonderful events in this life will never just happen, you must play your part!! A leaf can become green during the summer before falling in autumn_____ this is true of life. If you want this could happen in your life.

____ Sonam Tsering

“You cannot have ecstasy and divine vision without bitterness and despair, and both of these are the property of youth...for the young are not always lighthearted; youth bears a heavy heart”

____ Edmund Wilson.
My Grandmother and the Chinese Cultural Revolution

The following took place around the 1960s in the eastern part of Tibet during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. You may think I’m making all this up because it’s quite unbelievable. However, I’m going to write it down as my grandparents told me what they had actually experienced under those disastrous circumstances. This story, more or less, is similar to the genocide of the Jews by Hitler. So I think it’s worthwhile to share with you, my dear readers.

It was usual evening. I was talking with my grandmother upstairs while my mum was looking after our shop downstairs. She sipped a mouthful of her buttertea and said “Even though we have lost our independent nation, you are still luckier to live your life under these conditions—you don’t have to worry about clothes and accommodation. Your grandfather and I and many other Tibetans like us faced many difficulties beyond the imagination of human beings.” Actually I have heard many stories about the Tibetans who had suffered a lot during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, I was more curious about what had happened to my own grandparents in particular. If you are as curious about their story as I was, I think it’s better to ask my grandmother in person.

Grandmother: “After your grandfather and some other ordinary Tibetans like him had gone to somewhere very remote to avoid surrendering to the Chinese army, I was at home alone. We were not allowed to cook on our own. We had to eat what we were given by the regime. They gave us a small piece of bread with a watery flour-soup for each meal and, of course, we had to work a lot. As a result, many people suffered from many diseases like diarrhea frequently and most of them died of starvation. There were no reasons that motivated us to continue our lives, but I tried my best to survive with the hope that everything would get better sometime in the future and I was also hoping to reunite with your grandfather”.

After another sip of butter-tea, she carried on telling me the rest of her story. I waited with my eyes wide open. “It was a very dark night when your grandfather came back home. I was both shocked and surprised and also, of course, I was very happy to see him again. He told me that he was going to surrender and he did so the following day. He was very lucky that he had not been executed, but imprisoned instead. He was in prison for six months. During that time, my heart was full of worry because most of the prisoners were dying at the time, merely due to the bad condition and over work. I looked forward to the end of his sentence day and night like a child waiting for his mother to come. The time finally came and I went to the prison on a horse to pick him up. On my way, I saw a woman from our town coming back with the corpse of her husband on her horse. I asked her if she had seen your grandfather. She said nothing, but she shook her head to say no. I couldn’t feel optimistic any more. I sat down on a small rock beside
the river and wept alone. After a while, I continued on my way to the prison. When I got there, I saw a very slim and weak man resting outside the prison gate. I asked him if he had seen your grandfather. He came close to me and said “It’s me, your husband.” in a low voice. Oh my God. I couldn’t believe my eyes. But it was him. He was not dead, He had survived.”

Well my dear readers! I have to stop the story here. Because when she told me the story up to this point, some guests came and we changed our topic. The following day was the day I left Tibet to come to India, so I have never got chance to hear the rest of it.

Rinchen Jam
Spring

I didn’t realize your came
Maybe specified in my sleeping
Your walking is very light and soft
When I woke up I heard the sound of a brook
Limpid of the chorus
A number of birds wait early
In the morning
A number of flowers came into bloom beside me
All of this is your arrangement
You also use the fresh and gigantic sun
Clean my window brightly
I still don’t know when you came
Yet I believe you are going with smile

___Tsedon

“Spring is beautiful and early spring is charming.
You are such an early spring sending out the light of hope”.

_____Thomas Mann.
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The Purpose of the Self Immolated

Whenever we do something there is a purpose, whether we do good things or bad things. Our Tibetan heroes who have self immolated or who are still in the prison have only one purpose for their actions. They could do anything for our country and they even have enough courage to sacrifice their valuable body. They are very great people. They did everything that they could do. They are real heroes of Tibetan.

The rest of the things are our responsibility. We should try to carry on with our purpose and issues. It’s not easy to get the result immediately.

Actually, in the Universal Declaration of Human rights many rights have been listed (U D H R), but our Tibetan people don’t yet have these rights. Tibetans are still suffering under the Chinese oppression. So I think these countries which have power should think about it especially the UN. The Chinese leaders said that, in Tibet, they made a lot of progress and people are satisfied with what they did. But in fact its not like that. They always try to hide their mistakes and cruel actions therefore the UN should do something, it’s not to be looked at as merely what other people said. Instead, try to research what the real situation is inside Tibet. Then it’s very important to be pragmatic about which Human Rights have been listed in the U,D,H,R. We, the Tibetan people who self immolate or who are still alive, have huge expectation about what they did. So think about it very deeply.

Please.
Read more about our nation, and write more about our issues.
Talk more about both of these as much as you can.

_____Rizin Wangmo

“You have a choice in life:
you can either pay the price of discipline or regret”

_____Tim Connor
What is worth achieving in life?

For anyone born as a human, the three poisonous delusions naturally existing in our minds are attachment, hatred and ignorance. Therefore, to get satisfaction is rather hard for people. There are so many things we want to achieve, but there are generally things we want to do or gain first in life.

From my point of view, I see that education is the most important thing to have in order to succeed with our dreams and life. Education will bring us the power to understand what is valuable and what is not. Education is the main thing that helps us to make all our dreams come true, no matter whether our dreams are positive or negative. Those people who are educated don’t face problems with money to buy something that they need in daily life even if they don’t have money to put in a bank. Therefore, to become an educated person is my first ambition in life.

Different people, even siblings, might have a variety of goals, but without education whatever goals one has will remain an illusion. Education builds more opportunity for people to get a better life.

Education has the potential to remove the terror of natural death from people. The reason is that death is something that must happen after birth. So how important attaining an education is! For this reason I spend all my time and energy becoming an educated person. I don’t just want to be an educated person for the sake of being educated, but I want to use my education for something positive. For instance, serve other people sincerely not because of being paid. Teach people with a full heart and not like an electronic computer. If you are a teacher, just teaching your students in the class is not enough, more than that, you have to be concerned about students in every field as their parents are.

If you think carefully how educated people behave today you will find writers criticize each other personally and scientists invent so many different powerful weapons such as the atomic bomb. Who can count how many people have lost their lives through these cruel weapons? Nobody I think.

I strongly believe that many people don’t realize what the main purpose of education is. Many people behave as if education is just for them to get a job or support their lifestyle. However, I personally believe that education is very important, like our eyes, to protect ourselves from falling into the darkness of ignorance. If we have a good education then we have a lot of choices in our life: whatever we want to do, we can. Otherwise we have only one or two options, whether we like them or not.

_____Dhakpa
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A Strange Woman Missed

After about ten minutes nap, I was woken up by the sunlight that streamed through my window and I had to open my eyes and stretch out my hands and feet. I looked around and wanted to talk to someone, but all I could see was some other students laying on their beds and snoring. Outside the window the sun was shining as brightly as it was on my bed and there were, without doubt, beads of perspiration standing on my forehead. I could smell something unpleasant on my own body as a result.

I grabbed a book from my untidily piled books and started reading somewhere in the middle of it. I, without any interest, read a few pages and ended up missing someone!!! But, who? I was surprised, but I was quite sure that the person was a woman and her face, actually, was very familiar to me. I had some difficulties in pronouncing her name. As soon as I could pronounce her name accurately, I said it to myself a few times in a row because when I said it for the first time it reminded me of something peculiar and then for the second time it reminded me of something recognizable. And the third time it sounded very recognizable.

However, recognizable it sounded to me, I couldn’t figure out who I was really missing. I said her name in many different ways, loudly, gently, silently and quietly in order to know who that strange woman was. I repeated her name a few times a day and eventually it seemed like a prayer or a mantra to me. Nevertheless, I kept saying it as it provided me with joy. If someone had known what I had been doing with that odd name, they would have called me an idiot.

Anyway, after many weeks of saying her name like a pious Tibetan Buddhist monk says his prayers or mantra, it became clear to me that this woman had not been with me for many years now. And as a result I thought there was little chance that I would succeed in recognizing who she really was. Nonetheless, it seemed rather important to me to continue to say her name, to recognize her, and my heart said, ‘keep doing it so,’ I listened to my heart and carried on saying it.

It was not until two months ago that I recognized her when I found myself saying her name on the phone. To your and my utter surprise, the woman is my mom, namely Dolker.

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I Can’t Forget My Life

Introduction: in this story, a young Tibetan named Sonam tells about her real-life jour-
ney from a remote village in Tibet to Dharamsala, the seat of His Holiness the Dalai
Lama. Sonam, and many other young Tibetans, risk their lives crossing the Himalayan
passes in order to get an education, which is not available to them in Tibet.

When I was sleeping in Tibet, somebody called to me “Wake up, wake up! It’s not the
time to be sleeping. I will show you wonderful things, and listen to me, I’ll tell you in-
teresting situation.”

Then I woke up. I cleaned my eyes, then I looked around, but I couldn’t see any won-
derful place and I couldn’t see the road. Then I listened carefully to his speech. His voice
was interesting but I didn’t understand his special big words.

So I asked him, “Can I go on this road? I want to go there.” He kindly answered “Actu-
ally, it is very dangerous and far away. If you go there, you will understand country’s
situation and our world and can see everything.” So I decided to go there. He gave me
some money and other things. I didn’t take the things, I took only the money, but I didn’t
have enough money. So I tried to find some money. I went to dig the agrimony may be
15 days. then I sold those. I got some money.

On 1st June 2007 I departed from my parents and relatives. Then I didn’t tell anything to
my parents. I was alone going by bus one day, when I was worrying a lot because I didn’t
have any friends there. That evening I arrived at Salang. It was so big. I didn’t know to
go up or down and I was really confused. I sat in the bus station for a few minutes. There
I met some Tibetan people who came along with me to Lhasa by train, I stayed in a hotel
one night at Lhasa.

That morning, I went to Potala to pray and look at the area. When I was coming back
unfortunately I lost my way home. I walked up and down. I couldn’t get it. Then I went
near Potala. There were lots of people crowded around. I watched them. When I saw
some of my friends were going there, I followed them.

Next day I went to ChikaTsei. Then I worked in a restaurant for two months. One day
I got a guide to go to Nepal. We had 44 people. On 1st August 2007, that night we set
out the journey by a big car. It was nearly morning. We walked over a hill then we hid
in a cave that day. Actually we walked through the night and all the day we hid or slept
because of the Chinese police.
One day a person got so sick he couldn’t walk. We carried him together for maybe a night. Unfortunately there was a military camp. So we left him far away from the military camp with some food and clothes because it was really dangerous to take him. After a few days, we arrived near the Himalaya. One woman fell in the water. She shook and also trembled. We said goodbye to her, her husband and her daughter with some food. And also we lost two boys there.

Unfortunately, there was a military camp so we ran to the mountain. Among the mountains, two people appeared, we thought they were our two boys. We waited a few minutes. They were very fast. We looked carefully. They were Chinese police and had guns.

We ran up in the high mountains. They shot at us and said “We will kill you.” They caught some of my friends and nearly caught me, but I was insistent crawling as much as I could. I just laid in the mountain. So I was lucky.

Then I put my face on the snow for a few minutes and I breathed silently. I thought, “I will maybe die, and can’t see His Holiness (the Dalai Lama)” and I remembered my parents. So, I was very disappointed. Then I stared at the scenery snow mountain. It was really amazing.

