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## **Chronology of Self-immolation inside Tibet**

For our December 2013 to March 2014 edition of the quarterly newsletter VOICE, we have continued to publish the chronology of self-immolation inside Tibet from the last edition of the newsletter (August to November, 2013). The number goes from 124 to 129.

**124. Name:** *Kunchok Tseten*  
**Age:** *30*  
**Gender:** *Male*  
**Date:** *December 4, 2013*  
**From:** *Meruma town ship*  
*in Ngapa*  
**Status:** *Unknown*



A thirty year old Kunchok Tseten from Meruma town in Ngaba County self-immolated on December 3, 2014. Kunchok Tseten shouted slogans demanding the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and union of Tibetans inside Tibet and exile. Right after he collapsed, Chinese police surrounded him and didn't allow Tibetans to take his charred body for cremation.

Kunchok Tseten's wife Namnang and few of relatives were arrested. The source also said that few of bystanders were arrested too.

Kunchok Tseten and Namnang have two children; four year old Chakdor Kyab and three year old Paltsel Kyab.

**125. Name:** *Tsultrim Gyatso*

**Age:** *44*

**Gender:** *Male*

**Date:** *December 19, 2013*

**From:** *Amchok in Sangchu county*

**Status:** *Deceased*



Tsultrim Gyatso, a 44 year old monk of Achok Monastery in Labrang Tashikhyil self-immolated on the main street in Achok town on December 19, 2013. He died right after his protest and local Tibetans took his body into the monastery and more than four hundred conducted a prayer for him.

Tsultrim Gyatso left a note before he set himself on fire. The note says “...Tibetans are driven to suffering and the treasures of Tibet are being looted under the repressive law of China. To whom can we tell the sufferings of the six million Tibetans? Thinking about these brings tears to my eyes. I have set myself on fire in fervent prayers for the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet, the release of Panchen Lama from the prison and well being of six million Tibetans.”

**126. Name:** *Phagmo Samdup*

**Age:** *Late twenties*

**Gender:** *Male*

**Date:** *February 6, 2014*

**From:** *Dokarmo town in Tsekhong  
in Manlho*

**Status:** *Deceased*

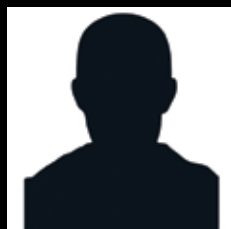


27 year old Phagmo Samdup self-immolated near Benchen School in Dokarmo town on February 6, 2014. According to the sources,

Chinese polices took away his body right after the protest. After this protest, situation in the region became more intense.

It is informed that Phagmo Samdup was a tantric practitioner.

**127. Name: Lobsang Dorje**  
**Age: 25**  
**Gender: Male**  
**Date: February 13, 2014**  
**From: Ngaba county town**  
**Status: Deceased**



25 year old Lobsang Dorji self-immolated on February 13, 2014. He is from Chukle Gongma nomadic area in Cha Ruwa, Ngaba. He was a former monk of Kirti monastery.

According to the sources, Lobsang Dorji was not dead at time when Chinese polices took him away. At present it is not known whether he is alive or dead.

**128. Name: Lobsang Palden**  
**Age: 20**  
**Gender: Male**  
**Date: March 16, 2014**  
**From: Ngaba**  
**Status: Unknown**



20 year old monk called Lobsang Palden self-immolated on March 16, 2014. He is from Kirti monastery. According to the sources, Chinese police petrol the area immediately and took Lobsang Palden away in a vehicle. It is not known whether he is still alive or not.

It is also said in the source that Lobsang Palden left a text message in his phone. In the message, he prayed for his parents, family, teacher and relatives. He also called for unity among Tibetans.

**129. Name:** *Unknown*  
**Age:** *Unknown*  
**Gender:** *Male*  
**Date:** *March 16, 2014*  
**From:** *Tsekhog county's*  
*Jador township*  
**Status:** *Unknown*



According to the sources, on the day lobsang Palden self-immolated, another Tibetan monk has self-immolated outside his monastery in Tsekhong County in Manlho prefecture. The detail about the monk is yet to know.

**TWA observes the 65th annual  
United Nations' Human Rights Day**

*December 10, 2013*



2013 marks the 65th annual United Nations' Human Rights Day and 64th year of Chinese occupation of Tibet, since 1949. Even after more than six decades of China's violation of human rights in Tibet, this year, China has made it to the 47-seat United Nations Human Rights Council. Either the governments have elected China in the council with hope to see positive changes or to maintain their trade relationship with China as it is the world's rising power. Which ever the case, we sincerely hope China is serious about improving human rights conditions in Tibet and the United Nations and UN Human Rights Council will maintain its commitments on human rights.

### **Appeal letter for the release of Tulku Tenzin Delek**

In marking this year's annual United Nations' Human Rights Day, Central Tibetan Women's Association earnestly requests Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Amnesty International, International Court of Justice, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee Against Torture and UN Women to support for the release of Tulku Tenzin Delek in order to get medical treatment as his physical condition is very critical and we also request to focus on health condition of all political prisoners who are suffering with serious illness in China's prison and detention centers.

### **Appeal letter to Ms. Frances Raday**

Tibetan Women's Association sent another appeal letter to Ms. Frances Raday, Chair of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), heading a team of UN experts' making their first visit to the People's Republic of China from 12 to 19 December 2013, to assess the progress made towards achieving gender equality and the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

### **Book Launch at the formal fuction of CTA**





In the morning, at the formal function of the Central Tibetan Administration, TWA launched the new researched book ‘The Status of Tibetan Women in Tibet Mirrors China’s Critical Disengagement with its National and International Commitments. A Comprehensive Report’.

### **Organized a Peace March with other major NGOs**



At the main gate of the Tsuklagkhang (Dalai Lama’s temple), three non-governmental organizations (Students for a Free Tibet, Gu-Chu-Sum and Central Tibetan Women’s organization) organized a mass campaign to support the release and well return of Dhondup



Wangchen by signing on a thousand of paper cranes made by the three NGOs. The signed paper cranes will be posting to the embassy of the People's Republic of China in New Delhi.

**Organized a talk on 'Human Rights Situation inside Tibet' for tourists**



In the evening, at 2pm, TWA organized a talk on human rights '64 years of violation of human rights in Tibet under Chinese occupation, since 1949' for the foreigners. The guest speakers for the talk were Tenzin Nyingji, a researcher at the Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) and John Gaudette, a legal intern at TCHRD. Nyingji focused on 'Human Rights situation in Tibet' and John focused on 'Crime against Humanity in Tibet'.

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## **TWA's new researched Book**

*‘The Status of Tibetan Women in Tibet Mirrors China’s Critical Disengagement with its National and International Commitments. A Comprehensive Report.’*

This flagship production: *‘The Status of Tibetan Women in Tibet Mirrors China’s Critical Disengagement with its National and International Commitments. A Comprehensive Report,’* proceeds to present a comprehensive account of the lives of women in Tibet, investigates China’s policies, the coercion, implicit in their often abominable implementation.



THE STATUS OF TIBETAN WOMEN IN TIBET

# THE STATUS OF TIBETAN WOMEN IN TIBET MIRRORS

China's Critical Disengagement with its  
National and International Commitments



A Comprehensive Report

Tibetan Women's Association  
2013

This seminal book, though might be empirically insufficient, yet is a dispassionate report that provides a synthesis of academic research, first-hand accounts, testimonies and lucid interviews that illustrate the profound impact that China's critical disengagement with its national and international commitments, have upon the lives of women in Tibet.

Structured around 10 thematic chapters: Education, Employment, Prostitution, Healthcare, Family-Planning Policy, Justice, Torture, Religious Freedom, Political Freedom and Environment, the research findings and interview results are augmented with TWA's interpretations and recommendations.

This book is a also a product of the conviction to provide a gathering place for the varied, lasting and emerging preoccupations of advocates, activists and scholars engaged in studying the status of women inside Tibet. It sets out to comprehensively chart the field and define the agenda for future research in an international context and serve as a useful compendium of resources for scholarship, research and international advocacy work.

This publication intends to make a landmark attempt to present the status of women in Tibet and thereby garner international intervention and adequate reforms to ameliorate the living standards of women in Tibet and keep China a strict adherent of its national and international commitments.

*December 10, 2013*

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## 55th Anniversary of

### Tibetan National Uprising Day



On 10th March 1959, thousands of Tibetans protested against the brutal occupation of China, it was the first Tibetan National Uprising Day. This year Tibetans across the world commemorated the 55th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day. Even though the situation inside Tibet is becoming more critical under callous crackdowns, the undying resistance and resilience is becoming stronger and wider.

In Dharamsala, after the formal fuction at Tsuglakhang, thousands of

Tibetans and Tibet supporters marched to Kacheri. The march is organized by four major NGOs based in Dharamsala, namely: Tibetan Youth Congress, Students for Free Tibet, Gu-Chu-Sum and Tibetan Women's Association.

The joint statement of four major NGOs states “Since Xi Jinping became China’s President one year ago in March 2013; China’s grip on Tibet has tightened. The renewed clampdown includes mass detentions, violent military responses to peaceful protests, increased use of “patriotic re-education” campaigns and the criminalization of family members of those who have protested by burning their bodies.



China’s policies in Tibet are facing scrutiny from a number of quarters. On 22 November 2013, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) held China’s second Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Unlike the previous review in 2009, last year saw thirteen countries make precise and firm recommendations concerning the human rights crisis and military crackdown in Tibet. They made specific references to the suppression of religious freedom and forceful resettlement of nearly 2 million nomads by the Chinese government in Tibet. On 19 March China will respond to its UPR at the UNHCR; there are already indications that Tibet-related recommendations will be rejected, but Tibet campaigners are paying close attention to the proceedings to keep up the pressure on China. Meanwhile, Spanish judges have issued a series of questions about China’s policies in Tibet to former President Hu Jintao, as part of the Tibet lawsuit China has been bullying Spain



to shut down. Spanish politicians are currently working to cripple Spain's laws in order to appease Beijing.

The crisis in Tibet has only worsened, which is why Tibetans in exile and Tibet activists around the world are intensifying efforts to urge world governments to unite to build pressure on China to end the severe repression in Tibet. By working in unison, like-minded governments can pressure China more strongly to end its dangerously provocative policies in Tibet, and send the signal that China's bullying of individual nations that support Tibet is unacceptable.

On this day, we also take the opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India for their long standing support and understanding. With the growing security and border tensions between India and China, we believe that resolving Tibet issue is the only viable and long-term solution to the tension. We therefore request that the Government of India issue a strong statement in light of the current human rights violation and crisis in Tibet.

March 10 is a hugely symbolic and important day for Tibetans the world over. We gain hope from the courage shown by our brothers and sisters inside Tibet, and we recommit ourselves to strengthening the non-violent Tibetan movement until we achieve our goal.”



## **55th Anniversary of Tibetan National Women's Uprising**

**Since 12th March, 1959**



ལྷ་ས་ ལྷ་ས་ Lhasa-Tibet

བོད་ཀྱི་བྱུང་མེད་  
སྒྲེང་ལངས་  
ཐེངས་ ༥༥ ལྷ་ས་བཞི།

**Commemorating the  
55th Tibetan  
Women's Uprising**



Tibetan Women's Association

On 12th March 1959, thousands of Tibetan women from all the three provinces of Tibet stood up against the Chinese forces thereby triggering a peaceful resistance that continue even today.

The Tibetan Women's Association, which was initially established in Lhasa on 12th March 1959, was reinstated in India on 10th September 1984. The core purpose of establishing this association is to continue the works of all the great women of Tibet, who have sacrificed themselves to preserve our identity, freedom and our culture.





The Central Tibetan Women's Association commemorated the 55th Tibetan National Women's Uprising Day by organising a function and peace march. At the function, Former Kalon and the founding president of the Tibetan Women's Association Ms Richen Kando Choegyal was invited as the chief guest. Other guests of honor were former executive members of TWA and current parliamentarians, and representatives of non governmental organizations. The function was held in front of Martyr's Pillar.

Ms. Richen Khando emphasized the strength of Tibetan women, she said *"We, Tibetans are not*

*less than any other people in this world especially Tibetan women- I believe that Tibetan women can face any challenges and are very courageous. Therefore, we should know where and how to use this*





*power innate in us.” She further stressed on the responsibilities of the new generation, she said “Under the grace and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, our elder generation have built a strong community and now it is the duty of the new generation to work continuously and brilliantly. And I believe in the strength of Tibetan people, especially the power of the Tibetan women”*

Central TWA's President Ms Tashi Dolma read the statement of TWA on the 55th Anniversary of this historic day. TWA pay homage to the sacrifices made by all the martyrs and pledged that the hardships endured by these martyrs for the cause will not go in vain and that TWA will continue to stand resolutely united and be of firm commitment to the cause of Tibet.

