



Tibetan Healing Fund

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Spring 2004



In Search of Hope

Text and photos by Meredith Aikman

Tibet, the name evokes images of soaring snow covered mountains, large valleys filled with yaks and sheep, maroon robed monks at Buddhist monasteries, ruby-cheeked children in brightly colored clothing and the wind blowing prayer flags. It also brings to my mind that of hope: hope for the people, hope for a spiritual belief, hope for preserving a culture, hope for survival. I wondered how hope could persevere with so much pain and so much despair. I found hope when I heard children laughing and playing games, and while watching villagers perform a traditional spring dance at a monastery. I felt hope when I viewed a Skilled Birth Attendant as she held the baby that she helped deliver.

In January and February, I had the fortunate opportunity to travel to Amdo and visit Tibetan Healing Fund's projects. At an average altitude of 10,000-12,000 feet and temperatures around zero, it was necessary for a girl from Dallas to wear 6 layers of clothing, which included 2 jackets in order to keep warm. I attended the teacher-training

workshop and visited with the Skilled Birth Attendants in Guide County, nomad villages in Guinan County, Labrong Monastery, Repkong County, Dowi County, and Kumbum Monastery and Hospital.

While in Guide County, I visited 3 of the newly trained Skilled Birth Attendants (SBA). Each of the SBA live in their native village where they assist with women's health education, safe motherhood and delivery. Each of the women were grateful to have attended the training course and to have a better understanding about women's health issues and were appreciative that the training course was designed to be simple, hands-on and practical. They all expressed their concern of living in a remote area and the lack of health education, knowledge and access to health care.

After discussing the health situations with the SBA and other women in the villages, I realized the importance of how the cultural factors, social and government programs influence the health issues, beliefs and perceptions. Because the birthing process is considered unsanitary, many women give birth outside the home or in stables. In some cases it is considered taboo for an outsider to assist in

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Little Kunchok was named after Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen, the founder of Tibetan Healing Fund. The SBA was so proud of him and told me how she helped in the delivery and explained to his mother the importance of not using chemicals or pesticides in the field while she was pregnant. I too was so proud of her and in awe of the beautiful healthy baby. At that moment I realized how many people both in Amdo and the US actually assisted in the delivery of this healthy baby, through our actions, whether it was donated money, time, knowledge or support... hope is happening.



While I was in Guide County was attending the first day of the bilingual teacher -training workshop. Walking into the room filled with 250 teachers from the county gave me such hope in the in future of education for Tibetans. Sangjie Gyamtso, a volunteer with Tibetan Healing Fund facilitated the teacher- training workshop and gave a moving speech regarding the importance of teaching in their native tongue, child-centered development and teaching methodology. The workshop was also a great opportunity to introduce Norbu Gesang, In-Country Field Director for Tibetan Healing Fund. After traveling through the villages and meeting children and the teachers you realize the desperate attempt that is being made to save a culture and that education is fundamental to the survival of the Tibetan people. For years, many traditions were not practiced and there are many areas in Amdo where people no longer read, write or speak Tibetan. By providing bilingual teacher training workshops we are helping this effort in a small, but significant way.



Make a Difference

Tibetan Healing Fund is an independent, 501(c)3, non-profit organization registered with the Secretary of State, State of Washington. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Federal Tax ID is available upon request.

My gift will support Tibetan women and children living in rural communities in Qinghai Province (Amdo), PRC.

Here is my gift of (and an example of that what that money can provide):

- \$35**—Enables village children to attend primary school *or* solar cookers for boiling water
- \$65**—Helps rural teachers to attend bi-lingual teacher training *or* village women to attend skilled birth attendant training
- \$120***—Provides medical kits for skilled birth attendants *or* safe latrines for village schools
- \$300***—Stocks a school library *or* supplies playground equipment for a village school
- \$500****—Builds a new roof for a village school *or* provides emergency medical coverage for uninsured villagers
- Other***—\$ _____

* Receive a box of Tibetan incense made at Kumbum Monastery for your gift of \$100 or more.

** Receive a beautiful, one of a kind Tibetan handicraft for your gift of \$500 or more.

- I would like to organize a fundraiser, party or other event in my area.
- I have a background in public health, medicine, nursing, education, marketing, fundraising, accounting, anthropology, web development, etc. and would like to volunteer for Tibetan Healing Fund.
- I would like more information regarding Tibetan Healing Fund.

Please send contributions to:
Tibetan Healing Fund
PO Box 9172
Seattle, WA 98109

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

- Enclosed is my employer's matching gift form.



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Tibetan Healing Fund

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Seattle, WA 98109
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Tibetan Healing Fund is a not-for-profit humanitarian organization established to improve primary healthcare and basic education for rural Tibetan women and children in Qinghai Province (Amdo), PRC.

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Upcoming Events

May Day Plant Sale & Tibetan Bazaar · Come celebrate May Day with Tibetan Healing Fund! We are hosting a plant sale and Tibetan bazaar at a board member's Ravenna home: 6849 27th Ave NE. Weather permitting we will have a Tibetan tent on display and will be serving tea and treats! For additional information, please contact: Info@TibetanHealingFund.org.

Volunteer Night · Starting Thursday, April 29th from 6-8 pm we will be hosting volunteer night the last Thursday of every month at our new downtown Seattle office. Please join us for mailings, database entry, fundraiser preparation, etc. This is a great opportunity to meet the board and get more involved with Tibetan Healing Fund. For additional information, please contact: Info@TibetanHealingFund.org.

Tibetan Cultural Nights · Join Tibetan Healing Fund and learn more about Tibet. Beginning in May we will host monthly gatherings to learn more about this amazing culture. Themes will include food, music, dance, Buddhism, art, nomadic life, etc. For more information or to host an evening, please contact: Info@TibetanHealingFund.org.



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