



Arizona Friends of Tibet

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Volume 7 Issue 1
Winter 2010

TIBET FIRST HAND THROUGH THE EYES OF MARY K. THOMPSON

October is beautiful in Lhasa. Trees are changing color, but much is still green. Young Tibetans are in their school uniforms. Many Tibetans are in their traditional dress. Visitors are fewer than in the summer. Days are sunny and moderate, nights are cool but not yet freezing. The air is clean.

The Tibetan language is pleasant to hear though I don't understand what is said.

It was such a privilege to see Lhasa in the company of the Tibetan doctor, Dr. Dickey Nyerongsha who grew up in Lhasa and went to medical school there and has an institute to support charities in Tibet. The Nyerongsha Institute is one of the charities given grants by Arizona Friends of Tibet so it was heartwarming to see the help money provides to Tibetans.

We visited two orphanages, a senior center, a hospital, a medical clinic, the Tibetan Medical School, and Potala Palace (winter palace), Norblinka (summer palace), Drepung Monastery, Sera Monastery, Jokhang Temple, Ganden Monastery, and many Tibetan restaurants.

Continued on page 4

Mary K. Thompson with Amala (Dr. Dickey's mother) on the roof of the Jokhang Temple. The Jokhang Temple was constructed in 647. The Potala (winter home of the Dalai Lama) can be seen in the background.



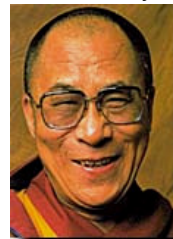
Our Mission Statement

Arizona Friends of Tibet is a non-profit organization for people who believe Tibetans are entitled to the basic human rights outlined in the charter of the United Nations. We support the non-violent efforts of the Dalai Lama to regain dignity and religious freedom for the Tibetan people, and to preserve the unique and endangered culture of Tibet and its ancient Buddhist traditions.

It is the purpose of Arizona Friends of Tibet to educate as many people as possible about this unique culture and civilization. In order to do this, within Arizona we promote cultural and educational activities involving Tibet and its people.

In 1949, China invaded Tibet. With our funds, we support projects that will alleviate the suffering of Tibetans within their own country, which continues to be occupied by China. We also support projects within the Tibetan refugee communities in Asia.

We are visitors on this planet. We are here for ninety, a hundred years at the very most. During that period we must try to do something good, something useful with our lives. Try to be at peace with yourself and help others share that peace. If you contribute to other people's happiness, you will find the true goal, the true meaning of life."



The Dalai Lama

~ The Dalai Lama of Tibet



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY PEGGY HITCHCOCK

Dear Friends and Fellow AFoT Members:

I am so heartened by your generous response to our membership drive. It is indeed very rewarding to see that you all continue to be aware of the ongoing tragic situation in Tibet. On behalf of our Board members, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

My friend Mary K Thompson's eloquent eyewitness account of her visit to Tibet in October really says it all. Our Tibetan friends are living in an occupied country under conditions approximating martial law. Unfortunately, I don't see any improvement in the situation. Every dollar that we can spare to alleviate the dreadful hardships under which they live is a great blessing to them.

Our friend Dr. Dickey Nyerongsha talked about her trip to Tibet with Mary K in the Pavilion on November 11th which resulted in donations of \$697. AFoT divided these funds between the two Tibetan orphanages mentioned by Mary K in her report.

Earlier in the year, AFoT gave a total of

\$3500.00 in grants to the following:

1. GU-CHU-SUM - \$250. Ongoing work with former Tibetan political prisoners who have been tortured.

2. DHARMA SAGARA HEALTH CLINIC - \$750. Health Clinic and earthquake relief.

3. TERMA FOUNDATION - \$500. Medical assistance to Tibetan children inside Tibet.

4. NIN QIN NUNNERY - \$250. Grant to help build kitchen for the 37 nuns in a very remote area of Tibet (One Global Village)

5. NYERONGSHA INSTITUTE - \$500. Grant to support Tibetan Children's Orphanage.

6. KUNCHOK FOUNDATION - \$750. Surman Shedra project and earthquake relief.

7. SAMTEM CHOLING NUNNERY - \$500. Grant to build more rooms for nuns; provide money for books and educational supplies for the nuns.

Thank you again for your continued support. I'm wishing you all a peaceful and loving holiday season.

Peggy Hitchcock

President, Arizona Friends of Tibet

If you have not made your annual contribution to Arizona Friends of Tibet, please take a moment and do so today. Memberships and donations for Arizona Friends of Tibet are used for health and education aid for Tibetans inside Tibet and for Tibetan refugees in Asia.

ARIZONA FRIENDS OF TIBET MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION

Student \$15.00 **Friend** \$500.00 Name: _____
 Individual \$30.00 **Lifetime** \$1 000.00 Address: _____
 Family \$75.00 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION/ADDITIONAL DONATION TO:

Arizona Friends of Tibet P.O. Box 31956 Tucson, AZ 85751-1956

Phone: 520.203.6438 Fax: 520.751.2671



SAVE THE DATE!

**Arizona Friends of Tibet
Film Festival**

Sunday, February 6th

2:00–6:00 p.m.

St. Gregory School Auditorium

Featured films:

“Brilliant Moon” and “The Unmistaken Child”

**Watch for schedule and film information on our website
(www.arizonafriendsoftibet.org) and in upcoming eblasts.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DR. DICKEY NYERONGSHA
will be in Tucson
Monday, February 7th –
Friday, February 11th, 2011

Dr. Dickey, Doctor of Tibetan Medicine, is the 7th generation of Tibetan doctors in her family. Before the Cultural Revolution, her family had the largest medical school in Tibet that was not associated with a monastery.