It was nearly dark and the weather was horrible. It was windy and snowy. We were hungry, famished badly, I was especially dizzy and vomiting blood, because we starved. It was very difficult to walk. I said to them “Please you go. If I will get better, I come with you.” But they never left me. So we were ………walking down slowly, fortunately we met some foreign people.

We didn’t know their language. We used body language. Suddenly, I fainted. They took me in their tent and gave me soup, It was the most delicious food in my life. They massaged my legs and hands. They were so kind to me. After that I felt quite better

So we slept there. That morning I opened my eyes. I couldn’t see anything and I moved my toes, I was unconscious. I felt my eyes and toes were wasted. They gave me socks and gloves. Then we said goodbye to them, I felt very sad and automatically my tears came out in my eyes. I am very grateful to all of them.

After a few days later we arrived in Nepal. The Tibetan reception took us. One day they sent us off to a place in India, which is called Dharamsala. One sunny morning, they took us to a Tibetan temple to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The first time I saw H.H. the Dalai Lama, I was very happy and on the other hand I was so sad because I
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didn’t understand H.H. the Dalai Lama’s teaching. I couldn’t stop my tears.

After a few days, they sent us to TCV Suja School. I studied for two years there. Then, 1st of August 2011, I joined Kunpan Cultural School. Now I study English and computers.

_____Sonam Tso

“The voice of life in me cannot reach the ear of life in you; but let us talk that we may not feel lonely”.

----Kahlil Gibran
Now, I am not going to bother you

Now, I am not going to bother you,
I wish you happiness without me.
The moment I think about you, I cry.
If the past I could return to,
I would choose to know you not.
Loving you I do not regret,
But love without you I cannot face.

Always in the silence of the night,
I wonder if you’re still with me.
I cannot sink, nor be nostalgic,
To make life difficult is not what I want.
I will tell you not because I know my own position.
My position in your heart,
You just do not care.

I thought a new start, you can forget the past.
But I began to take a step back.
I see your name in my diary,
I suddenly want to cry,
But how can I cry.
Because back we cannot go.
Cherished, I had.
Who has, may lose.
In fact, I never belonged to you.

Separated, you and I changed.
Change ourselves to who we are not.
I learnt to be strong,
No longer to pierce my heart.
From now, I will not bother you,
Darling, last time to call you darling.

___Lobsang Yunten
You are my world

I have been waiting and hoping there is a time to meet you again one day and have my life with you. Since I realized that I love you so very much, without you, I know I am losing hope like the stars fade at the daybreak.

I do believe in myself. I can meet the challenge of my future destiny and anything ahead. It doesn’t matter what happens to me. I don’t care about every single thing that might happen because it’s normal for things to change. But these days I am completely in darkness. I can’t think of anything. I am out of my world. It seems my body does not belong to me because I can’t control myself. I am extremely sad to know that you will not be at my side forever. So, I feel, I have nothing in this world to focus on and nothing interesting to make my life beautiful. For me, there is nothing better than you. You are really my world and where my soul exists. Without you, I am not very sure where my suffering soul will be in this impermanent society. Am I stupid to have such a feeling? No, because I love you the most even though I know clearly that there is no way to be with you. I don’t want to let my love disappear from my mind until my dying breath. I am not crying for death, but my tears run down my face automatically when I imagine you. My mind often easily travels with you even though you are going far away from me.

Many years have gone since we separated from each other but my love is deeper than when I was with you. During these years I have been keeping you pure in my mind as well as in my heart and missing you every single moment. But sadly, you are blown away as easily as fur by the wind. The sun sets in the evening and rises in the morning, but you have disappeared from me forever. Am I wrong to love a person who I love the most? My life is incomplete if my true love will disappear this way.

____Sonam Choelha

“Desire is half of life; indifference is half of death”.

____Sonam Choelha
As the untrue cannot be true anymore, like what China did to Tibet in the past, this reality can never be hidden anymore from Tibetan people and especially the young generation.

I didn’t know my own country, Tibet, when I was young because I was educated in a Tibetan school which was controlled by the Chinese authorities. My time in primary school was nurtured by the Red Communists. All students had to wear the Red Scarf and assembled for the national song, even though we were Tibetan students. Similarly, some other kinds of things we had to do were singing patriotic songs of Mao, the president of the Republic of China, and songs of the Chinese Communist Party; without communists there is no new China. We Tibetan people and Chinese people are siblings of only one mother called China. At that time, I had too much nationalism for my country, China, because our teachers always gave us a deep sense of communism, even if they were also Tibetan, but they had to accept the policy of our school made by the Chinese authorities. I was still proud that China was formed by fifty-six different nationalities and our Tibetan nationality was a small influential part of China when I graduated from my primary school.

The movie called “Seven Years in Tibet” showed me how bad China was to Tibet in the past. After I watched it secretly in my village, I changed completely my sense of nationalism. Then I understood that our Tibetan Government settled in India and one million Tibetans, led by His Holiness, moved there. Since I came to India in 2007 to study, I perceived that China is today so powerful on the world stage, because of its economics and military. On the other hand, many problems remain inside and outside of China, like human rights, corruption of Chinese leaders; the intellectual people, writers and social activists have been massacred in prisons for opposing the government; environmental problems have increased due to improvement of technology in China; problems exist among other ethnic minorities besides Tibetans. Of course our Tibetan issue is the biggest problem in China. Today, I believe that our issue will be solved soon. What China did to Tibet in the past is today’s seed to grow the perception of our issues among the Tibetan young generation and the international community. As we can see everywhere around the world today, many countries’ political policies are pursuing a democratic path, like the Arab Spring which influenced many counties such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and China, etc. Today, we Tibetans who struggle are a new young generation; we have our own sense of nationalism and our path of struggle is only non-violent. Anyway, no matter how powerful China is today, our nationalistic sentiment is more powerful.

Dhadak
Kunpan Cultural School

My Journey to India

When I was in Tibet, I didn’t know much about the politics but I frequently heard about it from elders. They talked about many monks and nuns who were arrested and killed by the Chinese police. I didn’t know the reason why the Chinese tortured many Tibetans and destroyed monasteries and nunneries as well.

I wondered why they killed Tibetans. One day I found a small Tibetan flag; I took it and then went to school. One of my friends said to me you must hide it, otherwise the Chinese will capture you, but I didn’t pay attention. I went back home; there was something wrong in our home because usually there was a big picture of H. H. the Dali Lama but it had disappeared; I felt something was missing in my home. I asked my mother, she said the Chinese had taken the picture down and said we weren’t free to keep it and if we don’t listen to them they will put us in jail.

After that situation, I had a strong desire to leave Tibet. Actually, I had never been on a long journey such as the dangerous walk to India. So, it took a long time to decide, because it was a crucial decision to leave my parents and family; they had been so gracious and affectionate to me.

One night I told my sister that I was leaving for India, and she asked me the reason I was leaving. We talked for a couple of hours and I requested money from her; I needed money to pay for a guide. She agreed and promised to keep the secret from my parents as well. On the departure day, I couldn’t look at my mother’s face because my eyes were full of tears, even though I didn’t know when I would see her again. I hugged her very tightly. I pretended to leave for Lhasa. My sister sent me off and we had our last conversation; we both were sad and cried and then I looked all around the area where I grew up. Then I disappeared.

When I arrived in Lhasa, it was evening. The roads were very crowded with people who had just finished work and were going back home. There were traffic jams and, when we got on a bus, it took us more than 6 hours to get to Shigatse, another town in Tibet. We arrived there at midnight. The following night, we were 12 of us who started the uncertain journey.

Our journey was at night and during the daytime we just hid in deserted places where the roads had been flooded and were full of ruts. We didn’t have enough food because we had taken only some tsampa which is a Tibetan traditional food and roasted barley flour. Day and night, we were very scared and nervous. There were many difficulties...
on our journey; the most difficult and dangerous were the nights when darkness was extreme and we couldn’t see each other. When we crossed a particular mountain pass on a very rocky road, we heard the sound of police dogs barking quite close to us and a very bright light coming toward us on the opposite side of the pass. My whole body was shivering, and then I slipped and fell down in a hole; it was fairly deep; I thought I wouldn’t be able to go to India or see H.H. Dalai Lama. We had walked 18 days, we were exhausted and lost our energy, and we were starving as well. I was so discouraged that I decided to stay in the hole whether the Chinese caught me or not. Actually, it was impossible to carry out this plan because it would have endangered the others, so I prayed for a blessing from H.H. the Dalai Lama, a prayer we are used to reciting daily, a prayer we hoped would save our journey. The others threw me the end of a belt, fortunately I grabbed it and I was raised from the hole. That same night we arrived near the chomo lungma (Mount Everest) and stayed there the whole day. When the sun set, we resumed the journey again. Our guide warned us that we had to walk quickly because if the sun rose, it would effect our eyes; we would be snow-blind. After we arrived at the Snow Mountain the whole range of mountains were covered by very thick snow. It was freezing. In addition, there were many skeletons of people and animals who died in avalanches or slipped into the crevasses. It also reminded me of one of my friends; she died there by avalanche during her journey to India three years before; I thought about how she suffered when she died there. We walked very fast as the guide said but as we nearly passed the Snow Mountain, the sun was rising. It was very difficult to see, so we put yak’s fur over our eyes to protect them. Then, at the bottom of the mountain, we set up a campfire and boiled tea; there was no wood so we collected shoes and rugs which had been thrown on the ground. After that, we could travel day and night. When we were approaching Nepal, the weather got hotter and hotter; our faces became pale and the peeling dead skin from our frost-bitten faces was falling off. Once in Nepal, we crossed many more mountains and met many Nepalese porters along the way.

After twenty-eight days of walking, since we left our homes in Tibet, we finally got a bus toward the capital city Kathmandu. After two days on the bus we arrived at the Tibetan Reception Centre. There were some Tibetans who escaped like us; they gave us food and clothes at the centre without any charge. Some days later we reached India; then we had a great opportunity to have an audience with H.H. Dalai Lama and receive a precious and inspiring teaching. His eyes were filled with compassion, and his presence filled my heart with the realization that our journey had not been in vain. We were very blissful because we achieved our purpose.

Through this dangerous journey we arrived in a free country, and for now I am happy to be here, to study my own language and other languages, and attend teachings with the Dalai Lama.

____Chunkyi
You touched my heart

As the concert ended, I heard someone call my name. It was a girl who was well dressed in Tibetan traditional clothes. When I turned around she had already come near me. Immediately I was confused because I used to hear that voice so many times. My confusion was still in my mind. Anyway, we had a long conversation. Through that conversation I recognized that she was my old friend. We hadn’t seen each other since we had departed primary school in Tibet. Tonight she was one of the singers in the concert. It seemed she was really delightful in singing her song because the audience were attracted by her sweet voice and smart face. The audience waved their hands while she was singing her song on the decorated platform. It looked like an ocean where the waves are moving with soft wind.

She started talking about her story since we parted. When she was around fifteen, her parents arranged her marriage. This was an unexpected event for her because she had fallen in love with a boy who was her neighbor. Her desire was to be with this boy in future. There was a big crack on her warm heart as she heard her parents’ order. Her parents thought that it would be their pleasure if their children were happy and wealthy in future. The man who had proposed was rich and powerful. She tried to avoid that awful situation and went from place to place to look for a job. By the time she was leaving home she promised herself to change her life. You can imagine that her life had been like a path of thorns because she had so many troubles after she left her home.

