



Telluride Institute Tibet Fund Newsletter

Date: January 26, 2010
Newsletter 8

"When you educate a girl, you educate the next generation."

Hello everyone,

I am finally back in beautiful Telluride after 3 months of travel in East Asia and Germany. Good to be home!

Most importantly, I want to let all sponsors and donors know that indeed, our money has provided what we were promised. There are 2 simple, but functioning shower stalls, all 108 girls have warm winter coats and the library is much expanded. THANK YOU!

Upcoming needs include a large rice cooker, 2 teapots and propane gas stoves, and the repair of the crumbling mud walls of the main house.

There is enough money in the Tibet Fund right now to take care of those needs. So awesome!

Unfortunately, I did not get to see the girls as I happened to be in town on the weekend of the local temple dances (exotic, lavish, mysterious) and the girls were either there or at home with their families. As it turns out the majority of them do have family; the school therefore should not be called "orphanage," but rather "boarding school." The girls attend this school rather than the regular (Chinese run) public school because their families are either too poor to pay the small, but mandatory Chinese tuition, live in far-away nomad camps without a school, or both.

I had hoped to bring back names and individual life stories to get us better connected to the girls. Sadly, that did not work out.

The political situation is still highly explosive. I had to respect my friend Lobsang's advice not to stay too long at the school or even in the town; foreigners are suspect, highly visible and always under Chinese observation. I certainly did not want to direct any unnecessary attention to the school.

I would like to invite you all to a short slide show and a lot of Q and A at the library in the near future. There are so many stories to tell and experiences to share that I cannot squeeze into a newsletter.

I'll let you know when that will be. •

Year-end report 2009

125+ individuals and families contributed to the Tibet Fund;

\$13,300 flowed into the account, in donations ranging from \$5 to \$1000;

\$8,000 went to the girls' school in Kardze for showers, winter coats and library equipment;

\$5,300 is remaining in the account for upcoming projects;

Some news

- The Tibetan government in exile announced that two representatives of the Dalai Lama's arrived in China on 1/26 for talks with Chinese officials. (let's hope the talks go better than at the previous eight meetings)
- A Tibetan lama, Phurbu Rinpoche from Kham, has been sentenced to eight and a half years in prison. (I told you about his dramatic arrest in newsletter 1)
- Dhondup Wangchen, the Tibetan filmmaker of *Leaving Fear Behind*, has been sentenced to six years in prison for filming interviews with Tibetans in Tibet in advance of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.