If you are interested in an appointment, contact Mary Kay at :

mk85716@yahoo.com or 520-250-4006.

AFOT ANNUAL YARD SALE
is right around the corner
at a new date

SATURDAY, APRIL 23RD

**4005 E. Palomar Drive in Tucson
(Broadway and Alvernon)**

**Please save your items for donation
and watch for details on our website
and in upcoming eblasts.**

**Please help support AFOT by volunteering,
donating or just buying!**

*“Remember, one person’s trash is another
person’s treasure.”*



At the Dickey Orphanage (86 orphans), Dr Dickey brought vitamins and chewing gum for the children and they sang a song for us. Dr Dickey presented a check to the lady in charge asking that they fix the sewer system which had a noticeable odor. This orphanage is partly supported by a store selling items



Children at the Dickey Orphanage.

made by the children. That Saturday morning, the



Mary K with some happy children at the orphanage.

Chinese had given instructions that the store was not to be opened that day. While we were there, a tour bus stopped and the tourists were entertained by the children and some wrote checks to the orphanage, but they couldn't buy anything from the store.

The second orphanage with 64 children was only in its third year of operation and had managed to stay under the radar. It was founded by a Tibetan monk who was also an artist. We arrived about 6:30 p.m.



At the senior center in Lhasa.

and the children were still in class: music, English, Tibetan, Chinese. They had made a DVD to raise money and some of the children performed for us. We were very impressed by the talent and joy expressed by these children. These happy, hard working children will have wonderful skills in the traditional Tibetan arts and will be able to support themselves after they leave the orphanage. The check given to them by Dr. Dickey was the first foreign money this orphanage had ever received.

At the senior center, about 20 of the seniors who receive help there had been invited to a meeting with us. These people really appreciate help as they do not have any family to help them and do not have a source of income. Each senior presented each of us



This group of Tibetan children at the orphanage are hoping to become doctors so they were memorizing medical information.



with a khata. Dr Dickey presented a check to the center and then gave each of them a small amount of money.

The director of the Tibetan Medical School (a classmate of Dr Dickey's) thanked Dr Dickey for the donation and explained that the money helped students who were given tuition scholarships but did not have the money for food and lodging to stay in school. It costs about \$10,000 US for a student to complete the five-year program at the Tibetan Medical School. Our money buys so much more in Tibet than it would in the U.S.!

The palaces and monasteries were so beautiful. The colors and gems and gold were breathtaking, but the real treasure was the Tibetan people and their culture and religion. Their strength was evident in their cheerfulness, helpfulness, and kindness to all despite the presence of voice-activated recorders and cameras.

There were soldiers everywhere. Usually they were standing shaded by a cloth canopy, six or eight in the group and facing outward with their machine guns ready. One day in the Barkhor (Tibetan market area near the Jokhong Temple) I counted 16 groups of Chinese soldiers who marched directly in front of the counter where I was resting and people-watching. You do not take pictures of soldiers or look at them.

In Tibet there is no mail delivery. If you are sent something, the Post Office will call you and you go to the Post Office to pick it up. Packages may be opened and the recipient may have to pay duty tax on the contents. And there is no junk or bulk mail!!!

Cell phones work everywhere. There is only one mobile company, China Mobile, and satellites (instead



Dr. Dickey after climbing the mountain above the Ganden Monastery.

of towers) are used to transmit calls. You buy your phone and you buy time. No long term contracts, no monthly bills.

Purchases are made with Chinese money in cash. The hotels will take a credit card, but other places expected cash (Chinese money). It is expensive to travel to Lhasa, but money went a long way in Lhasa. Hotels were more like U.S. prices, but food and other items were much cheaper. (Gasoline prices were similar to U.S., \$7.50 yuan per litre).

Solar hot water heaters and solar electric panels were all over the place. People carried reusable bags with them as there is a charge for bags. Food was organic. People (probably city employees) using large straw brooms were constantly sweeping streets and sidewalks. People walked. It is a way of life there to walk one of the circular paths around the Potala Palace. It is not uncommon to spend four hours a day walking. People do not heat their houses, but the hotels have heat which can be turned on. I did not hear any planes flying overhead. The Lhasa airport is about an hour's drive from the city and you must go through a tunnel in a mountain to get there. Outside lighting is limited. Flashlights are used.

Cabs are available. The cost is \$10 yuan for up to four people anywhere around Lhasa. Buses are cheaper and are free for older people. Parking spaces are difficult to find in Lhasa. There are only a few traffic signals in the city. People are considerate of each other but there are many close encounters between cars, buses, cabs, pedicabs, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians. In some of the outlying areas, I saw large plastic policeman by the side of the road to remind people to drive carefully. I only saw an occasional policeman in the city.



Mary K. Thompson on the roof of the Jokhang Temple looking inward. More of the temple is shown in the background.



Arizona Friends of Tibet

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www.dharmakirti.org

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www.tucson.shambhala.org

Bodhisattva Institute
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AZ Soto Zen Center
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www.azszo.org

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www.garchen.net

Emaho Foundation
480-704-4169
www.emahofoundation.org

Visit www.arizonafriendsoftibet.org for the latest postings of activities and events in the local Buddhist community.

This newsletter is a seasonal publication of
ARIZONA FRIENDS OF TIBET
a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about Tibetan culture and civilization.

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