TWA's steadfast commitment to resolving the long-standing





issue of Tibet through the Middle Way Policy seeking genuine autonomy for Tibet, remain strong. In this light, TWA has sent appeal letters and substantial reports to the concerned UN bodies and other world governments to urge the Chinese government to resolve Tibet's issue through dialogue and non-violence.

Every year TWA announce fellowship program for Tibetan women and this year the fellowship is announced to give to Tibetan women inside Tibet through reliable international foundation.

In honor of the 20 Tibetan women who died of self-immolation protests TWA also announced to give an honorary award of



25,000 INR to Ms Tsering Dolkar, also known as ‘Tibetan Mother Teresa’, for her work for humanity.

To appraise the efforts made by Tibetans inside Tibet to preserve and promote Tibetan language, this year, TWA announced two informal researchers’ seats (in Tibetan language) for two Tibetan women in exile. The research topics are *‘Intermarriage between Tibetans and Chinese under China’s rule in Tibet’* and *‘Intermarriage between Tibetans and foreigners in exile’*. The details will be made available on TWA’s web site after April 1 this year.

After the function, Regional Tibetan Women’s Association Dharamsala collaborated with the Central Tibetan Women’s Association and organized a peace march from Martyr’s pillar to Kacheri. RTWA Dhasa invited Dharamsala settlement officer Mr Sonam Dorjee to speak for the gathering. Hundreds of students, nuns, lay women and Tibet supporters took part in the peace march.





## **Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women**

### **Symposium Report**

***Day One, Monday, February 3***

#### ***SESSION REPORT:***

Opening Ceremony: The opening ceremony began at 9:30 am and ended at 10:15 am.



***The first speaker was J.M. Mukhi, a lawyer at Supreme Court of India.***

#### ***About Mr. Mukhi:***

*Mr. Mukhi received his education from the Universities of Bombay and Cambridge and the London School of Economics. He is a Barrister of Lincoln's Inn and the Middle Temple and an Advocate in the Supreme Court of India. He was at one time Legal Adviser to the Ministry of External Affairs in charge of India's case*

*against Portugal in the World Court at The Hague, Chairman of the Legal Committee of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam and Senior Counsel to the Monopolies Commission. He has advised on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question, the Kutch Arbitration, Constitution-making in Ghana and international commercial arbitrations. Having specialized in International Law, he has done research and study of the Laws relating to Refugees also and has been a sympathetic supporter of the Cause of Tibet. He has been since long associated with the Central Tibetan Administration and has been very kindly rendering legal advice and assistance in relation to various matters concerning the Tibetans. He has also been providing guidance to a number of Tibetan Law Graduates.*

***Excerpts from Mr. Mukhi's delivery:***

The Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that 'character and ethical conduct begins at home.' The Tibetan mother teaches her son that the Tibetan daughter is precious. A daughter is not a sacrificial goat but a potential goddess. A daughter uplifts and creates sunshine, so a mother should create respect and reverence for her daughter.

An Indian mother is disappointed when a daughter is born and the family consoles saying 'Laxmi is home,' why don't they say 'a Durga has come to slave the demons.'

My wife is much wiser, hardworking and self- sacrificing and therefore much superior to me.

Physical violence against women is a matter of past. There should be no physical chastisement at home.

A Tibetan child has the right to be guided with wisdom and a Tibetan girl has the right to decide her status.

A legally married woman has many rights: right to maintenance, decide, abort, confined to housework/motherhood, right to

separation, divorce, alimony and right to follow a career

Domestic violence shouldn't be tolerated at any degree. There is a great reluctance of married women to report cases of domestic violence and this is wrong. Things should be put in place. Where is the system of counseling to repair broken marriages. ?

These days there is an overuse of the word empowerment. Power comes from knowledge, from being aware of one's rights and one's ability to assert rights

Tibetan women in India are governed by Hindu succession act, they must have a birth certificate, marriage registration certificate and foreign registration certificate.

It is also high time that we need an authoritative compilation or a consumer friendly handbook that defines the laws and customs applicable in pre-1959 Tibet.

The Central Tibetan Administration should bring legal aid cells with 30/40 top grade well qualified Tibetan lawyer who will give advice and court assistance for free. Justice should not be charged.

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***The second speaker was Mr. TempaTsering la.***

***About TempaTsering:***

*TempaTsering was born on May 15, 1950 in Tibet. After the invasion of the Chinese forces in Tibet in 1950, he and his family escaped into exile in India. An alumnus of Dr. Grahams Homes, Kalimpong, he graduated with B.Sc. from Madras Christian College.*

*He was also elected as the member of the Central Executive Committee of the Tibetan Youth Congress and later, its advisor. In 1973, he joined the Tibetan civil service with Central Tibetan Administration. Tenpa was elected as a Kalon (Minister) by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile in year 2000. He held the portfolio*

*of Kalon for the Department of Home, until the term of the 11th Kashag (Cabinet) expired in 2001. In 2006, he was once again nominated as Kalon by Hon. KalonTripa Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and later approved by the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile.*

*Currently, TempaTsering is a Kalon and Chief Representative of the Dalai Lama in New Delhi.*

***Excerpts from Mr. TenpaTsering's speech:***

I Congratulate TWA for organizing this symposium. This is an impressive gathering and the concepts, issues and ideas discussed here apply to everyone in Tibetan community.

India is the largest democracy in the world and the Central Tibetan Administration follows a democratic system,

Though I am not a legal expert but adding on what Mr. Mukhi suggested, I would like to reiterate the importance of compiling an authoritative handbook of the laws that affect Tibetan women (Indian and International law, Exile Administration law, pre-1059 customary law in Tibet. In Tibet, though there was no legal system but people and institutions followed the Buddhist principles—such as lachoegeewa 10 michotsang ma 16, as guideline customary law.)

The Central Tibetan Administration is governed by laws and rules and it is important for us to be aware of the Indian law, the special laws and acts that apply to Tibetans either as refugees or foreigners or permanent residents. Only in knowing these laws we can make use of it.

For the first phase of being in exile, we were new and India as a host country remained oblivious. But after 54 years in exile and when majority of Tibetans are born in India, we cannot remain ignorant of the Indian law. There are issues facing individuals and institutions and we need legal solutions. Indian laws should guide us in our everyday endeavors—even things like seeking admission



into a school. Failure to abide by the Indian law is not only illegal but tarnishes the image of Tibetan and Tibetan establishments in India.

Therefore after 54 years in exile, being aware of legal procedures and abiding by the Indian law is an imperative, a compulsion and not a choice one makes.

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***The third speaker was Ms. Kamla Bhasin.***

***About Kamla Bhasin:***

*Ms. Kamala Bhasin is a feminist activist and gender trainer in South Asia. A social scientist by training, Bhasin has worked on the issues of development, education, gender, media and others.*

*Bhasin earned a M.A. from Rajasthan University and then went on to study Sociology of Development at Muenster University in West Germany with a fellowship. Afterward, she taught at the Orientation Centre of the German Foundation for Developing Countries in Bad Honnef for around year.*

*Bhasin worked with the Freedom from Hunger Campaign of the FAO for over twenty years, and is a well-known gender trainer. She has written extensively on participatory training, women and sustainable development. She has also written many songs on all these issues. She is the author of several titles in Women Unlimited's Gender Basics series, including Exploring Masculinity, What is Patriarchy? Understanding Gender, and Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia. With Ritu Menon she has co-authored Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition.*

***Excerpts from Ms. Kamla Bhasin's speech:***

It is so inspiring to hear judicial luminary Mr. Mukhispeak so humanly.

Today's gathering brings law and humanity together.

I have always expressed solidarity and admiration for Tibetan women and men fighting for their cultural and religious rights. You all refuse to leave your comfortable rights.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama's presence has helped India a great deal. You have all enriched us.

When we talk about gender we need to realize that gender does not mean only women. It is a social construct. Gender has nothing to do with nature and biology. Gender is what society/culture / religion defined women and men as.

The empowerment comes from the word power and we empower people who have been dis empowered- people whose power can have taken away by caste, race and patriarchy.

Power comes from controlling resources (natural and human, intellectual, financial, inner values, control over ideology) not just who are aware and possess knowledge.

In today's world, women do 66% of work and earn 10% income and possess 1% property. I refuse to believe that God is man. If God is man, then man is God. In most religion—man are imagined as God. Let us not forget that gender is not a new concept. Gender debate took place 2500 years ago in India.

A Women's fight is at many levels—at legal level, at religion level. Women have proven that there is nothing we cannot do. It all starts in the family. Society turns men into rapists, they are not born as rapists.

The quest for gender equality began since time immemorial and persists even today. It is important for Tibetan women in India to have closer links to mainstream India and have a sense of integration.

The quest for gender equality is a fight for equality. Let us envision a future where men and women can work together.

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The opening ceremony was chaired by Dhardon Sharling, creative head of Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women in Exile (LETWIE) project and Member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile.



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## INTERPRETATION OF QUANTITATIVE SURVEY FINDINGS

***11: 00 to 12:00***

The Interpretation of Quantitative Survey Findings was presented by **Ms. Tsering Choedon**. This was done with brief introduction of one year project - “Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women in Exile”. The survey data presentation was based upon questionnaire which was filled by women participants in the 17 regions. The workshop actually reached out to around 1000 participants but only 502 participants answered the questionnaire and were solely filled by Tibetan women.



***The reasons for choosing the 17 settlements for the legal workshop were given as:***

- Some settlements having historically reported more crimes against women and being more susceptible to violence & discrimination against women.

- The settlements covered have higher percentage of Tibetan population.
- Tibetan population not found in clusters in certain uncovered regions like -Darjeeling, Shimla, Kalimpong, Sikkim etc.

## ***REFLECTION***

- The survey data was presented in graphs on Power Point presentation. This raised many questions and differences in views amongst the participants upon different graphs.
- A young participant who is a second year law student at Delhi University raised the question on why the marital rape issue was not being included in the questionnaire. This was responded by Ms. Dharon Sharling, MP. She explained upon the lack of understanding of the term “marital rape” in our community and the need of education and awareness strictly focusing on the same.
- Another young man in his early 20s pursuing M. Phil in Chinese Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University raised the question on why the legal workshop was not able to reach people who had escaped Tibet post 1980 and before 2008. In response to this, the project coordinator Ms. Tsering Choedon responded to this by citing efforts that were made to reach out to all the Tibetan women – be it the ones who are born in India or Tibet. She further opined that the lack of interest, illiteracy or language barrier could be reasons for the graphs to show a limited number of participants from Tibet.
- It was clarified further that although the place like Miao shown in the graph had only 33 participants filled the

questionnaire but the actual turnout participants was more than 100.

- The presentation ended succeeding to an intense large group discussion upon the social and legal issues in the Tibetan community.

***Large Group Discussion: On the Social and Legal Issues presented in the findings.***

***12:00 – 01:00***

The large group discussion was facilitated by Ms. Tsering Choedon raising five main questions to focus. The talking points for group discussion were:

1. Are we really aware of what is sexual harassment?
2. Attitude towards gender sensitization
3. Attitude towards local police in the Tibetan community
4. Marital rape and its understanding in the Tibetan community
5. Obstacles that a Tibetan woman faces in the community



## **REFLECTION:**

- The discussion began with the question whether our community has a good understanding of the term “sexual harassment”. Ms. Lhakpa Bhuti, a school teacher at Gopalpur opined that although people in our community do understand sexual harassment but tend to take it casually.
- Another participant, Ms. Dukthen Kyi strongly suggested that women need to be more defensive and vocal to unwelcome sexual harassment of any kind be it- molest or simply stare, glare and stalking.
- A male participant, Mr. Karma Lekshay, Director of Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution (TCCR) shared his view upon the importance of the thin line to identify. He further suggested that although people in our community do understand the existence of sexual harassment but lack of knowledge and awareness to deal with it makes it prevalent resulting in people to take it casually.
- On the second talking point i.e., attitude towards gender sensitization, Ms. Tsering Choedon shared her experience during the legal workshop in Dharamshala where a man turned very defensive.
- A young man, Tenzin Choyang who is studying Bachelor in Commerce from Delhi University suggested that “Gender Sensitization” should be introduced in schools at primary level. He suggested that this can be a good prevention method for gender discrimination.
- A woman in her mid thirties from Regional Tibetan Women’s Association suggested that gender sensitization should begin from the family by equal treatment to both boy and girl from giving equal

standard of education to giving the responsibilities of household chorus.