Once in Lhasa, she lost her way and couldn’t find her hotel for three hours. Unfortunately on the way back to the hotel she met some people who had drunk a lot. She tried to save herself from their bad condition. Finally she was mugged by those mad guys. The hotel receptionist also scolded her for the late night. It was about 11 p.m. She went on looking for a job in some restaurants in Lhasa. She didn’t find any suitable job for herself because she couldn’t speak Chinese. Dear readers you can understand how powerful Chinese people are. She realized that she should do something for that and kept this kind of impact in her mind.

In 2005 she met some monks who were escaping from Tibet to India. Those monks helped her and took her with them to India very safely. She had faced a lot of crises when they were crossing the Himalaya. They walked for three days without eating anything because they had finished their food. In the ice land they ate ice instead of food. Luckily they saw some foreign mountain climbers who gave them some food and hot water when they felt cold and hungry. Those mountain climbers saved their lives. It took 28 days until they arrived in the Tibetan Reception Centre in Nepal.
Tears of a Journey

We should know that if you want to be successful, you have to have a strong heart to go up against whatever you are going to face. She has started living a new life since then. She went to school in India and has learned English and Tibetan. Of course she had lots of stress and tension about exams and other things like food and weather. Her hard work is like a river which moves day and night forever. Tonight she stood proudly in front of a countless audience and sang a song from her tender heart with pure smile. When she finished her story I moved close to her and whispered in her right ear “you touched my heart” and the answer was a sweet smile.

_____Dhukbhum

“It is difficult to say which is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and reality of tomorrow.

_____ (Robert Goddard, physicist Roketry Pioneer)
Refugees

On this blue planet people live in different situations. Many of them live in peace and luxury, but some people never enjoy this kind of life.

For example, take refugees who are tortured by another nation. They couldn’t stay in their native homeland so escaped for survival to a foreign country like homeless children. Refugees who spend their lives on the street are just like beggars.

We are human beings and need the same things as other people. We want freedom and we want to stay in our native homeland. To be honest who wants to be a refugee?

Who wants to leave one’s relatives? Who wants to live on a street like a dog in a foreign country?

Of course nobody wants to suffer, we Tibetans are refugees all around the world. We do not have too many troubles with our life situations. Obviously, this is because of the kindness of His Holiness

If we investigate in more detail our life situation, we are suffering. We are helpless, we can’t do anything. If foreigners are scolding or looking down on us without reason what can we do?

The situation inside Tibet is worsening day by day. People who live in our homeland are killed by the Chinese government. People around the world do not see the injustice and unfairness in our motherland. Our heart is full of sorrow. We cannot wake up the Chinese government and so we go on living in suffering.

____ TESDON

“For the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and reality of tomorrow”.

____Anonymous
Tears of a Journey

I felt that I was in a different world

This was the most vivid afternoon that I had ever seen. I went out of my school gate and walked along the road. I felt that I was in a different world because it was just a moment after raining which made the environment so beautiful.

The sun appeared more brightly behind the clouds and I felt the warmth of the sun’s rays on my body. I looked up in the air, the sky was partly blue and the sun was beautifully shining. The snow-mountains seemed to have just sprung up. They rose up in the skies very majestically and magnificently. The fresh air was breezing with full of fragrance which kissed on my face again and again and made my nose happy. The trees and the meadows were fresh and green that seemed to be a garden which had just been watered by the gardener. The rain washed away the dust on the plants and diverse lovely flowers were seen everywhere. They were very impressive and fascinating.

I walked down the road and the water was flowing along the road. The sun was shining on the water and the water became silver. Though it had rained some moment ago, the water was not contaminated. That was really impressive for me. Some birds were singing sweet melodies and beautiful butterflies were flying and landing on the flowers freely.

I looked all around and realised that the beauty of the nature could keep my smile forever. I stretched my arms out and closed my eyes trying to feel the full nature around me. Then I knew that it was my paradise on the earth. What a wonderful afternoon it was!

_____Choedup

“Artificial looks beautiful but nature keeps peace.
Knowing things is essential but analysing them is the most importance”.

_____Choedup

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Another Hell

Travelling from one country to another and never looking back is not my dream. I want to die at the same place where I was born surrounded by the people who I love and who love me. It would be wonderful. Nevertheless, there is something in my heart that always tells me “Never think about going to back to Tibet unless you want to be treated as an animal, and lose your life at any time by a gun shot or in a concentration camp”

How does this sound to you? Maybe you are wondering if I am in hell and talking about its conditions. But I can tell you I am a real human in exile in the world, admiring your happy family lives and independence in which you have equal rights with the people around you.

However, have you ever wondered if there is a hell somewhere to go to if you do something unfair? If you have not, neither have I. If there is one, then the Chinese should have gone already. But according to the condition my fellow Tibetans have been experiencing, it seems to me that there is another hell to go if you don’t commit any crime at all. Who can find any guilty Tibetans in Chinese prisons? They are just there for waiting justice, freedom and human rights. Sadly, it appears, it is very difficult to deal with this issue without economic power. without it, even the U.N won’t interfere in Chinese affairs despite its being extremely dangerous.

To put it in a nutshell, I hope we Tibetans get freedom and at the same time the U.K gets its freedom too, from the same country-China.

_____Dakpa
Refugee

Have you ever been to different countries or seen different cultures all over the world on your own? If so, what do you feel whenever you hear new sounds, new smells, new sights and new lifestyles wherever you have travelled? What is it like or have you ever jotted down your impressions in your daily notebooks? Of course, something has stuck in your mind as you see rich lives or poor lives, especially the refugee’s lives.

But I discern a certain understanding, (more than whatever you have heard or seen from other people and countries) due to what I have experienced in my real life spent in exile. Although many things are still obscured to me, I want to share with you guys whatever I have felt in a refugee’s life so far. It is a weird life, sour and bitter as if it were a food in our diet.

To be honest, in Tibetan refugee exile, no one has been starving and no one has been homeless, until now, on account of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. But as for me, refugee life is like the sun and moon being eclipsed by another planet; a huge burden is always on my shoulders, even though I don’t have any problems.

On the other hand, it is a wonderful opportunity to learn different languages, different cultures and to be acquainted with many people all over the world. But whoever observes the mind of Tibetan people in their everyday lives, will see it is insecure and unpredictable like a nomadic life; will see the mind searching for a way out of an innocuous life, everyday, every month, every year and every decade. I mean my mind is insecure as if I were living in my own motherland. I think all Tibetan people have the same feeling as what I feel in my refugee life in exile.

_Pema Tseten_
I have nothing valuable with me but this.

I have nothing valuable with me but this. Mum, when we departed you gave me a precious gem. I want you to know how much this stone means to me. So often I look at it and touch it. Whenever I am sad or happy, I pray with it for you and for me. It saves my life and it brings me good fortune. It is my best possession and my best friend and it reminds me of my time with you and your advice is reflected in my mind.

It brings you close to me even though you are far away. I am really lonely here as an orphan in the world. I put that turquoize perdant on my neck with a thin thread as a necklace because it makes me more beautiful than anything else and furthermore it is the one thing I love the most. I am happy having it and keep it close to my heart. Once I used another necklace but it meant nothing to me. Since then I have never tried anything else as I realized that there is nothing better than it in my sensitive mind.

It always kisses the small mole on my neck and they often touch each other happily as they play on it. They seem to be showing smiling faces to each other. Sometimes I put it to my nose and try to smell you through it, and sometimes I can hear something like your voice through it. I listen carefully, full of excitement but it doesn’t come clearly, so I think maybe it is my imagination; but who knows? All I know is that I miss you very much at that moment.

I cry with it from time to time when I miss you so much and I look round and round but I can see nothing like you near me. I feel like an orphan in the world, but there is nothing I can do. Whenever I miss you I touch the turquoize perdant. When I look up in the sky, I can see some clouds moving quickly in the blue sky and some of them are going down above the mountain one by one without looking back at me. I want to ask them where they are going to and take a message to you, but how can I? I think maybe they can see you! But there is no way to ask them. I feel such a lot of loneliness here.

_____ Sonam Choelha

“My life without you is as dark as the night.
It is like the sun rising with no light
and eating food with no taste at all”.

_____ Sonam Choelha
Tears of a Journey

My Childhood

I heard some words from my lovely mother. Those words were that when I was a child I was very ugly, therefore nobody looked at me and also all my relatives never looked after me, except only my mother and father. We lived in Kham.

When I was one year old, then my Mum became pregnant; he was my younger brother and since that time I didn’t get mother’s milk and also she always cared about my younger brother more than me. So I was very jealous of my younger brother but I was so despondent during that time anyway. Since that time, my Daddy always looked after me very well but my Daddy didn’t have milk so I always drank cow’s milk. So anyway I was dependent on the cow and my Daddy when I was a baby. So thank you very much, cow and Daddy, for supporting me so well.

When I was 7 years old, the cow was dying and I felt very sad because she gave me hot milk from her body and great energy, not like my mother, so I missed her and still I am feeling sad because I am grateful to her.

One day my Daddy sent me to a new school in Lhasa. I went to the school which was so far from my home that I didn’t come back for a year. So during that time I didn’t see my family and also my beautiful parents. I missed my loving parents and my lovely family and many times when I was sleeping I dreamed about my parents and when I woke up in the morning my pillow was full of tears and my parents weren’t really there. I wished to see my parents but I was not allowed to go home. Fortunately, one day I had a winter holiday and then I got to go back to my homeland in Kham. When I went back to my homeland and I reached my home, the first thing I could see was my Mum, and she looked sick. I asked her about it but she didn’t answer me. Anyway, I spent my time with my family, after that I had to go back to school. My Mum was so sick and she went to the hospital. I didn’t want to go back to the school because I knew that if I went to the school I would never see my Mum in my life again because she was hopelessly sick. My Mum said that I must go to the school but I didn’t want to go the school. Then, three days later, my Mum passed away I felt more sad than when my cow was dying because I knew that mothers are the most important people in our lives, because if there is no mother then there is no us.

Dear Mum, I am so sorry I couldn’t help you in my life but I miss you and I love you so much, deep in my heart forever.

One day my family moved to Lhasa but I didn’t want to move from my old house because it reminded me of my Mum and my cow who I was grateful to. Also, I loved my
friendly neighbours and I also wanted to stay with the kind old people in the town. And, of course I wanted to play with my lovely childhood friends. But Lhasa is a good place so I thought it would be fun. Three months later, we all moved to Lhasa.

_____ Tashi Tsetso.
I am wandering here in India now. My soul and desire have always been living beyond the Himalayas, because a small country called Tibet is located there. We Tibetans belong to the Himalaya region; these mountains and valleys separate Tibet from India.

Even though Tibet is a small country, it had been a peaceful and independent country before the Chinese occupied it. Its location is a unique characteristic that many people associate with Tibet. It is situated on the highest altitude plateau in the world and has wide grassland. Especially, the air is naturally very fresh and pure. As well, you can see the spectacular view of the greenery all around in every part of Tibet, except in the winter season. There were many more different animals, domestic as well as wild animals, that were living very peacefully till the Chinese colonized Tibet. Since the Chinese people first stepped into Tibet, everyone in Tibet has lost their freedom, peace and happiness, including the animals. It seems a very dark and slippery cloud has covered Tibet since then and still continues.

