



Dear Friends of VVF,

Welcome to Vajra Vidya Foundation's first newsletter! So much has been happening in the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's projects in Nepal and we felt it was time to let our esteemed friends and supporters know a bit about some of the changes. Rinpoche has many projects worldwide and we are highlighting a few of them in this issue: Shree Mangal Dvip Boarding School in Boudhanath (Kathmandu), Tara Abbey Nunnery in Swayambu (Kathmandu) and Namu Buddha Medical Clinic about 2.5 hours from Kathmandu.

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Please help us cut costs and divert more funds to projects by sending us your email address. Newsletters help you know how your donations are helping and we want to keep you in the loop. We promise not to bother you with unwanted messages and to keep your information totally private.

Gardening and Environment at Shree Mangal Dvip Boarding School (from the kids' own website at <http://www.voiceofhimalayankids.org/>)

Eco-Club is a club comprising of young SMD boys, girls, nuns and monks of the school. This club is taking almost every environmental initiative in the school. They organize programs for the World Environment Day and World Peace Day. Though the program won't be that huge but it would be worth complimenting and now here is another step that it is taking in the school. A great one. This time they are going towards plantation. They have planted several vegetables in the school compound where it was possible for the plantation. It is also a garden formed by the Eco-Club.

Eco-Farm is going well and there are lots of new species of plants. There are cauliflower, chillies, coriander and beans. The vegetables are given to the apartment or school if the amount is large. The garden is full of different flowers and it is really cleaner than before.

Love and peace

Karma Yangchen (B016)



News from Tara Abbey in Swayambunath, Nepal, written by Karma Yangku, a resident nun.

Construction of main shrine hall (prayer building) is almost finished but the interior painting is left and now we have our main gate as well. We will have our inauguration on 9th or 10th of December. All together we are 225 nuns staying in the nunnery. Among them 46 nuns are studying in Shree Mangal Dvip school including two teachers. Before we have 7 nuns studying in India but now we have 5 nuns getting their higher studies and just a couple of weeks ago two nuns finished their studies. They are now teachers of our nunnery, and they will teach the nuns who are studying in shedra. We have 3 teachers in the shedra and 29 nuns studying in shedra.

We have now 8 nuns doing their Tibetan medicine studies. They have almost finished their course and we are getting lots of help from them. ***A new water filter has been just been installed at Tara Abbey which completes the well drilling project that began last year. The water that the well provided was so full of iron that the cement***

the ground as well as everything else that the water touched was getting stained! The nuns are delighted and grateful to all who have helped to make this possible.
(DAR)





Yangchben Drolkar (seated front, second from left) is with Jane Goodall at West Island College in Calgary.

News from a 16-year-old student studying in Canada, one of 21 overseas scholars.

I am the second kid in West Island College, Calgary, to get a full three year scholarship. I recently finished grade 10 and [have] left another two years. I am very much grateful and honored to get this opportunity. I thank Rinpoche, Shirley, Peter, Khenpo and all the SMDers for their great support and love and hard work. It was very exciting and of course hard to adjust [to] the completely different environment. I mean new people, food, house and school. You have only one friend that can completely understand you but no way, people in Canada are so helpful and warm. They work really hard and are very kind. The way they care about others and respect others is surprising. The roads are completely organized and well constructed and clean. I was amazed with neat organizations in everything. School was very welcoming and all the WIC students were friendly and warm. Courses are interesting and above all I found teachers very helpful, hardworking and great people. I had lots of experience in Canada and learned a lot. We (overseas students) come back to Nepal and serve the school, spend time with family and friends. This is when we have summer break for two months. The purpose of this is to bind us back to our own culture and Buddhism and practice it within our own environment. Its been my best summer break and great time in school and share the joy!

Peace,

Yangchen Drolkar

20 SMD students are now studying abroad on full scholarships. They study in the International Baccalaureate programs, the most challenging in the world, or in university programs. Our challenge is transporting these students to the countries where these scholarships are offered. (LG)

Namo Buddha Update from Dr. John Barnhill

The recent clinical activities have been impressive. In addition to operating the clinics, Jamyang Dorje (Medical Director) and the Health Assistant (in training) monks have hosted other valuable endeavors. The Himalayan Dental Relief organization held a camp here in mid-May, providing urgent and elective dental care, teaching on hygiene and treatment, and handing out toothbrushes and toothpaste to hundreds of people over 4 days. Return visits are in the works as well. It is a delight to pass on the news of progress and recent activities serving the villagers and monks in the area surrounding the Monastery.

(taken from Namu Buddha newsletter)

Thanks to an outpouring of support, construction of the clinic at Namu Buddha has progressed to the point that it can be included in the consecration ceremony for the new monastery at the end of the year. Additionally, we have received enough funds to provide the initial furnishings and medical equipment.

There is much excitement now surrounding the completion of the monastery complex at Namu Buddha and the Shrine Hall for Tara Abbey. The dates have been set for the ceremonies to consecrate both places and invitations are being extended to all sponsors, donors, and students. Namu Buddha will be consecrated on December 5th

and Tara Abbey on December 12th and there will be several days of pujas both before and after each date. (DAR)



Needs, Fees, and Reminders



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* Sponsor fees are due by **December 31** to ensure ongoing support for the kids and projects.

Note: the 2008/2009 school year began in April - it's time for SMD sponsors to renew!

Boarder \$805 CAD
Day student \$310 CAD
Monk \$575 CAD

* Because of food shortages and rising prices, it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide fresh fruit, vegetables, and other nutritious foods. We are in need of additional contributions to ensure a **healthy diet** for the children, nuns, and monks

* Thrangpo Rinpoche has asked for help for the monastery **Ngudrup Tsokpa** or monks welfare, which is general support for the monks and the monastery. We have many more sponsors and donors for the nuns and lay students than we do for monks so Rinpoche has asked for additional support.