- A woman in her early 40s, complained about the poor attitude of Indian cops in the local community towards Tibetans. She further mentioned the police not being supportive towards addressing Tibetans in need and being corrupt. Advocate Mr. Vinayak Narayan responded to her complaint stating that Tibetans encourage the local cops with bribery. They consult wrong people for any legal procedure and don't take legal actions to address their problems including that of bribery. They seek easier way out by bribing police officers and other officials to get their work done.
- On the topic, marital rape and its understanding in the Tibetan community most of the elderly participants remained mum and had no view upon the topic.
- A young law student pursuing second year of law school opined that there is lack of understanding on the topic in the community. She further stated that there is need of awareness on the topic to both men and women in the community.
- Many participants responded strongly to the topic- "obstacles that a Tibetan woman faces in the community" with different issues relating to women in the Tibetan community.
- A teacher from Gopalpur cited a case of her student who shared with her of repeated rape committed by her sister's husband. The teacher further shared her helplessness in dealing with the matter except for the consolation and comforting her emotionally.
- The participants unanimously strongly suggested for an establishment of women's helpline and shelter. This

has been brought up by few individuals and rest of the participant supported the view.

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### ***Plenary Session One:***

The Plenary Session One began at 2:00 pm and ended at 4:00 pm.



### ***Dr. Ananya Vajpeyi: Historian and Professor***

#### ***Brief Profile:***

*Dr. Ananya Vajpeyi was educated at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (MA), at the University of Oxford, where she read as a Rhodes Scholar (MPhil), and at the University of Chicago (PhD). She has taught at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, in the history department at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore.*

*Her book 'Righteous Republic: The Political Foundations of Modern India,' won the Crossword Award for Non-Fiction this year as well as the Thomas J. Wilson Memorial Prize from Harvard University Press, and the Tata First Book Award for Non-Fiction (2013). Dr. Vajpeyi is presently with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi. She is also working on her next book, which will be a biography on Dr. Ambedkar.*



*Dr. Vajpeyi commissioned and edited a special issue of Seminar: A Monthly Symposium in April 2013, that was titled "Tibet Burning" and focused on the crisis in Tibetan politics and culture with the on-going spate of self-immolations.*

*She also wrote about a recent show of Tibetan art in New York, which then got carried along with other materials on the exhibition web site: it's not directly related to women's issues, but it is to Tibet.*

***Excerpts from Dr. Anaya:***

When I educated myself on Tibetan women and issues facing Tibetan women, I realized that the traditional Tibetan society was similar to the Indian society. We share a common ground. Like Indian women, Tibetan women in early times were also expected to wear their hair braided, wore full sleeves and aprons.

We must know that issues of dress and appearances normally applied to women relate to issues of sexuality and control.

It would be interesting to know the gender relations in the Chinese culture, which also bears influence in Tibet.

In exile, the interaction between Tibetan and Indian culture has two effects -1) India is gender unequal, is patriarchal and this has a dispiriting impact. But it can be inspiring at times as there is lots to learn from this and grow from there. All symbols of Indianness were created around women-Bharatmata. Women become repository of cultural values.

For Tibetans living as refugee, the external struggle is so powerful that adherence to internal organization has taken a backseat and likewise the question of women's rights is left at the back burner. Therefore today's symposium is remarkable attempt taken, apart from the larger political question.

Few questions that arise out of deeper contemplation are- what is your takeaway from living in India. Are you concretely connected

with Indian women's organizations and legal initiatives and with policies of Indian Government.?

It is understandable that even within Tibetan culture with a heavy influence of Tibetan Buddhism, there is a religious-cultural complex amidst strong monastic traditions. But again it is remarkable that Tibetan nuns are at the forefront of pol resistance.

As Tibetans, you are all working within constraints of politics and therefore to make life in exile more egalitarian and self-sustaining, it is essential for you to integrate with the mainstream Indian society. An important aspect of exile life is to making women's voice more pertinent in political and national discourse.

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### ***Karuna Nundy: Advocate at Supreme Court of India***

#### ***Brief Profile:***

*Ms. Karuna Nundy obtained a degree in Economics from St. Stephen's college, Delhi University. Her first law degree is from the University of Cambridge, England where she was awarded the Emmeline Pankhurst prize, the Amy Cohen Awards and the Becker Studentship. She then received an LL.M from Columbia University, New York where she was awarded a Columbia University Full Fellowship.*

*As an advocate in the Supreme Court of India, she specializes in commercial dispute resolution and human rights litigation. Ms. Nundy has argued cases involving the rights of alleged terrorists, mentally ill people and class actions on sexual harassment. Ms. Nundy's international human rights work has included advising the Maldives Attorney General's Office and working with the Chief Justice of the Maldives Supreme Court on legal reform. She has drafted contributions to the Nepal Interim Constitution's bill of rights; conducted a workshop on legislation with the Senate of Pakistan; advised the Government on Bhutan on its compliance with particular human rights treaties. She also advises United Nations agencies and governments of various countries to help*

*their legal systems conform to international and constitutional legal standards.*

***Excerpts from Karuna Nundy's speech:***

I admire the Tibetan community for bringing spiritual gift to India, that is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Under difficult situation you have all shown leadership in different spheres- be it in politics, education and professional field.

Patriarchy puts everyone in boxes. It takes away choices from both men and women. Often it is questioned whether patriarchy was handed down through religious teachings or were wrongly codified by men.

At a concrete level, when the question of violence within home is raised, where much happens, the pressure to keep within the home is pertinent. A level of incompetence is there even from police.

We must all realize that criminal law applies to all living in this land. How to deal with criminal law is intimidating and challenging to everyone.

We need to devise remedial measures to capacitate women and make women legally competent... Few suggestions could be – the creation of Network of Para –Legals and lawyers to ensure the effective use of law. For instance-criminal law, Indian Penal Code relating to rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment. Even disrobing, stalking, criminal intimidation, acid attacks are considered criminal by the law. Women's groups could use these measures tangibly and in areas where it can be used and areas where it cannot be used, must adopt measures to use it strategically.

Even then, women find it difficult to approach measures like the domestic violence act that is not refers to physical but to economic and social cruelty for women as well.

Women tend to deal with innate sense of entitlement--- say like self-denial. We tend to live with the intention of submit our

interests. For instance, in some culture, eating last is tied to the idea of honor.

Therefore, first step to women's legal empowerment is ensuring economic independence. Likewise, education is vital and right to property is also essential.

It is proven that with increased levels of financial independence, a level of violence goes down.

Another tangible measure could be creation of Crisis Centers. A center that has doctors, lawyers, counselors and provides safe houses for victims.

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***Jasmeen Patheja: Artist, Activist, Feminist.***

***Brief profile:***

*Jasmeen studied fine art at the Srishti School of Art Design and Technology, Bangalore. She has been a fellow at Sarai CSDS (2005) and is a fellow at Ashoka: Innovators for the Public.*

*By drawing attention to sexual harassment on the streets, Jasmeen Patheja transforms attitude towards an often-trivialized problem known in India as “eve-teasing”. Jasmeen launched Blank Noise in 2004 in Bangalore to help women and men challenge sexual*

*harassment. Her goal is to make sexual harassment visible and to transform public perceptions about the problem. Through her Blank Noise project, Jasmeen employs a variety of strategies- from advocating for effective legal mechanisms, to staging theatrical public protests, to using new technology to publicize offenses – to reach out to victims, perpetrators, and spectators involved in sexual harassment in public spaces.*

***Excerpts from Jasmeen Patheja's speech:***

When we think of what comes to our mind when we say-public spaces, there tend to be negative associations with it. There is fear, intimidation, and lack of privacy etc. Women tend to have fear based on their relation with their city. But the presence of another woman makes you feel safer at a public space at night.

As members of the civil society, we need to create spaces for dialogue on issues affecting women in public spaces such as sexual harassment. We need to build definitions for sexual harassment through argument and counter argument.

At Blank Noise we engage in actions like living organism and creation of action heroes and champions who will embody and enact on themes like—letting women walk the way they want to. We create a step by step guide to unapologetic walking.

Whenever we do actions, it should be done with collective spirit and the element of risks involved. But that should not deter us.

In cultures like India, the word sex and sexual are considered taboo words. Our actions should not only be interactive and informative but should create an experiential learning process.

What happens at Blank Noise is tangible actions that women can take up at individual level and at civic level as well.

It's time we come out of the web of blame game and own up for our actions. One sensible way is to make people take pledges.

***The plenary session one ended with a question and answer Session.***



The session was chaired by Dhardon Sharling, creative head of Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women in Exile (LETWIE) project and Member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile.

***Workshop Session one: began at 5 pm and ended at 7 pm***



The 58 participants were divided into four groups.

In groups they discussed, planned and finalized an Action Plan on the topic **‘Individual Responsibility and Civic Engagement.’**

Following are the group presentation:

***Group 1:***

***Action at individual level:***

- Self-responsibility.
- Setting role models.
- Non-discrimination.
- Common sense.
- Constructive social interaction and dialogue abide by rules and regulations.
- Accept changes with time.

***Civic engagement:***

- Spread awareness.

***Group 2***

***Action at individual level:***

- Pro active-either be it in studies relationship with families, social related issues promoting just society.

***Civic engagement:***

- Organize more workshop and trainings and gender sensitization at all levels-civil servants, parliamentarians, school teachers, students etc.

***Group 3***

***Action at Individual level:***

- Break silence and take stands-against nay form of violence.

- Make one-self legally aware.
- Empowering self and others.
- Taking responsibility at grass roots level.
- Accessing right to vote (politically).
- Women's right to her body.

***Civic engagement:***

- More legal awareness and empowering workshop.
- Creating a network and work hand-in-hand with other NGOs.
- -Women's help line-Para-Legal Networks and other NGOs like Jagori.

***Group 4***

***Action at individual level:***

- Knowing one's rights and duties.
- Exercising the rights and duties.
- Being vigilant towards other's unlawful acts.
- Give a constructive suggestion and be optimistic.

***Civic Engagement:***

- Be the change you want to see.
- Active participation in social issues.
- Leave ego.
- Be empathetic

Later groups voted for the best action plan, which was later adopted by the larger group.



***Adopted Action Plan:***

***Action at individual level:***

- Knowing one's rights and duties.
- Exercising the rights and duties.
- Being vigilant towards other's unlawful acts.
- Give a constructive suggestion and be optimistic.

***Civic Engagement:***

- Be the change you want to see.
  - Active participation in social issues.
  - Leave ego.
  - Be empathetic.
- 

***Day Two, Tuesday, February 4***

***SESSION REPORT:***

***Plenary Session Two:***

The Plenary Session Two began at 9:30 am and ended at 11:15 am.

The second plenary session discussed on the social, political and legal issues affecting Tibetan women in particular. Dialogue initiators included **Dr. B Tsering**, Principal of Dalai Lama Institute of Higher Education and Member of Parliament, Tibetan Parliament in Exile, **Ms. Tenzin Tseyang**, Coordinator, Women's

Empowerment Desk, SARD, CTA and **Mr. Vinayak Sharma**, a Tibetan speaking Advocate based in Dharamsala. TWA's General Secretary, **Ms. Nyima Lhamo** moderated the session.

**Dr. B. Tsering's** topic was 'Tibetan Women in India - Breaking Social Stereotypes and Political Prejudices.'



Dr. B. Tsering began the talk saying that it is not just enough knowing ones rights and duties but the importance of knowing them legally. The need to understand how the gender stereotypes prevalent become barriers was also stressed. The gender awareness programs are never meant to bring divisions in our society but it's in fact aimed to strengthen the community. Gender stereotypes prevalent based on indicators like colors, habits, roles are meant to be eradicated and it's time both men and women act as real partners helping one another in the most holistic ways.

Dr. B. Tsering then stressed on the importance of having a strong supportive civil society and how vital it is for women to inspire other women. Unfortunately, her experiences over the past many years kind of made her feel that having women in higher leadership roles does not necessarily meant supporting other women. Thus stated on the need to create and have more women role models in our society to inspire each other to do better. It was also stated that men supporting women empowerment is all about empowering the society.