Within a short time, the cruel and greedy people of the Chinese Communist Party have destroyed our country with violence and faithlessness. Since 1959 till now, we the Tibetans have become bereft in this world. Though the Chinese destroyed our families, still we have not lost our faith in god. In contrast, they were harsh in controlling our land but they couldn’t control the minds of the Tibetan people. Likewise, I believe they will never control us if we take our responsibility seriously. Then what is our responsibility? I consider that our responsibility is to be unified, to study hard and to struggle against China, rather than to think or talk only. Nevertheless, we have to seriously try to put our words into action.

Hence, beyond the Himalayan region, people will never die; because of faith and justice flying in the sky magnificently, we know we deserve the things we have already sacrificed for our nation.

________Choekyi
My childhood

I grew up in a nomad family; when I was a young, I rode yaks and horses a lot and also I drank milk and ate Tsampa, flour made of barley.

Since I did not get real toys to play with, usually I spent most of my time on making cars, motorcycles, toy yaks and many other things from red clay; I enjoined playing it very much.

I had a big problem inside my heart because I wanted to go to school very much. I was always thinking about that and also I dreamed about it every single night. In my dream I was going to school with some of my friends but I had no pencil and notebook so I was using a match box as a notebook and I also used the tiny black metal inside a battery as a pencil.

Since my brother went to school and my mum went to my brother’s school to cook for three months. I went there with mum. When I asked my parents to send me to school, they didn’t. I was really crazy about studying, so I was looking at the students through the window, when they had lessons. But they did ignore me. I was very disappointed. After three months, mum and I came back home. One day I heard that they agreed to send me to school instead my sister’s son. So, I was very excited about that. My nephew and I went to look after the yaks together. I asked him, “If you don’t want to go to school. I can go to school instead of you”. He said, “Yes, of course I am happy with that”; so I felt very happy. Anyway, I had to wait for my father’s opinion. Unfortunately my father didn’t agree with that. I was very sad and cried loudly. Really, it hurt in my heart like a sharp knife stabbing my heart!

So I never forget that time in my life.  ______Sonam Tso
A Master of Laziness

Since the spring of 2008 I have been away from my adorable family, SarthopTsang, and I have been doing my very best in the field of study to fulfill my dream of becoming a good teacher. My progress in study (mainly in English) is okay so far, but if I had studied a little harder, my progress would surely have been greater. My family, I know for sure, has a great deal of expectations of me. I, of course, want to do something beautiful to live up to my family’s expectations.

However, I have something with me that I don’t want to carry with my flesh anymore. Laziness is something I was born with and it travels with me quite comfortably, and I have liked it. If laziness was a subject taught in a school, college or university I wouldn’t need any teacher because I was born a Master of Laziness! Nevertheless, there is something wrong in being born lazy because if I am supposed to do something I don’t do it until it is a must! Oh! To prove this, the deadline for this essay is tomorrow; and now this essay is a must and I have to finish this task tonight.

If laziness is something I can get rid of easily I will do away with it right away because I can then study hard and meet my family’s wishes and expectations. But it is not an easy thing for me to do as I have practiced it for so long.

Days have to be spent with meaning,
Nights have to be slept with peace,
But how have mine passed with neither?
Nobody can answer this mysterious query,
But the Master of Laziness can for sure.

_____PhuntsokNamgyal

“Take advantage of laziness
but never let laziness take advantage of you”

_____Phuntsok Namgyal
A student presenting a tree.

Nyima class mock test

They having a speaking test

Dawa class presentation.

Having a debate

Some students getting a Certificate

Dawa class leaving for the exam

Nyima class mock test
Some students rehearsing Computer

Nyima class having a class.

Karma class having a class.

Nyima class having a class.

Karma class having a class.

Karma class having conversation.

Nyima class having a class.

Karma class doing homework.

Some students rehearsing Computer

Karma class singing a song
Students receiving Christmas gifts

A teacher dressing up as Father Christmas

Nyima class.

Students receiving Christmas gifts

Students enjoying teachers’ gifts.

Karma class

Tibetan New Year’s ceremony at school.

Bonfire dance on Christmas Day
Momo cheers!
Having lunch on Students’ Day.

Some girls with a teacher.
Cleaning school campus.

All teachers & students.
Having a Momo party.

Breakfast on Students’ Day.
Making dough for Momo party.

Momo cheers!
Having lunch on Students’ Day.
Students playing football. They are receiving prizes.

Enjoying games.

Students at Bodhgaya.

A teacher sharing her gifts.

Just arrived from Budhgaya.

Lunch break during Dalia lama’s teaching.

Good bye party for Karma.
Right after water sport.

Students playing football.

Girls playing basketball.

Enjoying games

Choosing the best card design

Blowing balloon game

Having a competition

End of Teachers’ Day
Nyima class having mock test

Having pizza party

On Teachers’ Day

Dress up competition

Having breakfast on Students’ Day

Teachers doing dishes

On an Indian wedding

Having pizza party

Some students having a discussion

Nyima class having mock test
Monlam giving a workshop.

Students having computer workshop.

Start of the hike in the mountains.

Doing activities on the peak.

Some students enjoying the photograph

Having breakfast on the peak.

Students competing.

Staying overnight on the peak.
Kunpan Cultural School

Journey to India

It is necessary for children to learn the foundation of education and go to school. They need the care of parents and of teachers. Then they are able to grow with good behavior and education. Otherwise, they can’t catch up with the children who get the chance to learn primary education. It is very essential for each child, but many children don’t get the chance. I feel sorry for them.

When I was six years old, I was sent to a monastery where I learned only how to read Tibetan and memorize Buddhism scriptures until I was eleven years old. I then went to monastery school. It was the first time I had went to a school in my life. I first learned Tibetan grammar, poetry, literature and philosophy. After three years, I graduated from this school but I wanted to further my studies.

I heard in India that Tibetan refugees got a chance to learn Tibetan culture very deeply and completely from my uncle who knew what was happening in Tibet because he listened to Voices of America Radio secretly everyday. He realized how important education is for our nation and in personal life. Before he died, he wanted me to go to India to learn Tibetan culture and he hoped for me to become an educated person. After he passed away nobody helped me go to India.

Three years later, I decided to go to India without my family’s permission. Nobody knew my decision and I didn’t tell anybody, except one of my friends. At first he didn’t accept my decision and didn’t want me to go alone. He knew how difficult it was to get to India and how much money I had. He really worried about me. I was unhappy to leave such a wonderful friend like him, but I had no choice. I sold some of my clothes and borrowed two hundred Yuan from one of my other friends then I had a total of seven hundred Yuan. I planned to get to Lhasa with that money and then in Lhasa I would ask someone to support me to get to Nepal. It was time to buy a bus ticket. I was a little nervous and worried because I had to leave my lovely family. I was going on a trip to very strange and new places that I had never been before. Actually, I wanted to tell my family where I was going to go, but it was very difficult to tell my situation because they wouldn’t accept my plan. They didn’t know how important education was. I understood why we had different opinions because they didn’t get a chance to go to school. They had only experiences of society. They never had difficulty in their lives without education.

I bought a bus ticket from my hometown to Machu, which was 300 miles away. On the bus most of the passengers were Tibetan so I didn’t have any problems even though I didn’t understand Chinese. In Xiling I had a problem with ticket officers because I didn’t
know Chinese. I had to use show body language to buy the ticket. The most difficult part of my long journey was to find a place to stay and something to eat, so sometimes I slept at the bus station and railway station. Also in restaurants I couldn’t order any food so I pointed with my finger to what people were having. It was really silly but at that time I didn’t have a choice. It was my first time to journey away from my hometown to another place by myself. I guess it was a good experience in my life. After four days, I arrived in Lhasa and I had only 200 Yuan left in my pocket. I tired to look for an uncle who lives in Lhasa .I didn’t expect to find him but he searched for me everywhere and found me.

One day we met in front of Jukang temple and he helped me get to the border of Tibet and Nepal. On the way, I had to pass many Chinese customs and I had problems with my permit of course, because it was one of my country mate’s permits. The Chinese officers couldn’t tell the difference between our faces because we have a very similar face shape. However, they recognized I didn’t have a spot and they saw a spot on the photograph in the permit so they asked many questions and they took my permit by force. They shouted at me and tried to stop me, fortunately the driver helped me to get through. The driver said to them I was a nephew of an efficient merchant on the border. The officers looked scared and after one hour they let me go with warning. At the border I went to my uncle’s house and he prepared a guide to lead me to Nepal. I had two partners and a guide. We started our journey at 1 o’clock am one night. We climbed on a high mountain and we couldn’t see the path properly, so we fell down on the ground many times. We hurt our legs and hands. When we reached the top of the mountain, one of my partners began to vomit. He also had a headache and was bleeding from his nose. We had to wait for him for half an hour. He needed a rest. We finished our climb after one day, then the guide put us in different village houses over nine days. The guide said we had to wait for a car which was going to take us directly to Kathmandu, Nepal and we didn’t need to hike. During the first day I nearly became crazy. My mind was full of doubts and I felt hopeless. During the time we stayed with village families in poor conditions, we didn’t get enough food and blankets. In the middle of the night we were so cold because we had to share one blanket between the three of us. The guide went out for three days and came back and changed our accommodation to another house. We had to stay in the houses secretly so we couldn’t go outside during the day. There were no toilets inside and we had to wait until the sun set to go out. Sometimes we urinated when the villagers went out.

After nine days the guide came and led us down the road in the middle of the night. That night we passed five Nepalase customs very silently. Continuously for four days and four nights we walked towards Kathmandu during the nights, and hid in the jungle during the days. We were very cold and hungry. One morning we went to Kathmandu by bus and on the bus we pretended to be Nepalese. We reached the reception center of Tibet in Kathmandu, Nepal. There were 1200 Tibetan refugees. After four days, we
were sent to India with a group of refugees. At the border, Indian and Nepalese armies plundered our clothes and money. I was so angry with them. They were just like robbers.

The bus took four days to get to Dharamshala. We were so glad to be there and we were excited to meet the Dalai Lama. We got a chance to meet the Dalai Lama. After four days we went to different sections and I attended Kirti monastery and my friends went to TTS school. Time has gone very fast. I haven’t seen my family for 12 years and I am not sure when I will meet my family again.

_____Kunchok

“It seems to me that self-confidence and the ability to stand one’s ground are essential if we want to succeed in life. I am not talking of stupid self-assurance but of an awareness of our inner potential, a certainty that we can always correct our behaviour, improve ourselves, enrich ourselves, and that things are never hopeless”

_____ (By Dalai Lama)
As the concert ended, I heard someone call my name. When I turned back, it was my wife who ran away while I was in a difficulty with my two little children. They were so young at that time.

I had a very tough time when we had two children and one of them was seriously sick. We didn’t have enough money for their schooling fees and we lived in an absolutely poor condition. I worked in a company during the day time and in a nightclub during the night. But at that time my salary was quite low. Sometimes we didn’t have anything for dinner because we had very little money but had to pay for many things just like water, electricity and house, etc.

My wife was looking after the children and doing house work while I was at work. She gradually regretted and was disappointed with me, but interested in going out with other rich people. Then she flew away and left me desperately with our children. I myself only worked hard without sleep much of the time and tried to run the family under such harsh circumstances. Since she left, I worked even harder for I had two small children who couldn’t take care of themselves well. I attempted to do a variety of things to earn a bit more money to bring up the kids. Then I trained to sing songs and play guitar.

A couple of years later, I became a very popular singer and had a lot of money. When I managed to get rid of the poverty situation, my children had grown up and were going to a good school in our town. I had no problem about anything.

