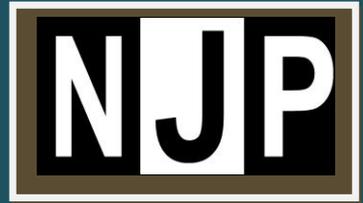


Nying-Jey Projects

Newsletter February 2015



GESHE SONAM IN TIBET

NJP Founder and President had the opportunity to travel to Tibet in December. This was a surprise visit for the committee, students and nuns in Tibet, as Geshe Sonam and NJP tours usually only travel to Ganzi in the Summer time. It is about 20 years since he last felt the Ganzi winter chill. Having lived in India for much of his adult monastic life, this was quite a bracing experience for Geshe Sonam, as day time temperatures registered -12C at times. The photos of the winter landscape, however, are quite stunning.

Students

Geshe Sonam oversaw the payments to students at a gathering in Ganzi. It was good timing as the meeting took place just 4 days before the students were to start a holiday break. Many would have returned to homes in distant villages and may not have been able to attend the meeting with Geshe Sonam. As it turned out, most of them were still in town and almost all the children attended with their parents to receive their payment. About 50 students were unable to come because they live and go to school at some distance from Ganzi, and weather conditions prevented them from making the journey.

The gathering was a very festive occasion; the children especially were very excited. Some of them wrote poetry about Geshe Sonam and the honesty and generosity of himself and the NJP organization.

Nuns

Geshe Sonam visited six nunneries in the Ganzi area and delivered the sponsors' money. He was warmly welcomed by the nuns who are always so grateful for the support they receive from Australia. Unfortunately, road conditions were too dangerous for him to make the long journey to Thang Kang nunnery.



Geshe Sonam in Ganzi, December 2014

SAND MANDALA TOUR 2015

A new tour begins in April 2015. Three monks from Gyumed Monastery in South India, none of whom have visited Australia before, will arrive early in April to begin a six month tour in Victoria and New South Wales. Venues already signed up for a week long Tibetan experience are some familiar places such as Avalon Recreation Centre NSW, Latrobe Gallery in Morwell, Karingal Shopping Centre in Frankston, Cowra Regional Gallery and Bathurst Regional Gallery [not visited since 2009].



The Sacred Footsteps Mandala Tour is also looking forward to introducing the Monks and the Mandala Tour to some new venues in Victoria and New South Wales, especially a week long residency at the Quang Minh Vietnamese Temple in Braybrook Victoria - the same venue that hosted the Heart Sutra teaching by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in June 2013.

Promotion of the NJP sponsorship program, and fundraising for next year's university scholarships will once again be a major feature of the 2015 tour.

EDUCATION IN GANZI A CULTURAL SHIFT?

Geshe Sonam reports that in both the larger and smaller communities, he sensed that interest in and engagement with education is at an all time high in the Ganzi area.

Almost 100% of children are now going to school. Locally the talk on the street is about an upward self-generating spiral largely initiated by and attributable to NJP. NJP sponsorships lead to students completing primary and secondary education, which leads to university enrolments, which leads to jobs and an improvement in prosperity. People see the results, word of mouth and chat on the street stimulates further interest, and the whole process escalates.

Geshe Sonam sincerely believes that NJP has made a huge difference in the Ganzi region.

CURRENT SPONSORSHIP DATA

	Sponsored	Seeking Sponsor
Students	356	154
Nuns	146	41
Monks	185	139
University	102	

CHANGED ADDRESS? CHANGED YOUR EMAIL?

NJP is keen to keep in touch with all our sponsors.

If you change your home address or your email, please add NJP to your list groups to notify.



NJP invites you
to like our
Facebook page
We're just getting
started, but look
for news and
more updates
from our
social media
account

NEW STUDENTS

Geshe Sonam returned from Tibet with photos and information about eighty-eight new students needing support from NJP. These students, mostly from extremely poor families, have been added to the NJP student listings, and will be included on the NJP sponsorship board on tour with the monks. Hopefully sponsors can be found for them.



WRITING TO TIBET

While Geshe Sonam was in Ganzi, mail arrived for several students and nuns from Australia. Geshe Sonam was able to contact the NJP office immediately and several sponsors were notified that their mail had arrived.

Some mail however arrived minus the ID number. Reading English is still a problem for our committee in Ganzi, so it is really difficult for the owner of mail to be identified. This time however, Geshe Sonam was able to email an SOS in the form of a photo of the sender's name and address to the office in Australia, and the recipients of the mail were identified and notified.

We encourage everyone to communicate with their child or nun in Tibet but, to ensure the delivery of mail, **please remember** the all-important **ID** at the top of the envelope or package.

WINTER IN TIBET

Winter days are short, but there is lots of sunshine. Even on days when maybe the snow has fallen over night, the sun can be very strong and it melts the snow on the ground and everything becomes muddy. Streams freeze on top, but the water is running underneath.

In the morning we often wake up to see there has been a big snow fall. People wake up early and the first job is usually to shovel the snow off the pathways and off the gutters on the roof. The snow is dumped in the back yard.

All the family eats breakfast together in the kitchen; the mother makes yoghurt and cooks potatoes and flat bread, tsampa (roasted barley flour) and Tibetan tea. Everyone sits on the floor around the fire to eat; they enjoy talking and laughing. It is a happy time. Winter time is also Losar (Tibetan New Year) time so everyone looks forward to that.

Winter is a hard time for the animals because it is so cold. All the animals live in the barn on the ground floor of the house. Every morning we have to clean all the manure out of their stalls and then feed and water them.

A lot of food is stored below the house from the summer. Vegetables that store well over winter are potatoes, radishes, Chinese cabbage.

Winter is a quiet time for the people because they can't do much farm work, so mainly they just look after the animals in the enclosure and sit around talking and sharing stories. Families talk to each and visit their neighbours to have a cup of tea.

The women do the cooking and some women do lots of knitting making blankets and clothes. They spin the sheep wool and they make blankets.

The children still have to go to school. They have to walk through the snowy roads. Some children have to walk for half an hour to get to school and it is very cold for them. They have warm hats, gloves and boots and thick coats with long sleeves



to keep them warm, but their cheeks are red and they often have ice on their faces. At the school, some rooms have a fire going but some have no heating.

The children like to play snow fights and some have skipping ropes. They blow on their fingers to make them warm, and jiggle up and down to warm their feet. Sometimes they do that in the classroom and make a lot of noise with feet on the wood floor. Some children like to make boats and play on the streams. They get into trouble with their mums when they come with their clothes wet and cold.

Most people still walk everywhere to go shopping or visiting, but that is very hard in winter. Sometimes one of the neighbours has a truck and when they are going to the town, lots of people jump on the back of the truck – no driving licence, no seat belts, lots of laughing and talking in the back of the truck – and they go to do some shopping. When the truck arrives in Ganzi everyone jumps off and disappears to take care of business. In the evening, the owner of the truck waits for everyone to come back and then he drives them all home.