Dr. B. Tsering concluded the dialogue guiding the women on the need of capacity building, empowerment and in making their voices heard. The men were requested to listen to women and after listening it is for the men to decide what they can do to support the women.

**Ms. Tenzin Tseyang** had a presentation which kind of gave the delegates a clear picture of the 'Gender status of Tibetan women in India---pressing issues as grass roots'. The dialogue initiator spoke about prevailing cases of violence against women and the biggest problem in such cases being that women do not speak out and share. The question here is why women are not ready to speak out and share their problems. Are the social stigmas and social pressure/perceptions too strong?



The importance of having women representation at all the levels of decision making bodies was equally stressed. The triple role of women 'reproductive, productive and community service' was mentioned with the hope in bringing in an understanding to the roles women play in everyday life. Ms. Tseyang concluded her dialogue touching on the prevalent incidences and cases of problems against women in our community and how we tend to compromise and hide such matters through our assumptions that it will bring bad name to our society. Such practices results in great injustice to victims.

Final speaker **Mr. Vinayak Narayan** talked on various legal provisions addressing domestics violence under Indian legal system. In the first instance he urged all Tibetans to come out of the ignorance which all Tibetans carry that Tibetans do not have any say under Indian legal system. He said that Tibetans are equal under Indian legal system having equal obligation and protections like Indian citizens.

He later stressed the importance of getting ones marriage registered. This helps in creating a legal evidence of marriage as many Tibetans couples are in live in relation. Registration of marriage helps aggrieved women to seek various remedies such as seeking maintenance for herself and also her children. Next he elaborated detailed legal procedure of seeking divorce, especially ex-parte divorce as many Tibetan women face problem of dissection by their husband.

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### **Sharing.....**

Ground observation of case studies sharing: began at 11:30 am and ended at 1:30 pm

TWA's four central executive members shared their experiences on the field survey and few cases of domestic violence, problems and discrimination faced by women from the places they have visited.

This was done with the intention to discuss the cases with the participants to look into the issue without any judgment. Most importantly to see how the case was handled at that time and what we should do if similar cases happen in the future.

***The session was moderated by Dorji Kyi.***



Following are the cases they shared:

***1: Ms. Tashi Dolma, President, TWA***

Ms. Tashi Dolma shared few stories from Himachal Pradesh state which includes Bir, Norbulingka and Mcleod Ganj:

***Case - 1***

A 14-year-old school going shared her experience of facing molestation by a male teacher in the school. She hasn't shared this one with anyone else because lack of confidence and trust and because of the fear of being judged. Therefore, the need for parental support and social support system is important to help such victims break their silence.

***Case - 2***

An elderly man in his mid 50s shared an incidence of a brutal gang-rape and murder of a Tibetan woman. He alleged that the victim was in a drunkard state and the rapists inserted shreds of

beer bottle into private parts. The victim couldn't succumb to the injuries. Neither was the culprit nabbed nor were there any social or institutional response or action.

### ***Case - 3***

A woman in her early 40s shared her story. Her first marriage failed after her husband moved abroad and married another woman there. She has a ten year old daughter from her first marriage. Occasionally he sends a meagre amount of money for his daughter. Few years ago she met a Tibetan man and they had a live-in relationship for three years. She recalls those years as the most miserable years of her life as she suffered under his hands.

Her partner beat her up until she bled. He didn't need a reason to hit her and would do for trivial reasons like—he is feeling bored. He brought his own girlfriends home and would get violent with her and have them witness the act. He would spit- and pass sputum in her mouth. She suffered miscarriage as a result of his brutal beatings.

Even though her family and friends suggested that she leave him, but she was hesitant as her first marriage failed and she felt she could be looked down upon by the Tibetan society.

Although she is aware of the legal safeguard measures, she never gathered courage or confidence to use them. Once she mustered courage to dial #100 but since the line didn't go through she lost confidence to dial again.

After 3 horrendous years, she finally left him and moved to a different place. Later she realized that she was once again pregnant with his child. While friends and family suggested that she abort the baby but she couldn't do that. She is now a mother of a son.

Her partner continues to harass her with phone calls pleading her to come back but she hasn't responded positively.

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## ***2: Ms. Samten Choedon, Vice President, TWA***

Ms. Samten Choedon la spoke on many cases which happened in the south zone including Mungod, Hunsur and Bylakoppe.

### ***Case – 1***

A young Tibetan woman was eve-teased by an Indian man on the street near her house. She approached the local police station but got no help. The cops did not register the case and ignored her complaint.

No one in the settlement seemed to have taken the case seriously. Therefore, despite a growing awareness on legal measures safeguarding women in India, the impact is not felt in the Tibetan settlements in India. The girl should have received support from the leaders in the settlement in approaching the police and filing a complaint.

### ***Case – 2***

A woman in her late 30s working at an old age home in the settlement. She has a son through her marriage to a Tibetan man in the settlement. The couple separated because of the husband's extramarital affair with another woman who is also working at the same place. The father took the son with him. Her struggle to get her son under her custody continues. The woman did not receive



any alimony and remains deprived of her right as a mother. There seems no legal or institutional intervention to help her. Their marriage is not registered under law.

### ***Case – 3***

An elderly lady in her late sixties shared the story of her sister who was repeatedly raped by her employer. As a result she got pregnant and despite her unwillingness was compelled to live with him and still does.

### ***Case – 4***

A Tibetan man in his late 40s shared his story. His marriage to a Tibetan woman ended because of his drinking and gambling habits. He then married a local Indian woman who worked as their maid. The marriage was registered under law. He admits that he had left all his ill habits and wanted divorce from his present Indian wife. But he fears that the Indian woman might take away his limited earnings as alimony. He shared his story to let other couples know that legal documents like a marriage certificate can provide security for any women.

### ***Case – 5***

This is story of a young woman who wanted to remain confidential. She introduced herself as a semi-orphan with an older brother. She shared how she assisted her mother who worked as a tailor to assist with her stitching orders and how she was the most “compliant and attending daughter” which was the reason why her mother never intervened in her personal and social life. She enjoyed her social gatherings and partying with her friends.

But rumors of her philandering manners spread by few young men completely shattered her. The men alleged they had physical relation with her in her drunkard state. Every since, she was ostracized and condemned by people in her settlement. She shared how a woman can so easily be victimized and tortured be it –

physically or mentally. She opined that women in our community are so vulnerable and can be easily judged and typecast. This case talks about how a modesty of a young Tibetan woman is a delicate issue and that is the reason why men encroach upon that to taint her reputation to retaliate for trivial reasons such as rejecting their romantic proposals.

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### ***3: Ms. Nyima Lhamo, General Secretary, TWA***

Nyima la shared few stories from Ladakh and central India;

#### ***Case - 1***

A woman in her 40's shared her story. Her house was rather simple and barely furnished. The settlement where they lived were in the adjoining area of an Indian military camp and this was where her husband was stationed when she initially met her. They fell in love and got married and had a baby boy. He later for transferred to a different battalion in a different State in India. He started ignoring her.

She went to the army camp office several times only to be told that they are working on it, but so far she has never heard from them.

Administrative action:

When she approached the local Tibetan leaders they punished her husband by making him prostrate 1000 times in front of the portrait of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; a way to cleanse his sin and ordered him to pay her 35,000 Indian rupees. She said it was "outrageous" as this money was suppose to last till her son turns 18 which means for another five years.

#### ***Case - 2***

The woman's husband betrayed her and their daughter and son, after he started having an affair with another woman. But she has both the kids under her care. But what is troubling her even today is the traditional practice of "Bhu pha thop, Bhumo ma thop"

meaning--- a son belongs to his father and daughter to the mother. She fears that on these lines, one day her husband would come and claim her son.

It is shocking to learn that the Tibetan society established in democratic India with its legal system running the country is still bound by a traditional practice to decide the custody of a child.

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#### ***4: Ms. Tsering Dolma, Joint Secretary, TWA***

Tsering Dolma la spoke on few cases which happened in the North East Zone which includes Rawangla, Tezu, Miao and Tenzingang. There are many Indian army camps based around these settlements and most of the Tibetan women are either married or settled with armies from these camps. Hence many of the cases she shared were related to army man.

She said that few participants were not very receptive to their presence and questions in Tenzingang. They were resentful towards a particular incidence (case of viol) that took place in their settlement in 2011 and was handled by TWA. They still remain unsatisfied with TWA's decision.

Since TWA's Vice President, Samten Choedon was one of the person who handled this case, she explained the detail issue and how their handled the case at that time.

#### ***Case – 1***

A 19-year-old girl shared the story of a case of domestic violence with the hope that we could use this to sensitize people to this topic and making the fathers responsible in the family.

Her father is a Tibetan while her mother is an Indian who was working as a labourer when she met him. She recalled the happy days when her grandfather was alive but he passed away when she was just six years old. After that her father started drinking and gambling. He also started beating her mother. She said that she used to hide with her younger brother whenever he comes home

drunk. She remembered how he would tell her to learn household chores and throw her books away. At one point when she was around 13, he came to her boarding school to withdraw her from School and forced her to work in the field along with her mother. Her mother being an Indian was never accepted by the Tibetan community and this she believed victimized her mother. Now her father has reduced his drinking habit but she is still traumatized by the experience. Her family received no form of social and institutional support.

### ***Case – 2***

This is a success story of one of the regional TWA leader. After she caught her army husband cheating on her, she took the right decision by filing a case in military court and she won the case. Thus she has been receiving alimony from him.

Suggestions made after the sharing session:

- Importance of have marriage act in our constitution.
  - Need of a Women's Commission under CTA.
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### ***Workshop Session two: began at 2:30 pm and ended at 5 pm***

The 58 participants were divided into four groups.

In groups they discussed, planed and finalized

### ***Top 5 actions for Tibetan Women's Association***

### ***3 recommendations for Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)***

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**Following are the group presentations:**

***ACTION PLAN FOR TWA:***

***Group 1***

- Introduce TWA chapter in universities and colleges.
- Fellowship for gender studies.
- Helpline / women's cell (street play, emergency refund).
- Workshop for social students.
- Resort to legal procedure.

***Group 2***

- Cover remaining settlements including schools – regarding giving sexual harassment.
- Conflict resolution center and legal empowerment body should collaborate.
- TWA should have better network with legal Indian women's association and NGOs.
- TWA research findings and solutions should be published yearly for further references.
- TWA executive's body should expend to legal advice.

***Group 3***

- Outreach at grass root level (school, universities, young professionals, health education, gender sensitization).
- Networking tentative collaboration with local, national, international with other women NGOs.

- Separate legal empowerment desk.
- Review of TWA training and establish a strict and strong protocol for all members, central and regional level.
- Long term planning - scholarship prof, (for men also in different fields of timely needed).

#### ***Group 4***

- Legal awareness program.
- Publishing a legal guideline kit.
- Connecting with youth.
- TWA fellowship for different subject (in contact for service after completion of course).
- Facilitation of in-service training for TWA staff members.

### ***RECOMMENDATION FOR CTA***

#### ***Group 1***

- Introduce women's cell.
- Introduce 'Gender Studies' in schools.
- Recognition for women accomplished.

#### ***Group 2***

- Independent women's commission body (economically, socially, politically).
- Women's Cell- helpline.
- Introduction of gender education as a subject in schools (interdisciplinary courses).



***Group 3***

- Research, documentation and codification of customary marriage law (to be later acknowledge by His Holiness).
- Expansion of women's empowerment desk.
- Organizing parental education (focus on 1st time parents)

***Group 4***

- Marriage and divorce act
  - Women Cell- help
  - Judicial commission should take active participation
- 

***Later every individual (58 participants) cast their individual vote for top 5 actions for TWA and top 3 recommendations for CTA and adopted the following:***

***ACTION PLAN FOR TWA:***

- TWA to carry out outreach and training programs in Tibetan settlements and Schools. Specific focus on topics of sexual harassment.
- TWA to establish chapters in Indian colleges and Universities.
- TWA to become more youth-centric at institutional level and at civic level.
- TWA's annual fellowship program to include Gender Studies and women related studies such a Gynecology.

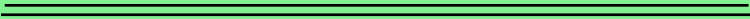
- TWA to establish a state desk for Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women in exile and each regional chapter to have a separate portfolio for LETWIE work.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CTA***

- To establish a women's commission body.
- Include gender studies in school curriculum.
- To recognize and confer award to accomplished women in exile.