One day I was invited by the local government to a concert to sing a song. When I appeared on the stage, the audience gave me a big round of applause and they loved my song very much. Not long after the show, I heard a quite familiar voice call my name. As I turned back my wife was standing there. The appearance of her seemed that she had a hard time. Her clothes were worn out and had become thinner than ever. She apologised and asked me to forgive and forget. It was definitely not easy to accept when I recalled about her leaving but for the sake of our kids we got back together and started a full family again.

"As long as love exists, forgiveness comes along".

CHOEDUP
Summer party with my family

Every society or country has its customs and traditions. To my sheer joy, something special in my home town was the summer party. It starts from the 1st of June every year. Families will normally spend more than one week at this festival. It has some characteristics that I doubt can be found in other places.

One unique aspect of our summer party is its location. It is situated in an unspoilt area of wide and marvelous grassland on a high altitude plateau. Especially, in the picture in my mind I can see the spectacular view of the greener all around during the summer season. The sky appeared as same the clear mirror. The edges of the green field were wrapped with dense trees and people could absorb intangible, fresh air which had been released from the trees. The birds were singing in the tree peacefully. I can see children playing hide and seek and running everywhere, without worrying to fall on the mountain’s slope. I also could see that many families played our tradition games and danced with their friends around the tents happily. Another memorable thing about the summer party is the positive nature of the people there. They are kind, friendly and reliable. So, during the summer party our neighbors and parents gave us children money and gifts. Being a very innocent little girl, I was wondering and looking forward to my summer party every year.

My mother and sister were quite busy to cook many delicious and special dishes for us. Still I never forgot that smell which came with the food my mom cooked for us. One thing that I can remember very clearly is that I felt my stomach was always very uncomfortable and heavy after we ate because the food was so delicious and I ate too much. During the day my friends and I played many games around our tents. We laughed together and shouted together. It is possible the flowers, grass and trees were even jealous of our happiness, as we felt like the whole world only belongs to us. Now I am pondering here today, thinking back over the years I have spent in Tibet. I recall the pure or real happiness which I used to feel as a child. Even though I have grown up now, and I have learned many new things and I have gained a lot of knowledge, but back that real happiness of childhood, at what I used to experience during the summer party with my family members and friends has never returned.

______Choekyi
Tears of a Journey

Once Friend, Friend forever

People come and people go.
Sun rises and sun sets.
Mom said: The River will dry one day.
Daddy said: The flower will wither one day.
But I said: No, it wouldn’t.

I put the water in the river every day.
But it dried someday later.
It’s the fish that drank away the water I put in.
It’s the fish, I think.

I watered the flower every day.
But it withered someday later.
It’s the earthworm that drank away the water I put in.
It’s the earthworm, I think.

You are leaving, today.
Will be here no more.
Even I watered our friendship every day.
But you have to go, at the end.
Back to your own world.
It’s not the fish,
It’s not the earthworm,
Then who caused it?
But I hope, as they said:
“Once Friend, Friend Forever.”

_Lobsang Yunten_
My Childhood

When I close my eyes, I can recall my first memory: laughing, spinning and falling in fields of flowers beneath an endless open sky. We told meaningless stories and played.

I think I was lucky because my parents chose me from among my siblings to be sent to school, but my older sister never blamed me about that. She is such a wonderful woman who grew up with me in our small family. Also she was with me more than my other siblings. When we both were about fourteen, every weekend we washed our hair, and then my mother put some oil on our hair and made two ponytails with our hair. Then we both went to the shop to buy candy and looked so much alike that people would say we were twins. This is one unforgettable time in my life.

Another unforgettable time in my life was during the summer holiday when I went to cowherd with some of my villagemates. We took the utensils to boil the tea and food, and went to the meadow where there was good grass to eat for cows and other animals. When we arrived, first we collected dry fire wood and built a fire, and then we made the tea. As it began boiling, we felt as if what we children shared together in the meadow was even more delicious than being at home with our parents and elders. It was a very peaceful time, aside from tending the herds. The meadow was full of cows and other animals. We played very freely and sometimes we lost the cows. Some cows were very similar colours and shapes, so we couldn’t recognize which cows were ours. Then we put a collar on the cow’s neck because it was better to know. At that time we didn’t think about our future; we didn’t have any responsibility except to look after the cows. If it were possible to go back to any place that I have been, I would really prefer to go back to my childhood and enjoy those days again.

Chunkyi
In Tibet a nomad woman’s life is not a happy one. When she is young, she doesn’t get a good chance to have good education or other play games. If she plays games, other people just mock or say something to her. If she wants to go to school, her parents say” you can’t go to school because you are a girl. You need to work in the home; you will not get a good job even with education. You are a waste of time just like dry wood! Because they don’t know the value of education.

So she grows up, she works very hard at home and outside. She spends most of her time with her yaks. Sometimes it rains in the morning, but of course she has to get up early, because she has to milk the female yaks then she makes butter and cheese. Also she doesn’t have time to get food during the day. In summer time all the nomads have to travel with the yaks, but that is fine with her.

In the winter time it is very snowy, windy and very cold, but she works very hard and her hands cracks like dry wood. She washes in hot water then put some oil on her hands, that is her medicine. She also has a bad husband. He always smokes and drinks alcohol. He also gambles and says bad words, but she never says anything back to him. Why? She is afraid of him.

Who can change this bad situation?
Most Tibetan nomad women’s lives are like this.

---Sonam Tso

---A woman protested saying,

“of course it was a righteous war.
My daughter fell in it”.

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Kunpan Cultural School

The Revenge of a Cigarette

It was a Sunday morning after I had quit smoking for two weeks. As usual, when I got up late, no one was there around me; all others had gone because it was a weekend. I went to the spring near our school to take a shower and do my laundry as well. When I got back to school, I was both exhausted and bored. I lay down on my bed again and tried to sleep for some time since there was nothing else to do. But I could not sleep at all because I felt I had forgotten to do something that I had to do. I tried to work out what that was, but it was fruitless.

Half an hour passed, still I couldn’t go to sleep. As fate would have it, I came across a cigarette beside my bed. A strange feeling that I had never felt before ran from my toes to my head as soon as I saw it; I felt my hair stand up at the same time. Maybe it was fear, I thought to myself. But I didn’t know why I was afraid of just a cigarette. Anyway, I went on trying to sleep and ignore the cigarette. But it was impossible for me to sleep, for the strange feeling I had just felt closed all the possible ways to do so. I remained helpless. I didn’t know what to do.

I took down the book called 'Stay Alive My Son' and started reading it from where I had put the bookmark. Even though the book was very interesting and exciting, I felt a little bit sleepy as I went through it. When I was about to sleep, the cigarette beside my bed somehow appeared in front of my eyes again, maybe it was what we call Karma. However, I knew that the cigarette was not going to let me sleep well. I knew clearly in my mind that the best way to go to sleep was to do away with the cigarette. So I held the cigarette in my right hand and went out to throw it away. But I felt mercy for it as soon as I got outside our school gate.

If the cigarette was able to speak, I thought to myself, it would have said “you should not treat me in this way. It’s unfair!” So I treated him in the way I used to, I lit it and smoked it. As I drew on it for the first time, nothing strange happened. But when I drew on it for the second time, I felt regret. Because, whether you believe it or not, I felt that the cigarette was saying “You puffed many lives of my brothers and sisters to death, now it’s my turn to puff you little by little to death.”

_____Rinchen Jam
It was a sunshiny afternoon; I like the feeling of sunshine on my face very much, just like that moment.

I rode my bicycle to the crossroads, the traffic lights were red. I looked up subconsciously and I found what looks like hairy and big tree at the corner of the road. The trunk was very thick and big, it seems the testimony of a century tree. Because of autumn, there were only a few leaves left on the branches.

I didn’t know the name of that tree, I just remember, I had seen it when I first went to my grandmother’s home. How green its leaves were at that time! And now, the leaves became red. The wind blew through the tree and the leaves separated from the branches. Suddenly I found a leaf was shaking its body hard, it seems the leaf wants to be free from the tree, but the tree seems not really wants to let leaf go, the leaf was shaking itself harder, the wind blew through the tree again, finally the leaf separated from the branch. The leaf blew up by the wind in the sky first, and then turns round slowly; it showed the most beautiful dance in front of me. As if the leaf was smiling and dancing beautifully in the wind.

My heart was shocked at that moment, as beautiful as the dewdrop on the cusp of the leaf, it was dancing on the border of dead and alive. For freedom, it would rather be dead, and let the moment become forever.

I think the leaf’s life was happiness! I think my life was happiness as well. I held testimony to the leaf’s beauty at the last moment. Even though it happened rarely, but it was very touching to our hearts.

The traffic lights went green, I rode through the crossroads by traffic stream, but I couldn’t help to turning back my head. The wind blew through, many leaves separated from the trees and dancing in the sky, just like the beautiful sentences in the poem……

The beautiful moment, it doesn’t need a lot of time; it needs a moment sometimes, just like that leaf, but in my heart it already became forever……

____Sonam Wanchen
The Self-Immolators’ Goals Contribute to World Peace.

I have high respect for the martyrs who immolated for equality, rights, democracy and freedom in Tibet and all over the world. Many people consider these principles very important, but they don’t really comprehend the value of these sweet words. They are only concerned with a nice life and staying out of trouble.

The self-immolators had a stronger desire to change the injustice and unfair things which were experienced by Tibetans. They sacrificed their precious lives for world peace and human rights. They left the dearest and the nearest behind them. Some of them were able to leave a powerful written message to the world and some weren’t; however, their purpose of the self-immolation was the same.

I hope that anyone who hasn’t got clear information about the reasons for the self-immolations will analyze where the events came from. The self-immolators knew there were many different ways to protest the Chinese government, but they believed this was the best way to have an impact on human society because the value of human life is priceless. They sacrificed everything for our better future. But on the other hand, some foreigners and Chinese people are wondering about the self-immolators’ courage and dedication and they say this is not the best way to advance the Tibetan cause in the world.

Yes, there are plenty of ways to struggle for our rights but many people don’t understand how the Chinese government and military have occupied the homeland of the innocent Tibetans. We Tibetans are simply asking the Chinese government to implement exactly what they have written in the constitution of the People’s Republic of China. In the constitution, the autonomous regions and minorities have rights to study their culture and languages so they can preserve their own identities. As a result the government should support preserving their culture and languages.

I hope the international community and the Chinese people will examine why we Tibetan people are willing to self-immolate without hesitation. For me our Tibetan people who self-immolated inspire three hopes and two dreams. The first dream is that His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all Tibetan people who are outside Tibet will be allowed to return to our homeland without any conditions. The second dream is to create a peaceful community in Tibet and China without racial discrimination between the two countries.

The first hope is that international community will understand why Tibetans have self-immolated. The second hope is that Tibetan and Chinese people will also understand
Tears of a Journey

this. Lastly we hope that as a result of the immolations peace and justice may also come to other places in the world that have the same problems we have had.

I hope the self-immolators’ dreams and hopes will come true as they wished, so we all can wake up by their great sacrifices to human society.

_____ Tseduk

“Life is indeed valuable; even higher is the price of love; if for the sake of liberty, both can be sacrificed”.

-----Sandor Petofi, Hungarian Poet
For many years I have been disappointed because I have not used my intelligence and my talents to the best of my abilities. Luckily, I have the chance to use my intelligence as much as I can for the rest of my life. I appreciate that my parents kindly offered me a precious life.