* The new kitchen at Namu Buddha still needs donations. There are several kitchens and dining rooms being built and Thrangpo Rinpoche will be having the monks eat according to the traditional monastic requirement - monks sitting in rows on cushions on the floor in the way they sit in the shrine room.

* All clinics need continuing support: Vajra Vidya, SMD and Namu Buddha.

* We have a record number of 10 'Seniors' this year - students who have finished Class 10 and are working part time at the school, gaining life skills and preparing for college and university studies. 14 other students are continuing to study (3 are in university). Grades 11 & 12 are only offered in urban for-profit schools. We keep them with us, and pay for their tuition. The cost of supporting these students at \$1000.00 each. We have established a **Seniors fund**.

* SMD wish list: Costs are rough estimates in USD. We have attempted to choose projects which create work in Nepal.

Screens for all bedroom windows to keep mosquitoes out during monsoon \$2665

A Biogas Plant: We are paying to have our septic tank emptied monthly. Converting to biogas, the kids will be providing the fuel to heat water and cook...and we won't be subjected to fuel shortages! \$6665

Sewer Repair: A broken sewer main on the road above SMD becomes a river of raw sewage that runs a foot deep outside the school during monsoon downpours. Everyone has to wade through it to get to and from school. In a collective, neighbourhood effort, we helped fund this repair and now owe \$4165. See the kids' story here: <http://www.himalayanchildren.org/kids-corner/sewage.htm>

A Solar Battery : Nepal has 8 to 12 hours of power cuts every day in the dry season (9 months). A solar battery \$540 allows Class 10 kids (who face national board exams in the springtime) to study.

Rent: We do not own the school buildings, and have to rent all the room we use inside the compound and the four flats we rent outside. \$17,170/year

Karaoke Machine: Beats stress and gives kids practice at reading Tibetan, English and Nepali scripts, practicing pronunciation and learning vocabulary! \$600

Small Carpets For Bedrooms: The school is unheated. Temperatures get down to 0 C at night. 100 locally-made wool carpets (the carpet industry is languishing) would keep kids feet warm, getting into and out of bed. \$6250

Rooftop Playground The children have very little room for playing. We would like to cover half of the roof of (the other half has solar panels) and enclose it with with wrought iron and chicken wire...to keep children and equipment safe. \$3000

Painting: Exterior: all buildings, fire escapes- \$4285, Interior: dorms, classrooms, dining halls, etc.- \$3570

Travel Budget: \$15,000/year. We have 19 kids studying overseas. Most (but not all) travel costs are paid by scholarships. Travel, (including travel to Delhi, where most Nepalis have to apply for visas) visa fees and associated expenses are costing thousands of dollars every year. A travel budget would allow for fundraising as well as support visits to students who are overseas.

YOU CAN DONATE AEROPLAN MILES: HELP A SCHOLARSHIP KID FLY. Check the [His Projects](#) page on the website www.vajravidyacanada.org



Make a **secure on-line donation** to the Vajra Vidya Foundation through the CanadaHelps website by clicking on the CanadaHelps graphic on the donation page of the VVF website. This will take you to the Vajra Vidya Foundation page on the CanadaHelps website where you can make a donation.

This makes it more convenient for you and us: for you, instant tax receipts and acknowledgment of payment received; for us, instant payment received and simplification of record keeping.

Ongoing support of the VVF projects will be greatly appreciated.

Keep in touch with your questions and suggestions at any time. Thank you for all your enthusiastic support.



Notices and Contact information

Some years ago we received a box of malas blessed by Thrangu Rinpoche and up until recently had not come up with an idea as to what we would do with them. The board has decided to distribute them, on behalf of Thrangu Rinpoche, to our Canadian donors. Since we have way more donors than malas we have picked names by lottery. If you have received a mala you did so by chance alone and if you did not receive a mala rejoice for those that have.

Board of Directors

John Fox – president
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For information on the worldwide teaching schedule of the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche visit his website at <http://www.rinpoche.com/schedule.html>

The **Kids' Corner** on the website Himalayan Children (all about the kids) is updated by Shirley and her assistants often. Check for news and new projects to see what the kids are taking part in. One exciting project helping the kids to learn about gardening, composting and healthy eating is the Eco-Club. <http://www.himalayanchildren.org/kids-corner/Eco-club.htm>

Special note:

We are making a request to all sponsors to **send email addresses** to assist VVF in responding to all donations, comments and requests in a timely fashion. We will be able to send tax receipts out promptly and will reduce paper and mail costs. This will enable even more needed funding to go directly to the projects.

Comments Regarding Tax Receipting

In order for VVF to comply with Revenue Canada Guidelines regarding tax receipting the following is important donor information.

A tax receipt is issued for the 'tax year' the donation is received in. We **must receive donations by the end of the year** in order for a 'tax receipt' to be issued for that year. **EXAMPLE:** When we receive a donation by cheque or money order that is dated and received in 2008 we will issue a receipt for the tax year 2008. If we receive a donation dated 2008 and received in 2009, we will issue a tax receipt for 2009. All work for the VVF has always been done on a volunteer basis. Since there is no paid staff, all contributions go directly to Thrangu Rinpoche's projects.

Many thanks to Debra Ann Robinson-Menzies at Himalayan Children's Fund for her assistance with information in this,

~~our first, newsletter~~

*Please remember to keep us informed of your address changes - **email** too! We are **updating our database** and hope to eliminate paper in the future – environmental and cost factors. Thanks so much!