### ***Closing....***

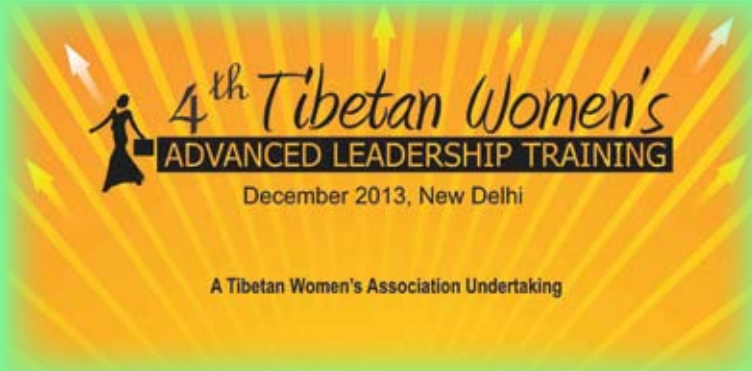
The two day symposium was concluded on a happier note with certificate distribution for the participants and group pictures.



## **4<sup>th</sup> Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training**

**December 25<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

**Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi**



### ***Pre-Training report:***

TWA launched the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 via our office web site and Facebook page. We also had timely support from Radio Free Asia, who interviewed Tenzin Palkyi la, Assistant Program Officer at the National Endowment for Democracy and TWA's General Secretary cum Program coordinator, about the upcoming Training in late November 2013. The interview mostly focused on the objectives, programme and activities of the training, the challenges and why a grant body like National Endowment for

Democracy would support such a programme. The interview played a great role in spreading the word to the larger community about the training. This radio broadcast helped us so much that the number of applications just started flowing in, making it to 35 applicants signing up for the 4<sup>th</sup> Advanced Leadership training.

TWA's coordination team made our way to Delhi on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup> December, two days preceding the 4<sup>th</sup> Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Training preparations in Delhi mainly included; confirming the conference hall at the India Habitat Centre, making advanced payments, visiting the NDTV 24X7 office in Oklha, requesting their participation and studio for our trainees, collecting the training materials from the print office, contacting the tent house for things such as table cloths, a floor mat, a spotlight etc, taking care of the electrical set up in the auditorium, getting the menu set, purchasing stationery, yoga mats, water bottles, group prizes, mementoes for trainers, panelists and guest speakers, and agreeing the final directions with the photographer and videographer.

The attractive stands' graphics reflected the theme of the training, with office logos establishing TWA's presence in the auditorium. The auditorium got the right transformation into an appropriate training space for the 33 trainees for the next week long. The auditorium might have never since looked so appealing and attractive as it did on 24<sup>th</sup> December.

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### ***Training outline:***

The week long 4<sup>th</sup> Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training (December 25<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>) was held at the Gandhi Peace Foundation. This edition saw 33 Tibetan women attend from various parts of India like Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir), Bangalore, Chennai, Dehradun, Dharamsala and Delhi. 33 Tibetan women comprising of teachers, activists, students, social workers and doctors

converged in the Indian capital from 25<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> for 7 days of 'identifying, inculcating and implementing leadership skills'.

The training course was divided into three phases of 'identifying, inculcating and implementing leadership skills'. Three professional trainers led the training: **Lynda O Lepcha** (Director of Holistic Training Solutions), **Dhardon Sharling** (Member of Tibetan Parliament in Exile and Co-Chair, International Tibet Network) and **Jaya Iyer** (professional leadership trainer through the arts). The program covered areas such as critical thinking, personal effectiveness, communications strategy, social media and leadership, leading self and others, leadership strategy and execution. The outbound training included a field visit, covering stories in a real life setting, an interactive session with Tibetan professionals based in Delhi, lobbying Indian leaders, participation in an **NDTV studio** debate and a panel discussion with famed Indian speakers.

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*24<sup>th</sup> December, 2013*



Just as the organizing team finished the final touches in transforming the auditorium to an attractive training zone, trainees started reporting; registering, collecting their training kits and accommodation assignments. A simple welcome dinner saw

all the trainees and the organizing team introduced informally at the dining tables, followed by a very brief welcome note by the President of Tibetan Women's Association.

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### ***Day 1 – 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2013***

Everyone was pretty timely, reporting to the standard daily routine of TWA's leadership trainings, i.e. the morning yoga session. The terrace fitted us all with the colourful yoga mats and the wintry cold wind blew through as we had the yoga session.



TWA's President, Tashi Dolma (Mrs.) began the training with a short introductory speech; focus was laid on the objectives and the history of the Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training, followed by a formal introduction of Tibetan Women's Association; its mission, convictions, projects and programmes.

TWA's General Secretary, Nyima Lhamo, led the ice breaking session right after; wherein the





trainees were paired and given 20 minutes to introduce each other and have their partner's introduction in the form of a drawing. The trainees had their initial laughter as they introduced each other to the larger group with their drawings. The participants were then given a secret friend each and the whole essence was to maintain the secrecy till the 31<sup>st</sup> night, when the mystery would be revealed.





The trainees were divided into 4 teams with a team leader and a time manager after the ground rules had been set. Nyima briefed the trainees through the week long schedule/programme at the orientation round; informing trainees of their participation as teams, small studies, media reporting, meeting influential personalities, news studio participation, design and presentation of group tasks, ad-hoc panel discussion, lobbying with politicians and the excursion trip. The orientation almost created a whole new world for the trainees, arousing lots of questions, curiosity and interest.



The afternoon session saw two guest speakers train our women leaders on lobbying. **Tenzin Lekshay**, Media Officer, Bureau Office, New Delhi was the first guest speaker after lunch. Lekshay's training presentation introduced the concept of lobbying, its history, tact and techniques, preparations, past lobby campaigns carried out by Tibetans and Tibet support

groups, and most importantly gave guidelines and tips on follow ups and taking the campaign further.

The next guest speaker for the day was **Rev. Yeshe Phuntsok**, Member, Tibetan Parliament in Exile. Rev. Yeshe Phuntsok's talk emphasized possible influential



politicians and Tibet supporters based on his many years' experience on the ground in Delhi. The trainees were introduced to many possible focal points within Delhi and it was more than interesting to see how the teams really paid attention knowing the next day awaited with a battle/crusade for them.



TWA's General Secretary, Nyima Lhamo gave the final presentation of the day; deliberation and planning for the next day's outbound practical training. The trainees were introduced to what they will lobby on the next day, which was to request and appeal to the Indian leaders and influential personalities to urge the Spanish government to maintain the judicial independence of the Tibet lawsuit from political interference and to call on the European Union to stand up for Tibet.

The trainees seemed pretty nervous and anxious through their evening session as they sat in teams to strategise and plan for the next day's outbound practical training.

*"This is my first leadership training; it helped me overcome lot of challenges and inspired me to befriend women. I learned a lot and i thank TWA for organizing such leadership training."* Karma Norzin Palmo, Teacher, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir.

## ***Day 2 – December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013***

The trainees sounded and seemed a little anxious and apprehensive as to how their practical outbound training would unfold. The trainees embarked on their day long outbound training at 9:30AM. The key goals of the lobby campaign were;

- To engage collectively and directly with key decision makers or people who influence policy.
- To urge them to demonstrate public support for the Spanish lawsuit on Tibet and thereby call for coordinated action on behalf of the Tibetan people.
- To stage face-to-face meetings with any individual, office, organization or public institution that holds a say or sway in public discourse.
- To work in a team.
- To communicate effectively.

As the clock ticked 5:00PM, trainees started reporting back to the venue in teams with the sense of accomplishment, contentment and having done something new. The groups sat in for an hour to prepare their group lobby presentation which was judged by Miss Dhardon Sharling. The teams were judged and given scores based on the basis of 1) number of signed petitions and the credibility of the signer, 2) team work, team building, 3) quality of the presentation made later in the evening, 4 ) judicious use of the resources within budget.

The trainees were finally briefed that the idea was; to get as many public figures to sign the on-going petition addressed to the Spanish Prime Minister, and how it was completely an exposure and learning opportunity for them. Since the lobby ask was a politically sensitive case, people might refrain from endorsing it but their role was to communicate the key message effectively. The key strategy with the lobby campaign was not the signatures but relaying the message to the target audience.

***LOBBY REPORT***



A lobby campaign was carried out in the Indian Capital by 33 Tibetan women participants of Tibetan Women's Advanced Leadership Training; leading Indian politicians and advocates of the Supreme Court of India signed the petition urging the Spanish Government and the European Union to stand up for Tibet and to maintain judicial independence of the Tibet lawsuit from political interference.

PERSON

Urges the Spanish Government to Stand Up for Tibet

Urges European Union to Stand Up for Tibet

To: Mariano Rajoy, Prime Minister of Spain  
Cc: Secretary of European Union Member States

I am deeply concerned to learn that the Spanish government is planning to limit the independence of Spain's judiciary, in a move that could lead to a ground breaking Tibet lawsuit, which implicates Chinese leaders, being shut down.

I am aware that China has reacted angrily to the indictment of Chinese former President and Party Secretary Hu Jintao for genocide and other grave crimes in Tibet, and the orders that warrants of arrest be issued against two Chinese leaders, including another former President and Party Secretary, Jiang Zemin. However, I urge you not to make any attempt to curtail Spain's criminal duty to prevent and punish the most egregious human rights violations in Tibet, as offences against all humanity.

I appeal to you to adhere to the democratic principles upon which Spain and the rest of the European Union is founded and stand tall in support of judicial independence from political interference.

I urge the whole of the European Union to stand up for Tibet, to stand with Spain in resisting China's unreasonable pressure against an ongoing criminal investigation, and to support the internationally recognised human rights standards that these Tibet lawsuits are investigating. Such cases should be based on the strength of evidence and a commitment to serving justice, not the political power of the perpetrator.

It is an affront to Spain's judicial sovereignty, to the victims, and to universal principles of human rights that the Spanish government is considering surrendering to Beijing political pressure.

Signature:   
Name: Bhakta Charan Das  
Country: India  
Email: [bhaktacharan@gmail.com](mailto:bhaktacharan@gmail.com)  
Date: 24/12/2019  


PERSON

Urges the Spanish Government to Stand Up for Tibet

Urges European Union to Stand Up for Tibet

To: Mariano Rajoy, Prime Minister of Spain  
Cc: Secretary of European Union Member States

I am deeply concerned to learn that the Spanish government is planning to limit the independence of Spain's judiciary, in a move that could lead to a ground breaking Tibet lawsuit, which implicates Chinese leaders, being shut down.

I am aware that China has reacted angrily to the indictment of Chinese former President and Party Secretary Hu Jintao for genocide and other grave crimes in Tibet, and the orders that warrants of arrest be issued against two Chinese leaders, including another former President and Party Secretary, Jiang Zemin. However, I urge you not to make any attempt to curtail Spain's criminal duty to prevent and punish the most egregious human rights violations in Tibet, as offences against all humanity.

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It is an affront to Spain's judicial sovereignty, to the victims, and to universal principles of human rights that the Spanish government is considering surrendering to Beijing political pressure.

Signature:   
Name: Inder Singh Nomdhan  
Country: India  
Email: [inder.singh.nomdhan@gmail.com](mailto:inder.singh.nomdhan@gmail.com)  
Date: 24/12/2019  


Influential signatories from the lobby campaign include: Shri Bhakta Charan Das, Lok Sabha Member of Parliament representing Congress party, Shri Inder Singh Nomdhan, an independent Lok Sabha Member of Parliament, Smt Meenakshi Lakhi, Politician, Lawyer and National Spokesperson for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shri Dig Vijay Singh, former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and General Secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC), Shri James Sangma, Member of Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, Chief Whip of Opposition and General Secretary of National People's Party (NPP), Shri Manoj K Jha, Senior Leader and Spokesperson of Rashtriya Janata Party (RJD), Shri Jaydev



Ranade, security and intelligence expert and former Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India, Shri Puran Mal Saini, Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Shri Ranbir Yadav, Advocate, Supreme Court of India.



The signature campaign started by International Tibet Network and Comité de Apoyo al Tíbet (CAT) is underway. It expresses deep concern over the Spanish government's plan to limit the independence of Spain's judiciary, in a move that could lead to a ground-breaking Tibet lawsuit, which implicates Chinese leaders, being shut down. The petition reminds Spain of its universal duty to prevent and punish the most egregious human rights violations in Tibet, as offenses against all humanity. It appeals the Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy to adhere to the democratic principles upon which Spain and the rest of the European Union is founded and stand fast in support of judicial independence from political interference.