When I was younger, I thought appearance and beauty were the most important things in life. Because I was innocent and illiterate when I was young, I always thought that I was perfect enough even though at that time I didn’t know what a meaningful life was, and how important it was. I didn’t think about it as I do now. I thought this way because I couldn’t get out of the darkness of my mind at the moment and I didn’t use the intelligence which I got from my parents. It seemed like I was staying in my own room in an ancient house with no windows to let the air and the rays of sunlight come in. But now I realize that there are lots of different animals and people in the world, as well as many small creatures, and each of them has a responsibility. I am one of those creatures who should think about the future, and life on earth, and take action as much as I can for the future of life on earth. Since I realized that, I have thought carefully and I know that I am still in a dark house where the windows are covered by a piece of cloth. I can’t see the open world even if I am in it. I notice that the world is such a wide and endless place to travel, and there are countless things which can make life colorful. So I thought I should pull back the curtain and have a look through the shining window. I want to open myself to experience life as much as possible.

So now I am on my way. I am walking on a small path and hoping to find the right way, even though I don’t know how to get there yet. Luckily, I have guides to help me, and I am starting to get a purpose and a sense of direction in my life.

—— Choelha,
Tears of a Journey

My Journey to India

The day I decided to leave my family was a new starting point for me, when I took my first step toward the dream that I had wanted for a long time. This starting point would make a big difference in my life and I hoped that it would make a difference to my family; I was the only hope for them as no one in the family had succeeded in the field of education. Since then I promised myself that I couldn’t let them down and I would be the person they could be proud of.

It was an utterly unforgettable memory in my life. I am sure that my journey wasn’t the same as for others because I do believe that my journey to India was unique among those people who escaped from Tibet.

To be frank, my journey to India wasn’t as hard as some others’ because I didn’t come here on foot. I mean I didn’t cross the mountains where other Tibetans underwent the hardship of walking to Nepal but I, myself, have had an extremely extraordinary experience in my life, and I will never forget it. The only obstacle was the people who were near me and didn’t believe I could deal with things in a tremendously new society where I didn’t have any friends or family. I used to be the black sheep of my household; they believed that I was a trouble maker all the time. But due to my insistence, I got a little support from them; that’s why I am here today.

It started when I was 21 years old; on the 30th of November, 2007, that was the day I separated from my family, my friends and all my relationships. Then I went to the capital city of Tibet, Lhasa, and I stayed there more than a week; there I met my friends who were working in Lhasa and we travelled all over the city and to the holy places where I had always wanted to go. After that, I went to Nepal on a bus with the help of one of my friends; I paid the fare, which took two thirds of all the money I had at the time.

Less than my expectations

When I arrived in Nepal, everything was less than I expected, such as how Kathmandu appeared to me: an awfully polluted environment like I have never seen before, the traffic system was unpleasantly crowded, and the Nepali lifestyle was completely different from anything I had ever known. I felt like someone who was dumb because, even though I could speak both Tibetan and Chinese very fluently, I could not communicate with anyone. This was a fact that I had to accept; I felt frustrated; I even doubted that my perspective on my future was wrong. Then I entered the Tibetan Reception Center in Nepal, where I found a little hope to hold onto my goal. At least I found some people who speak the same language as I do. I spent my time there for about a fortnight and I realized that what I had decided would be alright.

Time is never concerned about how fast it goes. In the course of time I comprehended
Kunpan Cultural School

that life will be what it should be. In the Tibetan Reception Center, I was treated as a
member of its family and I met some people who told me their life stories and later they
became my first friends in my refugee life. Soon, we were sent to India by officers of that
center. It took us three days from Nepal to India; during that journey we faced several
problems with the local soldiers, traffic jams and lack of food. But, finally we arrived in
India safely.

The holy land India
On the 28th of December, 2007, I arrived at Dharamsala; since then, it became the area
I visited most often. There I got a golden chance to enter a school to learn English as my
third language.
That was my journey to India, during that journey I learnt how life is often not smooth
and is often filled with difficulties. I felt I had matured and my sense of humanity had
grown……

_____Sonam tsering

“If a man empties his purse into his head,
no man can take it away from him,
an investment in knowledge alawys pays the best interest”.

_____Benjamin Franklin
Money makes people poor and crazy.

In this world, everybody loves money so much, therefore all people are working hard to earn money but it is not easy to earn money. Because of that, some people will do anything for money.

Some people, like criminal gangs and terrorists, steal money and valuable property from other people and also they kill so many people for money; when they get money they buy guns, bombs and drugs; then these people become enemies to each other. Of course they value their own lives but they don’t value life itself; they love pleasure for themselves but don’t care about peace and happiness for others; in the end they leave and they leave behind them neighborhoods and cities with war, danger and suffering. If businesses and companies have a lot of money then they make so many factories and cut down trees for their factories. These factories cause so much pollution because they produce different things we can buy and, because we buy them, they produce even more. In the process, more and more air pollution and garbage is created which causes water pollution as well. Air and water pollution has caused many fish and animals to become extinct. The water is dirty so in many places people don’t get clean water to drink, and the environment is in danger because of pollution. And all these things, people do for money.

In this universe all people need money but if they have too much money then people want to buy everything, whether they need it or not, and they pay others to do things they don’t want to do themselves. Some rich people lead a life with no purpose. They don’t think about their future lives and they never think about understanding their own values and what will happen tomorrow. They only eat and buy useless things and also they drink a lot of beer. To be honest, we don’t need all those things, despite the fact that people do buy those kinds of things.

Money is made of paper; even though it very powerful, it disturbs the environment and people’s thinking. Money is a dangerous thing because it changes the world, so we should be careful when we use it. Anyway, money can make people lose everything and their lives.

Money is paper really, if it burns then it leaves only ashes, then you can never use those dirty ashes for your future benefit. If you don’t have money then it doesn’t matter because you can use your natural understanding and live your life with good values and enough money will automatically come to you.

____TashiTsetso
Kunpan Cultural School

Education Can Open Our Minds!

When I was in Tibet, I didn’t have any idea why I had to live with Chinese people and why I couldn’t do what they were doing. I thought they had special talents! I wanted to try to be better than them but I was scared I would fail.

Without education, I felt just like a blind and a deaf man because I was very curious to see the world and to hear people but I couldn’t. I only dreamt about seeing the world and feeling it around me. I knew the world was wonderful and like a giant classroom. I had hoped that even I would be able to learn from this wonderful classroom. I had also thought that people who can learn from this world would get special talents and abilities which I didn’t have. But I also realized that people got into powerful position because of their wealth. They could be good at education, business and politics as well.

I had tried many times to escape from my fears. In 2005, I decided to come to India and fortunately arrived here in 2006. Since then, I have been released from both my ego and my fears and the disease that is lack of confidence. I have now started to see and hear the world and to feel the freedom of my life. I have learnt how to speak with different people and those people have taught me about the skill of self-improvement. They had faced many problems before they found themselves.

I now realize that nothing is impossible to change in our lives. Learning is the key to opening our eyes and minds.

_____ Tseduk

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“The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one”.

-Malcolm Forbes, American Educator.

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We Tibetans are still not criminal of the earth.

Long ago, when we humans were a general form of nature, our mother earth was abundant with resources and very beautiful other living forms. At that time, humans and all other living forms were an equal part of nature. Humans were not criminals of the earth as they are now. After the invention of science and technology for our benefit, we humans started to let the other living forms become extinct.

This destruction is not caused by all human beings. Some countries create many scientific and technological things for their own improvement by allowing high carbon emissions from factories, digging natural recourses, and cutting down lots of forests in China, including in Tibet, even if they know how a healthy environment is important for living beings.

In Tibet, we Tibetans have a rich and deep culture which is very unique and could be useful for improving human values and ethics in todays’ scientific world. It also could help to prevent the problems facing the environment including living forms becoming extinct. Actually, we Tibetans don’t know about the problem facing the environment which has been created by deforestation and carbon emissions from the factories around the world, because we didn’t have those problems the environment until recently.

In my country, Amdo Rebkong, there is an old saying; people in Rebkong don’t have Tsampa to eat when there is no snow on Shachon which is the highest mountain in my country, Rebkong. This means the temperature in Tibet was very cold for years. But today people all over Tibet fear that everything is changing, including the climate because of the improvement of Chinese economics.

The spirituality of Tibetan culture includes having compassion equally for both human and sentient beings on our planet. Some people say that we Tibetans are still natural humans and we are not social humans yet. This shows two sides; one is that we Tibetans do not have modern education and we are behind other countries. But another is that we Tibetans are still a part of nature and we are not the destroyer of the environment. Mainly, we Tibetans are still not criminal of the earth.

______Dhadak
I was coming alone on a narrow path, I could see a beautiful lake, mountains, trees, and I heard the wonderful voices of birds. I would be late but I didn’t want to miss this marvelous scenery. I laid down on the grass and I looked at the sky. There were lots of stars shining, and the full moon was appearing among the stars. The full moon was attractive to whoever was looking at it and other planets, oceans, mountains, trees, birds and animals as well that night. It was really graceful.

Suddenly I remembered that the moon is considered as god by many religions and some religions think that the moon is their god’s palace. So the moon has approached the earth to show its beauty arrogantly to living beings. The moon ignored other planets because of how much living beings love it. Most of the people enjoy moonlight but the moon became an arrogant planet.

I was looking at the moon which told me about its body structure of reality. It hadn’t told everybody yet, but the astronomers already knew about that. The moon hated astronomers and it tried to prevent astronomers’ information everywhere. Because the moon had only out beauty to attracte others.

After that I thought carefully about why people are proud of the moon. Because the moon is very bright and it makes people feel safe in the dark and it helps many plants to grow. It is right but most people are confused. They think the moonlight comes originally from the moon. In fact, the moonlight isn’t its own light, it is the sun’s light. The moon is just like a big rock. It hasn’t its own light. But the moon pretends to be great. Just like what human beings are doing as same way.

Most people think outer beauty is important and they have done many things for their outer beauty. They spend lots of money and energy but they don’t pay attention to inner beauty. When they talk about value of human beings, they first point out a human being’s beautiful face, fit body, who has a good job, who is nice, and how well dressed. They don’t talk about inner beauty like faith, loyalty, compassion, patience, tolerance, generosity, respect, kindness, sincerity, and concern for others. Most of them fight, are jealous, divorce, argue, cheat and lie to each other. They don’t have happy lives because of their wrong decisions and choices. We have to stay with family, friends, in society and partners our entire lives so we shouldn’t choose wrong. Don’t consider outer beauty is more important than inner. It can make us suffer.

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Kunchok
Happy Birthday, Mom!

On 16th of February 1965, my mom was born. When she was about 2 years old, her two younger brothers and a younger sister were born. She was the oldest child in her family. When she was in primary school she studied very well, especially writing. She wrote many essays during her school life and most of her essays were rewarded. When she graduated from primary school, she was matriculated into the best secondary school in our hometown.

My mom’s parents were officials; they didn’t go back home for lunch because the place where they worked was far away from their home. Therefore, my mom was the one who had to cook lunch for her siblings every weekday. I still remember my aunt telling me these things when I was about 12.

In 1986, when my mom was only 21 years old, she married my dad; 2 years later, I was born into this wonderful world, because of the greatness of my mom. My mom and dad took many photos of me on my first birthday. Since then, they have taken photos on every one of my birthdays.

I left my hometown in 2006, when I was 17 years old. Now, 6 years have passed. In these 6 years I didn’t celebrate my birthday, because my mom and dad were far away from me. They couldn’t travel here for my birthday. Yes, sometimes I think it’s ok, because I’ve already become an adult, but whenever I remember my childhood, I feel sad and I miss my mom and dad; I want to be with them as soon as possible.

