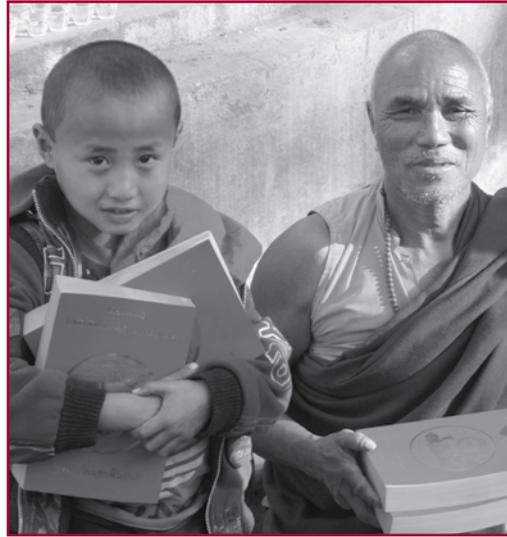


The World Peace Ceremony: Rebirth of Hope

This February, the holy site of Bodh Gaya, India came alive with chanting and the flickering of butterlamps. Prayers for world peace streamed from the voices of monks and nuns who had traveled hundreds or even thousands of miles from villages in India, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan.

For 22 years, the World Peace Ceremony has brought together thousands of Tibetans and Dharma practitioners in joyous celebration. Now one of the largest efforts anywhere to preserve Tibetan culture and tradition, it gives more than 10,000 participants a chance to proclaim their unity, a vibrant example of the Tibetan people's resilience in the face of hardship.

Each year, participants receive sacred texts shipped to India by the Tibetan Aid Project and its sister organizations. Because of your generosity, we have been able to send more than 3 million books to Bodh Gaya. These texts help preserve Tibetan language and culture, so deeply rooted in written teachings. Even though the distributions have been happening for twenty years, they always evoke awe. As one volunteer said



Books benefit both young and old

about this year's ceremony, "When you see people carrying off boxes of books on their backs, it's hard to imagine that they are creating libraries all over India, Nepal, and Tibet. But that's exactly what's happening."

A Treasury of Wisdom

This year, we gave away 185,296 books. These included some 20,000 copies of the two-volume Padma Katang, published

in English as *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*. This extensive biography of the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, is one of Tibet's greatest epic works.

We also distributed almost 7,000 copies of the Manjushri Namasamgiti, a richly symbolic and powerful text that evokes the power and insight of Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. This is one of the two major works chanted at the World Peace Ceremony.

Sets of the Kangyur and Tangyur, the Tibetan Buddhist canon, rounded out this year's shipment. Not long ago, these collections, which transmit the direct teachings of the Buddha and commentaries by great Buddhist masters, were extremely scarce. Now they can be read and studied by thousands.

Along with the books, we handed out more than 20,000 prayer wheels. Turning prayer wheels by hand is a vital practice for many Tibetans, especially lay people and the older members of the community. For the Tibetan people, each turn of the wheel sets prayers and blessings into motion, releasing the healing power into the world.

Continued on next page

A Trip to Bodh Gaya

by Pauline Yu, TAP's Graphic Designer



Arriving in Bodh Gaya for the first time, I found it to be dusty, colorful, overwhelmingly alive and full. The World Peace Ceremony, which takes

place there in a compound surrounding the main temple and the bodhi tree, is no less vibrant, but its rhythms differ. They reflect chanting and prostrations, circumambulation, prayer and deep joy.

In the sea of red and yellow robes and the river of voices, a feeling of great connection, purpose and peace is everywhere. Khenpos, great learned masters, twirl bodhi leaves in their fingers as they chant verses of aspiration. The words tumble after each other so quickly that they are difficult to follow. Groups of

pilgrims dressed in white circumambulate the bodhi tree. A long-haired yogi meditates nearby. Other pilgrims touch their foreheads to the stone gate that encloses the tree. Brilliant green parrots flutter near the temple, calling to each other.