The Indian political figures, intellectuals and advocates joined the global call urging the European Union to "Stand Up for Tibet" and to stand with Spain in resisting China's unacceptable pressure against an impartial criminal investigation, and to support the internationally recognized human rights standards that these Tibet lawsuits are investigating.

*"I always had the wish to attend this training and finally made it possible this time. Muzaffarnagar and Lobby training touched me deeply. Thank you TWA." Tenzin Dasei, Dharamsala.*

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### **Day 3 – December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

The trainer for the day was **Jaya Iyer**, professional trainer through the arts. Jaya's personality, simplicity and humility aided in connecting to the trainees and the trainees really felt at ease from the introductory session itself. The sessions began with an interesting introductory session which the trainees took in with much enthusiasm and creativity. As requested, the day's theme was leading self and others; self-image and openness, leadership for freedom and responsibility and reflective practice for personal leadership.



The day was filled with ample refreshers in between and the whole object behind all the exercises was to bring out creativity and to introduce the basic leadership skills within each trainee. Jaya laid quite an emphasis on one's communications skills, personality, bodily presentation and keeping eye contact through theatre as the medium.

The concepts of power; power within, power over, overlapping of power, confidence and humility were explained through an



interactive session. Describing words like conflict, violence, rights and responsibility in groups kind of led to a conclusion that our rights are accompanied by responsibility and it is thus for every individual to be responsible for one's actions. It was interesting to see how the trainees really engaged in discussion and coming out with their perceptions and understanding of these concepts.



Everyone then had an awesome breather after lunch in the lawn; it was all about being creative, alert, prepared and witty. The final task of the day was a group role play. The trainees in their groups creating costumes, deciding roles and dialogues, and giving directions sounded like a few professional theatre groups competing against one another in the auditorium. Almost all the groups had a similar climax to their play; however the teams really did a great job given the short span of time to prepare. But some of



the groups surely had a lot of questions in their minds as to how their team fared as a whole in this role play. Ultimately it was all about team work, bringing out each other's strength, skills, and contributing to the group success.

Jaya ended her day with an interesting breather while the organizing team presented a memento to Jaya as a token our appreciation for her presence as the trainer of the day.

*"The team was enthusiastic and interested throughout. Participation and energy remained consistent, the diversity in terms of age, background and pursuit made it even more enriching." Jaya Iyer, Professional Trainer through the arts.*

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### ***An evening with the Tibetan Professionals***



The day was not yet over at TWA's training. A special interactive session with four Tibetan professionals based in Delhi awaited the evening preceded by the screening of "The Girl from China," a film produced by Sonam Tseten, Creative Yak Films. The session was

chaired by Lhakpa Tsering, Senior Programme Manager/ Career Consultant, Envision, New Delhi.

The objective of the session was to introduce the young Tibetan professionals to the trainees and to inspire and encourage the participants with the possibilities and bringing in the confidence to reach their potential. Very positively, it also turned out to be a stand for the professionals to see and look at ways of contributing back to the community through their professions. The professionals

included Tenzin Khepak (Wildlife Filmmaker), Tsering Dolma (Editor, Fashion Magazine), Tashi Topgyal (Photo Journalist) and Sonam Tseten (Filmmaker). The discussion tuned into a very productive one as the trainees really had good questions for the speakers. The answers to the questions pretty much reflected their inspirations, self belief, determination and vision they had in achieving their goals in life. The trainees were guided on the importance of planning long-term goals in life with new ideas and perspectives. One of the speakers also reinforced the needs to look beyond our comfort zones and to be more globalized.

The two hour session was followed by an interactive dinner where the trainees got the chance to carry forward their discussion with the speakers at the dining tables.



*“It was a very new experience and exposure. I realised and learned a lot and it helped me revitalize my own potential and skills.”*  
*Rinzin Wangmo, Coordinator, Tibet Charity Education Section.*

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#### ***Day 4 – December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013***

The ambience in the auditorium seemed like a complete professional training centre when **Lynda Lepcha**, Senior trainer, Director, Holistic Training Solution settled in with her two male colleagues, both attired in formal wear. The theme of the day was



“Building Leadership skills; Strategy and Execution,” which was further elaborated on; 1) understand and execute leadership strategy, 2) understand the difference between strategic thinking and strategic planning, 3) identify critical success factors

and create a value curve for functions and 4) execute strategies effectively by converting them to actionable tasks.



The day's first topic was 'Strategy' as a method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future either in the form of achievement of a goal or solution to a problem. This further led to discussion on strategic thinking and strategic planning as two distinct things but an interrelated and complementary thought process that must sustain and support one another for effective strategic management. The stages of 'Strategy planning' were identified as; reactionary, remedial, resourceful and revolutionary. The participants were then given an individual task to complete a questionnaire listing the problems which prevent them from creating the change they want to see and solutions which will help them to overcome



the problems. The exercise aided the women to realize that every problem has a solution thus giving them the much needed encouragement to never give up.

Critical success factors was the succeeding topic which are an important element and necessary for anyone in any project to achieve their mission; like establishing one's mission and goals, actions and plans to achieve the goal, identifying the critical success factors, monitoring the critical success factors and thus reevaluating one's critical success factors to ensure progress towards one's goals. The participants then had to work on the 'Four Action Framework' also called the Eliminate, Reduce, Raise and Create GRID. The grid helped the participants to identify new competing factors and design new strategies.



The final topic of the day was 'Strategy Execution'; the trainers began with the four parameters used in a matrix used in decision making. It was called the RACI denoting Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed. This concept helps in indentifying the workload, making sure the processes are not over looked, ensuring new team members are informed of their roles and responsibilities, finding the right balance between the line and responsibilities, redistributing work between groups to get the work done faster, allowing the openness to resolve conflicts and for discussions and finally documenting the roles and responsibilities of the people within the organization. The trainees were then asked to work on a graphic game-plan showing how they will get where they want to go with their project; a project based on their backgrounds as students, activists, teachers, health workers. The trainees learned how this can be a handy tool for taking a large, multi-dimensional project and breaking the workloads down into manageable chunks in a planning meeting with all the team members.

The day long programme was filled with breathers, individual activities, group activities, and short video screenings related to the theme of the day, taking the women through reflection, light moments, and laughter.

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### ***NDTV 24x7 studio participation:***

Super excited, and a little nervous at the thought of having to ask questions on a live news show, the trainees had their questions ready as they boarded the studio cabs.

The discussion topic at the NDTV studio was 'Whether the Aam Admi Party will start a new trend in 2014 where all netas will say no to bungalows, will travel by metros and say no to security?' Ten women leaders from the leadership training had the opportunity to be part of an interactive audience show for a new series called 'Agenda'. The interactive panel discussion aired

live on NDTV 24x7 is a discussion on current affairs and issues of social relevance with the panelists and the anchorperson Ms. Sunetra Choudhary. The trainees returned with much excitement after having experienced something new.



*“TWA’s leadership program is intense and challenging as it sets out to mould us, young women as future leaders,”- said Nyima Choezom, executive member of TYC Centrex.*

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### ***Day 5 – December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013***

The topic of the day was ‘Communications Strategy, Social Media and Leadership’. **Ms. Dhardon Sharling** began her training with a 5-minute breather called ‘grab your partner’ followed by a short introduction on the basics of communication. The trainees were





briefed on how the ability to communicate well is the primary factor that distinguishes one individual from another. The communication process and its multiple parts and stages were explained through the discussion.



The 20-minute team exercise jigsaw puzzle highlighted how we communicate in a group under certain constraints or what happens when there are more speakers than listeners. The trainees were then briefed on the importance of having communications armory to be able to communicate effectively with anyone and at any level. It was also said that in our everyday communications we need to be SMART and build up our SMART communication skills so no matter what position you hold, you can communicate on an even footing and get your points across in a firm, concise and empowered manner.



The teams then had to come up with an award winning television commercial; each came out with a product to sell, with a jingle for the product and performed the commercial to the larger audience. The learning curve was that communication goes far beyond the actual words that we say and the more important part is how you say it and the way you say it. Communication skills are not about personal or positional power but are an art, a skill, and an asset for you to become successful in your field.



Every breather played highlighted the importance of all elements of communications; source, message, encoding, channel, decoding, receiver, feedback, and the context. The most interesting outdoor game was crossing the mine bridge with the bricks as a stepping plot; it was a lighthearted and cheerful method of being strategic in our communication. Every breather tested the trainees' application of strategic communication skills.

The topics just got bigger and better as days passed by; the next session guided the trainees through the concept of citizen journalism and explained how it is based upon public citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information. A few important examples of citizen journalism like the ‘Arab Spring’, ‘the 2013 protests in Turkey’ and the 2010 Haiti earthquake and a few other popular instances were shared with the trainees. It was highlighted how the increasing prevalence of cellular telephones, social networking and media sharing web sites have made citizen journalism more accessible to people worldwide.

TWA’s citizen journalist film ‘Lhamo Tso – Behind the Sea’ was screened to show how harnessing the power of blogs and social media can expand one’s reach and influence in getting the message across. Especially in this modern world, the availability of technology has made the citizens often report breaking news more quickly than traditional media reporters. However, it must be mentioned that the screening proved powerful and empowering to these women leaders as it resulted in rousing emotions and tears in many of them. The aftermath discussion was on how the film uses media tools to engage in strategic communications and the consequences of such a journalist like Dhondup Wangchen, facing a long prison term and who was also given an International Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists.



The trainees then had to come out with their role play to feel and understand; what is it like for citizen journalists like Dhondup Wangchen in Tibet and China?

The trainees were then briefed about the next day's outbound training 'rebuilding lives' at Muzzafarnagar relief camps. The trainees had looks on their faces like 'are you serious?' with much disbelief about the possibility of such an outbound training. However the organizing team had it all arranged and the obvious answer to the trainees was 'Yes, we are going to Muzzafarnagar'.

The trainees and the organizing team had been briefed about the Muzzafarnagar riots very clearly and how things are out there. They were all informed that our outbound training was completely a social relief project. The trainees in teams were also instructed to carry out a team project as citizen journalists. The teams had to pick up one or two social issues from the relief camps and make a photo presentation when we returned to the training venue.

The trainees seemed excited and were all busy preparing themselves for the next day's outbound training.

*"I think this is one program every Tibetan woman should be a part of, once in her lifetime. It gave me a life-changing experience," said Tenzin Lhadon, M.Phil student in JNU, Delhi.*

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### **Day 6 – December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

On December 30, the trainees undertook an outdoor project titled 'Rebuilding Lives,' wherein they visited three relief camps in Uttar Pradesh. Besides engaging in relief work catering to women and children victims of the recent riots in Muzzafarnagar, the trainees filed a photo-story narrating the pressing social issues facing the inhabitants of the relief camps.

The four hour long journey by bus seemed pretty fun as most of us listened along to the playlist played on the bus. Many of the



women were busy taking pictures, listening to their own songs from music players, reading books and enjoying their snacks.

Of the various NGOs and foundations working these relief camps, TWA contacted the Zakat Foundation for India (ZIFF) to visit three relief camps in Muzzafarnagar and Shamli districts.



***Brief introduction to Muzzafarnagar riots, Western Uttar Pradesh, 2013***

It all started when clashes took place between the Hindu and Muslim communities of Muzzafarnagar, India. The clashes are said to have claimed 43 lives, injured 93, and displaced over 50,000 men, women and children by burning and looting thousands of homes. There are different accounts of what sparked the violence but it's obvious that tension was building; little action appears to have been taken to curb local leaders from exploiting the growing animosity.

TWA's idea was to focus on life after the riots, where 50,000 people have been displaced in the Muzzafarnagar and Shamli districts of Uttar Pradesh in 31 functional relief camps of the 41 camps.



The immediate areas of concern were; inadequate provision of water supply, latrine facilities in the camps, lack of privacy for women coupled with no security for accessing the facilities at night due to their distance, location and lack of power supply, no bathrooms and covered places for women to take a bath, poor hygiene conditions with no drainage facility, lack of a waste management system, public health risks with a high possibility of water contamination and stagnant pools of waters becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The following is the list of relief materials needed when we asked what TWA and women trainees could offer for the inhabitants at the relief camps.

Providing clean and adequate water supply, 2) Providing sanitation facilities by building technically feasible emergency latrines with hand wash facilities in camp sites and constructing appropriate bathing and washing places for women, 3) Disease control and hygiene improvement by distributing hygiene kits, ORS packets, sanitary napkins and chlorine tablets for water purification in the camps, 4) Providing food security and livelihoods for people in camps, 5) Building emergency shelters: with winter fast approaching, bedding materials (mattresses, blankets, and mosquito nets) are needed to protect women, children and elderly from the respiratory tract infections/diseases.