Today, the 16th of February 2012, is my mom’s 47th birthday. Even though I can’t be there to celebrate her birthday, I deeply wish my mom health, happiness and good luck in this New Year. Your child will be with you forever!
Happy birthday, my dear mom!!
Sonam Wanchen (Dawa Class)

_____Sonam Wanchen
When I was a child my favorite ceremony was the Tibetan New Year. The day was very long when we were waiting for New Year. Usually we couldn’t sleep very well because of the excitement of waiting for it to arrive. When we were celebrating the New Year we all wore new clothes and had new things. We invited all our relatives, neighbors and friends to each others’ homes. This was the best time to meet all our nearest and dearest. We congratulated and wished each other a happy future in the New Year. We also gave little gifts which expressed our congratulations. It was the happiest celebration for me. Not only for me, I think for most Tibetan children as well.

Since I have become a refugee, I have lost my interest in the celebration of Lasor, which means New Year in Tibetan. This is especially since 2008. During every New Year inside Tibet there has been mourning for what happened in 2008. At that time, the Chinese government killed thousands of Tibetans and put others into imprisonment. I hate the word New Year now because we lost many Tibetans due to the situation inside Tibet. Tibetans are still struggling for human rights and democracy for future generations. Since 1959, many Tibetan children have become orphans and Tibetans have lost their jobs as a result of them asking for human rights from the Chinese government. I am really in pain when I think about these kinds of events during Lasor. Also, my elder sister has been under arrest since 2008 so I am really in grief every New Year.

I know that worrying about it doesn’t help, but I can’t escape from my anxiety. During Lasor, all these tensions weigh heavily on my mind.

My sister’s smile is all that I can think about. Maybe many people think I am very stupid to worry about all this because it doesn’t help to release her or improve the Tibetan situation. Nevertheless, I have no way to escape from these feelings, so I hate the black New Year!

______Tseduk
Tears of a Journey

Letter to dear mom

How are you mom? I hope you are very well as before. I apologize about some things which I didn’t tell you about leaving and couldn’t get chance to say good bye while I was starting to escape from Tibet. I thought if I told you about that, you wouldn’t give me permission to go there. That is one reason why I couldn’t inform you that properly. Now I realize that I am wrong. Dear mom! I was full of eagerness to meet you in my heart but there is a long distance between you and me, therefore, to miss you is making a big carve on my heart. I always disappoint myself and am regretful about that. If I have a chance to meet you again in the my rest life, I would never ever leave you for a single moment: and I would repay you for what you did for me.

In this letter I want to share with you two things which are my journey and my life in exile. I suppose it would be helpful for our new generation who are living under the communists’ atmosphere: and also some Tibetan people who are living in native places where our tradition and cultures have disappeared.

Since I have set out from Rabgong I went through some important places in Tibet like xinning, Lhasa and Shikates. I never worried about language because I myself am proud enough about Tibetan. Unthinkably those cities are full of Chinese people, of course, they use Chinese language. Tibetan could do nothing for me even buy a mineral water in a small shop. So I recognized the Cultural Revulsion and the Peaceful Liberation of Tibetans have been making the Tibetans deaf and dumb, the Chinese dream is successful nowadays.

A beautiful morning, I arrived in Lhasa. In my mind Lhasa is the purest part of Tibetan society but only the Potalace palace and Chokang are standing in the center of capital city in Lhasa unchanged but the other things in Lhasa have already changed like design of houses, Language, traditions. People in the world can’t believe it is a Capital city of Lhasa because Chinese make it their own city. Dear mom, don’t forget to tell your new generations what Chinese did for Tibet during the Cultural Revolution.

On 13 July in 2006 I got very safely to the Tibetan Reception in Nepal. I am grateful to His Holiness and his government in exile. What a wonderful service Tibetan Receptionists did for us at that moment! They sent us to second destination of Dhelhi Reception and Dharamsla where we went to different schools. Furthermore I got a great chance to see His Holiness at Daramsala at that time. It was one of the proudest events in my life.

My first school, which was Tibetan transit school (T.T.S), is suitable for my age. That
Kunpan Cultural School

school is located by a small river where some Tibetan flags were waving across the river. When I felt homesick and missed you, I used to look at it and imagined our home and your kind smile.

That school consists of 700 students who are from different places in Tibet and 40 teachers. The main subjects are Tibetan, English and Computers.

When I finished my previous school I got an opportunity to go to another school which is located near the Noblinka Institution. It is a private school. Our director is a Tibetan who lives in Switzerland right now. He and his staff members offer 24 students an opportunity to learn English and Computer for 2 years. Now I am studying there.

I am going to finish here, things which I told you are very important for our generation to know.
God bless you.

_____Dhukbhum

True compassion has the intensity and spontaneity of a loving mother caring for her suffering baby. Throughout the day, such a mother’s concern for her child affects all her thoughts and actions. This is the attitude we are working to cultivate toward each and every being. When we experience this, we have generated “great compassion.”

_____H. H. The Dalai Lama.
Tears of a Journey

My Life in India

What a strange and interesting place: that was my first impression of India with its charmingly dressed people, very crowded streets and odd shaped vehicles. The different language made me even more curious about the way of Indian life and culture.

My life in India started with the unforgettable meeting with His Holiness. For a Buddhist I have done the most important thing in my life; I got the blessing from the holiest God. My parents, my relatives and my friends feel proud of me, and as for me I have met my ideal scholar, my hero.

Life in India is an adventure, and I realized a lot of truth after I arrived here. I’m a refugee in India, but I’m not alone. There are thousands of Tibetans fighting for freedom, they have struggled for fifty years. I strongly believe a proverb: If there is a will, there is a way.

Life in India is a challenge; living in a foreign land is not as easy as I had expected. I have encountered some difficulties, and I have had to face the realities of one’s life, such as illness and boredom. Sometimes I really felt angry and helpless when I had arguments with Indians but I have learned to be tolerant.

Life in India is a gift from love. I’m learning a new language, English. That’s the subject I have wanted to learn for a long time, and I believe it will make the path in front of me more wide and meaningful. So far, I have spent four years in different schools, where I have met a lot of kind people who fed my starvation, both for hunger and learning, even though we are from different places and far distances. Encouraged by parents and teachers, support and help from friends, I received lots of love from all of them. This is how the love coloured my life in India.

_____Gonpo

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising up everytime we fail”

_____Anonymous
The horrible dream

Last night was different from a usual night. It was getting dark very early and the weather was colder than before. I looked outside through the window crack. Trees were shaking. It looked like the wind was playing with the trees. At the same time, some street dogs were barking very loudly as if they had been without food for a few days. I went into a classroom with some of my family photos. While I was reminiscing and looking at those photos, it reminded me of my family and some of my friends. I didn’t know how fast time had gone. When I went back to my bed, all my roommates were sleeping deeply I wondered why they had gone to bed earlier than usual? I checked my watch, it was 11.30. Again I came outside and I looked around our school. I could see thousands of bright stars in the sky. It as if, they were waving to me, but suddenly, the cold wind warned me to go back to my room. I tried to sleep but I couldn’t, I heard a flock of birds squawking, so I covered my head with pillows and I slept very deeply and had a strange dream, which I didn’t want to happened.

In my dream, my dad told me on the phone that, he felt sick. I felt very nervous and I run towards him as quick as possible but, it was as difficult as climbing the desert mountain. It was very hard to reach him. At last, I got there but my father had already died. The house was empty, I called father three times but nobody responded. Then I realized that he had left me alone. I didn’t see anything and it was like full of thick cloud in front of my eyes. After sometimes, I saw some monks but they didn’t talk to me. My eyes brimmed with tears. I cried very loudly. Tears automatically rolled down from my eyes. I felt, I would never see him again. This strong feeling woke me up. My pillow was wet with my tears. I looked at my watch. It was 4.30 I didn’t want to get up from my cozy bed so I slept again. When I realized, it was all a dream. I calmed down but my heart was still beating really fast. I expected to break down very soon because I wanted to make a phone call to my family and I wanted to know about him. After two classes finished I called him. I was delighted to hear his soft voice. My pain was healed.

Rinzin wangmo
Tears of a Journey

A letter from the Core of my heart

Oh! My god!!! The time is knocking at my door that I have to leave soon from Kuupan Cultural School (KCS). A strong feeling of sadness and happiness is rising up in my inner heart. I feel sad because your love and kindness enveloped my whole body within two years. Likewise, I feel very warm and reliable feelings are sinking into my heart deeply. Hence, I want to keep that sort of feeling for a long time rather than take it off from my body like a coat. Especially, a deep greedy motivation still looks forward to gain more knowledge. Moreover, in many cases I feel you as brothers and sisters whom make me feel strong and self-assured in this school, but soon I have to leave.

On the other hand, I feel happy and excited, because I am going to graduate from KCS completely. Of course, No matter how much knowledge I have got and no matter what kind of job I am going to hold for living my life, at least I have enough confidence to say to my parents that I did my best, which is based on my own ability.

Above all, I realized that both the feeling of sadness and happiness are absorbed from the combination of all the kindness and discipline of all the organizers, staff members, generous sponsors, warm hearted volunteer teachers and supporters who have given us such a great opportunity to show our natural skill or talent without paying a single rupee and provided us with all the facilities as a school need.

Nevertheless, I appreciate all of your positive attitude, altruism, contribution, and tireless dedication in nurturing our physical and emotional well-being for our lives. So, from the depth of my heart I would like to say to all of you “thank you very much for whatever you have done for me”. I’ll always pray to God for keeping you all away from misfortunes and evil spirits. I wish you achieve all your goals. God bless you.

‘May the days of prosperity often belong to Kuupan Cultural School’?

__Choekyi
Kunpan Cultural School

My childhood

When my mother was pregnant with me, my father was in a prison in China; my elder sister was born before he was sent to prison. He really wanted me to be a boy and expected to see me. Unfortunately, he was arrested by Chinese police before my birth. So my mother had to look after my grandmother, aunt and my elder sister, as well as me. My mother took her responsibility seriously and worked hard for her family. When she went to work in the fields, she carried me on her back and held my sister’s hand and pulled her alongside. Anyway, she suffered a lot.

When I was four years old, my sister and I played with the children in the village. They were older than us. In the winter we went ice skating. During that time we didn’t need food. We didn’t notice how cold the weather was. Every evening my legs were cold but my grandmother always touched my legs to her chest and kept them warm. Usually in Tibet most of the children grew up on their mother’s breast; I don’t remember whether or not I sucked my mother’s breast when I was a small boy. I always slept with my grandmother and elder sister all together. In my village we didn’t have separate beds for children. They slept with their parents or brother and sister. In the summer we went swimming and played with water the whole day. In the evening most of the time our clothes and shoes were wet. My grandmother shouted at me and I had to promise I wouldn’t get my clothes wet again, because I wanted to go and play with the other children the next day.

When I was six years old, my father was released from prison. Then we stayed together more than three months and after that I was sent to a monastery. So I didn’t get chance to live with my parents longer than that. Sometimes my grandmother visited me and we had lunch together. When I walked with her, my eyes were full of tears and they fell down on my cheek because I wanted to go home with her. I was not allowed to go home and visit my parents, like other small monks. I only could visit them twice a year. I didn’t go to school until I was eleven years old.

I was an unlucky boy because I didn’t get the opportunity to study primary education. Now I have to study that which I hadn’t studied before. I had a miserable childhood. I can guess that nobody had a childhood just like me in my school. Most of them went to school and lived with their family. I wanted a childhood like theirs. In the future, I will send my children to school and support their education. I don’t want them to be just like me. I want them to be educated people. I want them to go among others confidently.

_____Kunchok
Tears of a Journey

My Dear Father Has Left This Lovely World

I do not have any idea what I have to do since I heard about my dear father’s death. Actually, I had planned many things to say and do with him, but everything is impermanent unfortunately and he has gone from me without giving me the opportunity to do these things with him. In this life of course, everyone’s parents’ are one of the most precious factors parts in their lives. I think my father was hugely important to the whole family. He worked so hard for our future and made sacrifices for our well being. I feel we never did enough for him.

Oh! It is really hard to believe that my dear father has gone from me. I couldn’t even spend one day with him because I didn’t live with him in Tibet. It was Karma that led to us living separately when he was alive. This is something I just have to accept. My parents had divorced before I was born. When I was growing up I wanted to meet him, but many things prevented this from happening. I used to dream about him a lot. Once I dreamt that he came to school with me, held my hand and walked through the gates with me.

He may be gone but he has left many stories with me. How can I begin to tell these properly? But I have to make the effort because Karma has decided that I am the reader and the writer of my father’s life. I am confident that I can read write? all about his great contribution to his family’s life and to his Tibetan nation. This is my great responsibility.

Dear Father you have passed away and no longer need to worry about your family or your nation. We will do our best without you. I am sure that the Three Jewels, the Refuges, will guide you to the right place because you were a great man and have gained merit. According to Buddhism one must put others before themselves, since you have done this I believe... I therefore believe that your path will be peaceful and bright.

Dear Father, tonight I couldn’t sleep and I cried really loudly but I have to control myself because it doesn’t help you anyway. On the one hand we have birth; on the other hand we have death. I have received much comfort from the manager at Kunpan, Choephel, and from the teachers and students. I have brought your name to the attention of H.H. the Dalai Lama and some other high lamas who will pray for your passage into the next life.

Finally, I want to say thank you for all the blessings that you have brought to my life. I am determined to treasure and respect your memory through the life that I now lead and will continue your contribution to the Tibetan nation.

_____Tseduk
Death

It is a complex word when I think about it, but in other words, it’s seems to be simple. So many writers and philosophers have written about it that it makes me more confused in understanding about death. Anyway I will jot down a few ideas of my conception of it.

“Death”. When I heard the word, it guided me to think deeply beyond the word, what is death? Maybe someone will tell me that it is the law of nature. It cannot be escaped by anyone. Yes agree with that and I know that when death comes by disease, accident or old age, none can extend one’s life. In Buddhism it is so-called karma.

It is possible that someone tells me that death is complete annihilation or disappearance of a living being, but I don’t think that is true, and I will never use annihilation to describe death because I do believe that after death there is something called immortality. Things such as their names, achievements, contributions, and even an imagination of their external structure will remain or live on continuously.

To be frank, I am very scared of death which will come fast towards me, but on the other hand, we are always running towards death week by week, day by day, even with the passing of a single second that means the distance between death and me will be near by one second. So I think life is short and the time of it was limited. We, therefore have no option to choose to waste our time. The only way to face death is to grasp every single second in our life, and to do something good for our host-earth, for our offspring that will make a big difference in this world. It is the true mean that human beings have to be.

______Sonam Tsering

“\textit{It is a brave act of valour to condemn death; but where like is more terrible than death, it is then the truth volour to dare to live}”

----Thomas Browne
Women’s role in society of Tibet

Referring to women’s role in society of Tibet, the first word coming to my mind is “change”. Especially in 21st century, women’s role has changed dramatically in terms of both status and variety.

Women seemed to be the least important creatures in the world in ancient times. At that time the criterion whether a woman was good or not was obedience. A woman was to be obedient to her parents in her youth, to her husband once she got married and to her children in her old age. At that time, women were subordinate to men, having no humanity at all, not to mention the so-called liberty or equality.

Also in the old society of Tibet, women, in general, were inferior to men too. Women were to remain ignorant and to obey--first, their fathers; after marriage, their husbands; during widowhood, their sons. The major role of women, considered the private property of men, was to please their husbands and to bear children.

As time goes on, the society is developing constantly in all fields. Women’s role in society in Tibet has been undergoing great changes. To sum up the situation, women become more independent. They have the right to receive education and go to the job markets to find jobs. From working as nurses and teachers to working as doctors, engineers and managers, women are no longer confined to work in certain fields. They even surpass men in some jobs which used to be occupied by men. With women’s abilities being recognized, they are receiving more and more respect from the society.

Still, there exist some problems. Especially in some rural areas, women are still in a lower position. They have to obey their husbands and are almost illiterate. Therefore, women still have a long way to go towards a completely equal society. I think the case is based on education. It can’t be denied that men take a dominant position in strength, logical thinking etc., but there are characteristic advantages women have anyhow, in which men fail to contend with them. Consequently, men are no better than women. Policewomen, women pilots, and women astronauts..., all these will prove the ability women own to the public. As a result, women get more and more aware of their own values. Despite its hardships and high costs, lots of them are trying their best to change the prejudice of the society. However, what I want to point out here is that not only men have the prejudice, but some women themselves do too. Even those who claim to long for equality with men have the double standard of equality. On one hand, they demand equal opportunity; on the other hand, they take “ladies first” for granted, considering that
it is perfectly justified for men to open doors for them, offer their own seats to them, pay for dinner for them. Does it make sense? How can you ask others to treat you equally while you yourself have admitted the inequality in advance? In short, I think as long as our sense doesn’t change completely, the real equality between men and women won’t come.

All in all, women’s role in society of Tibet is being made various and significant, which is certainly the trend of the whole world’s development.

______Lobsang Yunten

We are not too good, nor wise,
That is all the merit we have.
In a luckless moment we were born,
When the star of wisdom was the dimmest.
We can hope for no profit from our adventures,
We move on, because we must.

------Rabindranath Tagore
Eyes Wide Open

It is difficult not to repeat what many other teachers have already written about the school and the students, especially their strong motivation and welcoming nature. Instead of regurgitating this - however much I’d like to show my appreciation - I would like to share some personal feelings.

Coming from the western world and having had the opportunity to visit and work in different countries, I often find myself feeling slightly privileged. I know there are many people in Britain that live in poverty and have extremely difficult lives, but I feel that on the whole most people are provided for, often with help from the government if not their own families. There also appears to be a certain amount of freedom, even though big brother is opening his eyes wider.

Most of these things that people in my country take for granted have been taken away from the Tibetan race. I am currently looking at a picture of the Dalai Lama hanging above the whiteboard in the computer room in our school, which would not be possible for the families and friends of the students still living in Tibet (even an empty photo frame could have you arrested). I have heard many stories of horrific human rights violations that began many years ago and are still going on. The fact that some students here have had to risk imprisonment and on some occasions their lives, simply to get an education, is something I cannot fathom. I certainly do not have enough courage to ask what actually happened to the students here who were imprisoned on their way to India. Sympathy is probably not the best way to describe the feeling I have for the students. I would say that it is more like admiration. The majority of them intend to return to what is left of their homes after they have gained a further education, feeling that they can do more good and help their families further when closer to them – once more risking possible imprisonment. At the moment they are far from home in an alien country and separated from their loved ones when ideally they would not choose to be. Again, a situation I really cannot fully comprehend.

I think we should all think once and a while about what is happening further afield in this beautiful, although sometimes vicious, world of ours. Tibet is not an isolat-
ed occurrence. I know that there are many similar atrocities happening in different parts of the world, motivated by different reasons such as religion, land and energy resources. If more and more people become aware of these situations, including the reasons and implications for the minority, I would like to think that changes could happen.

They say ignorance is bliss and I do believe it. It is safe to say I would be very happy sitting in my room in Britain watching some footie with a beer, not knowing a thing about the difficult and often traumatic lives’ of the students here. On the other hand experiences, education and interaction with others can enrich every one of us, maybe even giving us a different outlook on life. To return to my initial sentence and sentiments, it may sound a little clichéd but I just hope these students learn as much from me as I do from them.

Thank you

THE TRUE MEANING OF LIFE...

We are visitors on this planet, we are here for ninety or one hundred years at the very most. During that period, we must try to do something good, something useful with our lives. If you contribute to other people’s happiness, you will find the true goal, the true meaning of life.

......His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama

------Gordon
I'm not an English teacher by profession. My university degrees are in politics and political science. I do, however, hold a certificate in teaching English as a second language and my native language is English. Armed with these qualifications, I applied to teach English at E.S. Tibet. It was one of the happiest decisions I ever made.

Here at the E.S. Tibet School, we are all in this together, students and teachers alike. We live together, have meals together, and study together. In other words, this is total immersion training for the students, the only way, in my opinion, to grasp a second language quickly. What students don’t pick up in the structured atmosphere of the classroom, they do in the many informal teacher/student interactions that take place numerous times during the day. It is a wonderful way for a student to learn and a teacher to teach.

And, oh, the students. They are without a permanent home, at the time I write, and without a country. I can’t imagine a greater hardship. They are the most dedicated and most motivated students I have taught. They are young people with hopes for the future; mastery of English will go a long way toward fulfilling those hopes. They are not learning English because they think it might be a good idea. They are learning English because their lives depend on it.

Here, at the E.S. Tibet School, these young people have been given a chance and they have grasped it with both hands. And, for me, I have been given this wondrous opportunity to be a part of this stage in their lives. These students will triumph. They have spirit and courage. And I will always hold them in my heart for who they are and for who they will become.

-------Carol
Monkey in the Kitchen

There’s a monkey in the kitchen
    Get him out!
He steals everything I have (even my bananas)
    Invaded my home
Leave me alone monkey, leave me alone.

No way to ward him off
Monkeys have long arms, you know
    They hang on and on and on
One day when we return home
I have a feeling everything will be gone….

There’s a monkey on my back
    Weighing me down
Waiting for that weakness, and my will to disappear
But, you know, I realised monkeys, they just aren’t very clever
I’ll keep my head and I will fight that monkey until forever.

By:--- Vaila
Editor’s note

In the short four months we have been the editors for this magazine, Khang, we have heard and read stories that bring a smile and a tear. So many stories are worthy. So many stories richly deserve to be told. They are poignant, moving and inspiring.

In this magazine students of Kunpan Cultural School tell you their untold, touching and heart-warming stories. Most of which are their life stories and many illustrate how they made their narrow escape from Tibet to India. This journey took some of them two weeks, crossing the Himalayas. We also have some creative stories and rich poems.

The publication of this private school magazine is a milestone in the progress and development of the school. The magazine will open a window of opportunity to many of you who will read many types of stories which are unlike any stories you have read before.

One of the main purposes of this magazine is to give every student an opportunity to write their stories and share them with you, the readers. We have enjoyed every story, poem and essay and we hope you also find them a good read.

Last but not least, on behalf of all the students of Kunpan Cultural School, we, with this great opportunity, would like to thank all the catering staff and all the volunteer teachers for their hard work and dedication—you are all our heroes and heroines. We also wish to thank all the sponsors, not only for their financial support, but also for their kindness towards us. We are all well aware of how grateful we are to all of you. And finally, we hope you can continue to give us financial support, which we greatly appreciate. We are, at the same time, hoping to have more new sponsors to be able to get essential materials on time and help Kunpan Cultural School last longer as this school means everything to all of us.