TWA offered mattresses for 300 families in three relief camps while the women leaders brought fruits and candies for the children.

It was the experience and exposure of a lifetime for everyone to visit the relief camps and the photo-stories filed and presented by the teams spoke a whole lot about their experience. One of the team's photo-story had everyone cry; the presentation just reflected everyone's emotion of the day as we walked through the relief camps, talking and connecting with the people there, especially with the women and children in the camps. The elders in



the groups were so moved and touched that the whole experience reminded them of our early exile days.

The day ended with a lot of questions, reflection and thought processes within us as individuals, and as human beings being part of the 7 billion population in this world.



“This is my first Tibetan coordinated training and I am happy to be connected to my roots. Helped me gain self-confidence”. Trinley Paldon, Ph.D Student, Madras University.

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### ***Day 7 – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013***

A very short formal presentation preceded the panel discussion as our panelists kindly consented to present the group prizes to the teams. The women were put into groups from day one and they have been marked on the basis of their participation, team work, time management etc. The whole idea was to keep the women in a very constructive and positive competition, setting examples to one another and inspiring each other to give their best participation. Dr. Alana Golmei and Ms. Souzeina Mushtaq presented the teams with their group prizes.

The panel discussion titled ‘Role of Women in Peace-building, Reconciliation and ensuring Accountability,’ marked the

culmination of the training organized by Tibetan Women's Association. The panel discussion held at the India Habitat Centre was graced by the three key speakers: Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, former minister and current member of Parliament, Dr. Alana Golmei, activist and founder of Burma Centre in Delhi and Ms. Souzeina Mushtaq, journalist and writer from Kashmir. Dhardon Sharling moderated the two-hour discussion; as the speakers spoke at the momentous gathering of 50 people.

The 2-hour discussion established a substantive dialogue to identify the impediments and opportunities for women, to consider lessons learned and build on best practices and ways forward for bolstering women's role in securing peace, reconciliation and accountability, across the globe particularly in Tibet, Burma, India and Syria.



Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar stated that only when sufficient women power is harnessed along with men power, will it sum up to human power. He also said that it is time we understand this very important thing; power needs women more than women need power, and stressed how women are the ones who make the ends meet in a family by stretching every penny to the most possible. The Indian leader summed up his deliberation with a powerful line "Harness women power to human power".

"My personal conviction....(being in a family of women: a single mother, a doting wife with 3 daughters), has strengthened my



intellectual conviction.”  
Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar,  
Former Union Minister,  
current member of Indian  
Parliament and writer.

“With collective effort we can  
achieve our dreams... ..our  
fight is still on.... we need  
to march on.....,” Dr. Alana  
Gomei, activist and founder  
of Burma Centre in Delhi.



“Women need to be independent first to help themselves and a woman's battle is not a personal one, but a symbol of love and peace.” Ms. Souzeina Mushtaq, Journalist.

The panel discussion concluded after a good question and answer session. TWA's President honored the panelists and the moderator with the mementos as TWA's General Secretary delivered the note of thanks.

The panel discussion was followed by a sumptuous lunch giving the participants some more time to interact and discuss with the panelists.



A short informal presentation ceremony saw TWA's President present certificates of participation to the trainees and TWA's General Secretary led the concluding oral feedback session 'Spin

a yarn'. The oral feed forward session was very productive with some awesome feed forwards. Many of the women could not control their emotions and gave everyone moist eyes and saw tears running down all the faces in the room.

*"The training designed to empower Tibetan women on the leadership front focuses on bolstering female representation in the political and social arena of the exile Diaspora," said Ms. Tashi Dolma, President of TWA.*

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### ***Women's talent night***



The final evening saw a 'Women's talent night' where the women leaders unleashed their talent and best of their styles. Teams had to perform a solo song, solo dance, group song, group dance and a fashion show with a theme and social message. For many of our women leaders it was their first ever New Year eve taking time to take care of themselves with some love, style, dance and songs. The secret friends were finally revealed and it was all laughter and surprises as the friends got to know one another. Finally it was the countdown to a brand new year 2014 with greetings, hugs and all smiles.





## Conclusion

Tibetan Women's Association remains thankful to our financial partners Shelley and Donald Rubin foundation, the TIBET FUND and the National Endowment for Democracy, all based in the United States for supporting us with the much needed financial impetus. We thank our dear participants for their participation and for making this training one of the most successful.

TWA remains thankful to the institutions like Tibetan Children's Village, Mentse Khang, Tibet Charity; for availing the opportunity offered and Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society for supporting us with a yoga master throughout the weeklong program.

The women participants shared commitment to take strident steps in their everyday lives to better and perfect their leadership skills and to hold the mantle of female leadership, to continue with the legacy of women's leadership and thereby secure a safe and a sound future for women across the globe.

The Tibetan Women's Association remains committed to creating more platforms to empower our women to climb higher leadership scales in both personal and professional fronts. Over the weeklong, we saw and heard what needs to be changed and the women surely reflected that the much needed change is going to come from them.

*"This year we focused more on strategies including strategic communications and leadership strategy and execution," said Nyima Lhamo, General Secretary of TWA.*

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## **Udaan, 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**

**(Bangalore, India)**

*Reporter: Dorji Kyi, Women's Environment and Development Desk of Tibetan Women's Association*



### ***About Udaan:***

Udaan was a gathering of mostly young people from across India. It was part of a larger global project called Global Power Shift, initiated by International Climate Movement-building organization, 350.org. Global Power Shift and Udaan aimed to build a collective of young people who will question and disrupt the status quo and capture the public's attention using creative methods of communicating the issue of climate change in India and around the world.

### ***15<sup>th</sup> December, 2013***

I reached Bangalore Fireflies Ashram at 11:30 pm with few other participants. We were given our rooms and ID. We had lunch at 1 pm and waited for the other participants to join us. By evening, around 100 participants have come and we had welcome presentation at 6 pm. The organizing team introduced themselves and gave a brief presentation of the programs for the next 4 days. After that participants introduced each other and we played few games as icebreakers.



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### ***16<sup>th</sup> December, 2013***

First day of Udaan was started at 9 am with opening plenary talk by two great people on “The challenge of climate change, the state of the world”.

Siddhartha, founder of Fireflies Ashram spoke about the importance of creativity in social movements and more importantly to connect with nature, valuing it and preserving it. He also spoke about some of his personal stories related to Fireflies Ashram’s natural surroundings.

Second speaker we had Ms. Vaishali, an environmentalist and an activist from Maharashtra, who have been working against coal mining, hydropower plants and others for more than twenty years. She spoke about her struggle against coal mining and nuclear power plants in her state. She also shared few inspirational stories of farmers who fought against companies, government and their policies.



After the opening plenary talk, we went for the morning session, where participants can choose the sessions that they are interested. I went for “Understanding Climate Change – Science and Impacts”. This session was lead by scientist and global managing director of 350.org, Payal Paresch. She spoke about climate change around the world and its impacts. I learned that “350 ppm” is where 350.org gets its name. “PPM” stands for “parts per million,” which is simply a way of measuring the ratio of carbon dioxide molecules to all of the other molecules in the atmosphere. I also learned that scientists and climate experts agree that 350 ppm is the “safe” level of carbon dioxide.

For the evening session, we had people from three different places who shared their stories of struggle against companies, system and politicians to save their village. Their shared their personal experiences of climate impacts, solutions and social change from their regions.

**17<sup>th</sup> December, 2013**

Day 2 opening plenary session started at 9 am with Deepa Gupta, Founder of Jhatkaa.org and Nityanand Jayaraman, an activist, he also teaches at Asian College of Journalism. Topic was “What does campaigning for a cleaner, fossil free future look like? And what is the role of a new age campaigner”

*Excerpts from Deepa Gupta:*

We must reclaim our rights of citizenship through better understanding of democracy. Taking action locally is not enough. We should change the dynamics of the global decision making powers. 80 crore Indians have mobile phones and almost 12 crore Indians have access to Internet.



When we try to do something in life specially a work that doesn't pay much, the first problem we face is our family and parents who wants to see us earn more, settle well, fit in the society and have a secure future. But you have to be strong in our fight. We are not doing it just for the love of our family but also for our planet.

*Excerpts from Nithyananda Jayaramana:*

The fight is not to save the earth because the earth is self-sufficient. The fight is to save us because what we are doing to the planet is causing harm to us. What goes around comes around. Don't just use cloth bags, plant trees but also fight against a coal plant, nuclear energy. Renewable energy is a lost dream if we are moving towards an unsustainable economy.

Environment activism as of now is an act of love and hope. We need to move beyond this and take concrete actions for change. The truth as IPCC sees it, is not good. There are no shortcuts in winning the fight for environment. Human beings are not animals because we believe that the law of nature does not apply to us. Nature does not require saving. It is self-sustaining. What we want to save is our backs.

For breakout session, I went for “Non-violent direct action”

Non-violent direct action was lead by Nithyananda Jayaramana. He gave a presentation on Non violent direct action and also on the Bhopal incident, a 30 year struggle for justice. I was astonished to learn that the chemical remains are still there and the people who are responsible for this have not yet cleaned the place.

Our next speaker was Ravi Theja, green social entrepreneur who talked about clean power energy. 3 years back, Ravi visited a village in Karnataka which received electricity for just one hour. The visit shocked him and he decided to do something about it. Hence he started a social enterprise with some of his friends. Ravi's social enterprise provides renewable energy solutions in the rural areas of Karnataka. Ravi and his team established the world's first smoke-free village in India. He said: “The whole point of studying engineering is to create something constructive and not something destructive.”



Environmental activist, Dilli Rao spoke about his people's struggle in the wetlands of Sompetta, Andhra Pradesh. Sompetta has 4000 acres of fertile land. In 2008 the local authorities declared this land as barren under pressure from a few corporations. These companies wanted to start a coal fired power plant in Sompetta. The locals from Sompetta visited a nearby thermal power plant. They were shocked to see the negative impact the thermal plant had on the people living there. Hence they decided to fight back in Sompetta. "The movement you question the hazards of coal power plants, political leaders will as an oppressor of development." Said Dilli Rao

Pushpinder Singh from Greenpeace India presented the case study of #FreeTheArctic30.

The second day of Udaan came to an end with the sharing of inspiring stories from across India.

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### ***18<sup>th</sup> December, 2013***

Day 3 of Udaan was eventful with the breakout session on using art and activism in communications and campaigning.



Arjun Srivathsa from Wildlife Conservation Society spoke on artivism, using art and creativity in our campaigns to simplify the focused issue into something that everyone can understand.





He presented his own arts to explain the sea food crisis and it did made the issue more clear and understandable. I thought we also should do something like this to advocate the environmental degradation happening in Tibet.

Next we had a group called Space Theatre from Goa performing on various social issues like Mother Nature, homosexuality and on women's issue. Their performances were very powerful and meaningful.

After lunch scientist and global managing director of 350.org, Payal Paresh spoke about climate change and 350 is working on reducing CO2 emission.



Later in the evening, participants were divided into groups to design our own campaign. Our group did our campaign on banding plastic bags in Hyderabad. We planned our online and offline campaign strategies.

The day ended with 'No Talent Show' where participants can sing, dance, tell a story and do anything whether they have the talent or not. It was really fun.



***19<sup>th</sup> December, 2013***

The final day of Udaan was very short for me as my train was leaving before noon and we had to leave soon after breakfast. I said goodbye to the organizers and the new friends I made there. We promised to keep in touch and do something together on environment soon.

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## **Reports of Activities of Regional Chapter of Tibetan Women's Association**

### **RTWA Clementown (Dhondupling)**



***December 6, 2013***

Rtwa Dhondupling organised a prayer to honour the martyrdom of Pawo Kunchok Tsetan from Amdo Ngaba.

***December 22, 2013***

Rtwa Dhondupling organised 2hours prayers in Rtwa hall for Pawo Tsultim Gyatso, who self-immolated on December 19, 2013.

### ***December 25, 2013***

Rtwa Dhondupling, Rtwa of Doon valley and RTYC organised a prayer session for Pawo Tsultrim Gyato.

### ***February 14, 2014***

Rtwa Dhondupling organised a mass prayer for Pawo Dorjee from Amdo Ngaba, who self-immolated for the cause of Tibet on 13th February.

### ***March 17, 2014***

Rtwa Dhondupling organised a candle light vigil for Pawo Lobsang Palden, who set himself on fire for the cause of Tibet.

### **RTWA Mussoorie**



### ***March 12, 2014***

RTWA Mussoorie organised a peace march on Tibetan women's uprising day. And local Tibetan women took part in it.

### **RTWA Dharamsala**

### ***December 4, 2013***

In solidarity with the two Tibetan martyrs Kunchok Tseten and Pagmo Samdup, RTWA Dharamsala in collaboration with other regional NGOs organised a candle light vigil which saw a



participation of around 100 people including local Tibetans and tourists.

A native of the former martyr Kunchok Tseten was invited at the vigil who shared with the audience why such self immolations happen in his region and explained the situation of Tibetans living inside Tibet.

### ***January 7, 2014***

RTWA along with SFT and RTYC, they organised a candle vigil for a pawo Pagmo Samdup. They invited general secretary of TYC to speak about the martyr's sacrifice. More than 100 people joined the candle march.

### ***March 7, 2014***

RTWA Dhasa's president and executive members wished losar to local Indian union, SHO, police and former members of ITF, with a khabsey and Indian sweet.

### ***March 8, 2014***

In the celebration of International Women's Day, RTWA Dhasa participated in a seminar cum workshop on "Equality for Women is Progress for All" organized by Young Women's International Institute Association and Edu CARE India at Naddi (near by Upper TCV).

Almost 40 international student have participated and they discussed on how we can progress women in the society and make equality with other gender,

### ***March 12, 2014***

Rtwa Dhasa commemorated the 55th anniversary by taking peace march from the gate of temple to Kachari. They invited Mr. Sonam Dorjee la, the Tibetan settlement officer as a chief guest. He highlighted the importance of the day and expressed the gratitude of Indians and Himachal govt.

### ***March 16, 2014***

Executive members of Dharamsala did a candle vigil for the 127<sup>th</sup> self immolator Khechok Palden (monk), from the Mcloed Main Square to Martyrs memorial.

### ***March 18, 2014***

Rtwa Dhasa organized a sangsol and mass prayer at Lhagyalri for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all sentient beings.

### **RTWA Nainital**



### ***January 1 & February 12, 2014***

RTWA Nanital organized a Mass Prayers for the brave Tibetan martyrs who self immolated for the freedom of Tibetan people.

***March 10, 2014***

Executive members of RTWA Nainital participated in a protest demonstration organised by the RTYC Nainital.

***March 16, 2014***

RTWA Nainital executives organised a mass prayer at Gaden Kunkyopling monastery to mark the celebration of Buddha Purnima “Choenga Choepa.

***March 18, 2014***

A mass prayer was organised in front of the Tibetan market for Pawo Lobsang Palden for his supreme sacrifice.

**RTWA Dekyiling**



***December 25, 2013***

Rtwa and Rtyc Dekling organized mass prayers session at Tibetan market.

***February 9 and 17, 2014***

RTWA Dekyiling organized a prayer session for martyrs- Phagmo Samdup and Lobsang Dorjee.

### ***March 10, 2014***

Rtwa Dekyiling organized a peace march from Dekyiling to Dehradun.

### ***March 12, 2014***

RTWA Dekyiling organised a protest march on 55th Tibetan National Women's Uprising Day.

### **RTWA Hunsur**



### ***December 1, 2014***

To observe the World AIDS Day, the executives of RTWA Hunsur associated with Phenden hospital and organized a HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in various schools and monasteries.

### ***December 12, 2013***

RTWA Hunsur observed the world Human Rights Day by organizing a rally across Mysore city to spread awareness about the human rights violation happening inside Tibet. They also wrote an appeal letter addressed to the United Nations' Secretary General – Mr Ban Ki-moon. Throughout the day, they visited the respective government offices and departments to hand-over the copies of the appeal letter.



***January 14, 2014***

Executive members of RTWA Hunsur celebrated a traditional Tibetan festive occasion called Pa Lhai Ri Truo at Gyudmey Monastery.

***February 7, 2014***

RTWA Hunsur pays tribute to Pawo Phagmo Samdrub by holding a mass prayer.

***February 14, 2014***

RTWA Hunsur organised a candle vigil to honor the martyrdom of Pawo Dorjee la,

***February 23, 2014***

A Gender Sensitization workshop was organised to 7 to 9th grade students of CST – Gurupura. The workshop was led by Ms. Tsering Choedon (Central TWA's non-standing executive member) and Ms. Tenzin Dolkar.

**RTWA Delhi**



***December 10, 2013:***

RTWA Delhi executives participated in the function organized by Samyeling camp's Gyathue office at TCV Samyeling Days School ground to celebrate the Human Rights Day and Nobel Peace Prize

Days. RTWA executives served refreshments and lunch to all the attendees.

### ***December 4, 2013***

RTWA Delhi executives organised a candle vigil at Samyeling Tibetan colony in solidarity with Kunchok Tseten (30) who self immolated himself on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2013.

### ***December 19, 2013***

RTWA Delhi executives offered 100 butter lamps in the name of late martyr Tsultrim Gyatso who set himself ablaze in Amchok Town, Sangchu County in Tibet.

### ***February 2, 2014***

RTWA Delhi executives went to show their concern and support to the Arunachal Pradesh MLA's late son Nido Taniam at Jantar Mantar.

### ***February 3&4, 2014***

During the two day symposium organized by the Central TWA in Delhi, two executives from RTWA Delhi participated in the training. The RTWA Delhi also took the responsibility of arranging transport facility to all the participants who came from different parts of India to join this training.

### ***February 7&14, 2014***

The executives of RTWA Delhi offered 100 butter lamps in memory of those brave Tibetans who set themselves on fire to protest against China's illegal occupation of Tibet.

### ***February 22, 2014:***

RTWA Delhi executives participated in the function organized by Samyeling Tibetan Colony's Gyathue office to welcome His

Holiness the 17th Karmapa at Samyeling TCV Day's School. RTWA executives volunteered to serve the guests and public gathered at the function.

***March 10, 2014:***

On 55th Tibetan National Uprising Day, a function was organized by Regional Tibetan Freedom Movement at Samyeling Temple's ground, where RTWA Delhi president Zedon la offered scarf to the 30 days peace marchers as a warm welcome. Later in the afternoon, they participated in the protest march organized by RTYC Samyeling Delhi. RTWA Delhi helped in serving the mineral water to the protesters.

**March 11&12, 2014**

RTWA Delhi organized a peaceful demonstration at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on the 55th anniversary of Tibetan Women's Uprising Day. The protest was well attended by Samyeling residents and other local Tibetans.

## RTWA Bylakuppe



*December 10, 2014*

RTWA Bylakuppe and RTYC Bylakuppe organised a peace march on world human rights day. Many local Tibetan people took part in it.

## RTWA Gangtok



***December 9, 2013***

Executive members of Gangtok welcome students from Australia and introduce them the history and current works of Tibetan women's Association.

***December 17, 2013***

RTWA Gangtok celebrated Pai Lhai Ri Trou. They organised Sangsol and mass prayer.

## RTWA Kollegal



***December 12, 2013***

RTWA Kollegal prayed for martyr Kunchok Tseten, who sacrificed his life for the cause of Tibet.

***March 15, 2014***

RTWA Kollegal organized a mass prayer session for the well being of His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama and all the martyrs.

**RTWA Puruwala**



***March 10, 2014***

On 55th Tibetan national uprising day, RTWA Puruwala organized a function and peace march from the settlement to Nehan. For the fuction, they invited Sirmaur district's high personal Gita Ram Takur and the president of Indo Tibet friendship Dr. Madal lal Khurana.

**RTWA Rajpur**





### ***March 12, 2014***

RTWA Rajpur commemorated the 55th anniversary of Tibeant National Women's Uprising Day by organizing a mass protest rally. For the fuction, they invited Mrs. Neelam Cycle, a representative from BJP Women's wing.

### **RTWA Ladakh**



### ***December 17, 2013***

Rtwa Ladakh celebrate traditional Tibetan festival Pal Lhai Ri Trou at Ruthok Choeding Monastery.

### ***March 12, 2014***

Rtwa Ladakh commemorated 55th anniversary of the Tibetan National Women's Uprising Day. For the fuction, they invited Ms. Tsering Yangskit, the vice-president of the Ladakh Women Alliance, the vice-president of Ladakh Gonpa Association, the president of Himalayan Tibet Support Group, chief officer of the Sonamling settlement and the president of the Local Assembly.

### **RTWA Orrissa**

### ***March 11, 2014***

Rtwa Orrissa organised a mass prayer for all the Tibetans, who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet.





***March 12, 2014***

Rtwa Orrissa organized a fuction to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of Tibetan National Assembly. They invited heads of the local offices.

**RTWA Shillong**



***December 17, 2013***

Rtwa Shillong celebrated the traditional Tibetan festival Pal Lhai Ri Trou at monastery and they also visit Mother Teresa orphanage to treat all the kids there.

Rtwa Shillong organised a fund rising project; they opened food and other stalls.

## RTWA Tsering Dhonden



***March 12, 2014***

Rtwa Tsering Dhonden commemorated the 55th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Women's Uprising Day. They invited their state's BJP president Neelam Saigal as the chief guest and many other important officials as guests. The success of their event was covered by the local newspaper.

## RTWA Ontario



***December 22, 2013***

Selection of new executive team (6<sup>th</sup>) was conducted. The formal function was started with Sangsol and they invited local Tibetans to attend the function.

## ***January, 2015***

The previous executives hold a dinner for the new executive members and they introduced the new team to the representative of all the Tibetan NGOs in their community.

## ***February, 2015***

Rtwa Ontario celebrates every first Wednesday of every month. This time they organised a movie night and shown the Tibetan movie 'Keyma' to educate people about negative effects of drug.

## ***February 14, 2014***

RTWA Ontario puts on a Valentine Day fund raising celebration. They organized a social gathering where they prepared many games, foods and gifts. The team decided to donate 30% of the profit from the sale to the Performing Arts Program at the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Center to purchase performance attires.

RTWA Ontario also initiated many programs to educate and empower people about the importance of health care. They also welcomed the newly arrived Tibetan immigrants from Arunanchal Pradesh.

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## **An insight into TWA's oldest project**

### **“Stitches of Tibet“**

Stitches of Tibet (SOT) is a non-profit vocational training program initiated by the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) in 1995. The project provides opportunities for Tibetan women to become self-reliant. Priority is given to those refugees who have recently arrived from Tibet. An eighteen month course is given to approximately ten women in traditional Tibetan tailoring skills, western shirts and trousers. In addition the women receive an education in English, computing and maths.



TWA initiated “Stitches of Tibet.” SOT serves as an income generating project that aims to eventually become self-sustaining. Every eighteen months approximately ten trainees are selected. TWA ensures that 80% of the positions are reserved for newly

arrived refugees and 20% of the positions are reserved for exile based. Priority is given to those applicants from low socio-economic backgrounds.

SOT is a project that promotes economic stability for Tibetan women living in exile. The positive effects of this program greatly improves the lives of many children and families living in exile. With more women being educated, our Tibetan community grows stronger and more empowered.

There is one full-time paid tailor, part-time subject tutors and also Tibetan and English language volunteers. As some of the women have not received any formal education, it is crucial for them to learn how to read and write in both Tibetan and English, as well as gain valuable skills in computing and maths that will help them in future employment.



Since 1998, SOT has been running by selling the products produced during the training period and additional handicrafts. This project aims to eventually become totally self-sufficient by generating income through selling items produced by the trainees. Former trainees are now working in well-established handicraft and tailoring centers in various Tibetan settlements.

Prior to 2011 this project had been running out of TWA's own fund, with the little income generated not enough to cover all expenses. As of October 2011, new funding support from the Horizon Foundation has enabled TWA to expand the teaching of SOT (to add computing, maths and English lessons).

This project has been running with great success, as it is well accepted and received by the Tibetan community, however there is only a small fund to cover the women's expenses. TWA is able to provide a Rs.2400 (approximately \$50 – \$60 USD depending on exchange rate) monthly stipend to each woman while she is enrolled in the program, but this is hardly enough to fully fund their daily necessities when many care for families.

If you are interested in sponsoring a woman in the SOT program or would like to provide funding for the overall functioning, please contact us [tibwomen@gmail.com](mailto:tibwomen@gmail.com) or [twagrants@gmail.com](mailto:twagrants@gmail.com).

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