It was as if the entire place shared a heartbeat: the people, the great temple, the bodhi tree and space itself. I could almost feel the streams of blessings flowing from this place of enlightenment, brought alive by the offerings of books and prayer wheels and the great sincerity and devotion of practitioners.

I felt unbelievably fortunate to be there. Everything else in my life seemed to glow, becoming lighter under the influence of this place. It was amazing to be at the scene of the Buddha's enlightenment, to think about



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the questions he asked, why he left home and what it means to follow in his footsteps. It was incredible to meditate and make offerings under the bodhi tree, to witness the devotion and faith of pilgrims from all over the world, to be in the presence of so many colorfully garbed monks and nuns and to wonder at all those who have ever made the aspiration of a Buddha and taken steps towards that destination. ♦

A Moment of Awakening: A Bequest to Tibetan Culture

An Interview with Mark Henderson

A moment of awakening came for Mark Henderson in his teen years. He stood one day on the forested slopes above his family's cabin on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe.

"I looked across those deep blue waters, and I saw enormous casinos, spoiling the beauty—monuments to greed" he said. "I think that moment began my search for a more natural and harmonious way of being in the world."

Mark now teaches at the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley. He has traveled the path of Dharma for more than 40 years, starting with an interest in Asian philosophy and a college course in Tibetan Buddhism. He continued his spiritual exploration as he pursued a law degree at University of the Pacific. In a time of challenge and upheaval, while the Vietnam War raged and the first early protests against the degradation of the environment took form, a professor in-

troduced him to *Gesture of Balance*, a guide to meditation by Tarthang Tulku, the Tibetan lama who founded Tibetan Aid Project. Soon Henderson was taking meditation workshops from the author. He felt closer to the balanced way of life that drew him as a teenager.

Mark has been deeply involved in Tarthang Rinpoche's work ever since. An early supporter of Tibetan Aid Project, he helped with the humanitarian projects that aided the Tibetan refugees following the forceful occupation of their land in the 1950s. When Tibetan Aid Project shifted its focus to cultural preservation, he joined in the distribution of sacred texts, art and prayer wheels. He has twice traveled to Bodh Gaya in northern India, site



of the Buddha's enlightenment, to participate in the distribution of Tibetan texts.

A few years ago, to keep his personal line of support for Tibetan Aid Project unbroken, Mark joined the Wheel of Dharma Legacy Circle. Having chosen to remember Tibetan Aid Project in his estate plan, he encourages others to do the same as a member of the Planned Giving Committee. As a former lawyer who specialized in estate planning, his words carry special weight.

"My bequest to Tibetan Aid Project makes my estate plan into something more than a way to transfer assets to those I love," he said. "It allows me to express who I am. I consider my bequest part of my loved ones' inheritance, a reminder to care about others."

To learn more about the Wheel of Dharma Legacy Circle, contact Rosalyn White at 510-848-4238 or rosalynw@tibetanaid-project.org. ♦

Taste & Tribute



Chefs Michael Laiskonis, Laurent Manrique, Alfredo Ayala, Eric Ripert and Gavin Kaysen

Preparations are well under way for the Tibetan Aid Project's renowned annual culinary gatherings, each a milestone event. The two Taste & Tribute benefit galas, taking place in New York and San Francisco, are sure to be memorable evenings, full to the brim with exquisite food and wine, camaraderie, and shared goodwill.

The New York gala, which takes place on Wednesday, June 1st, will host one hundred

guests in the grand Arader Gallery, located on Madison Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The captivating Beaux Arts townhouse where the event will be held features fine collections of art, maps, rare books, custom oriental rugs, and antique furniture. An exquisite four-course dinner will be prepared by four star chefs: Gavin Kaysen of Café Boulud, Missy Robbins of A Voce, George Mendes of Aldea and Michael Laiskonis of Le Bernardin.

On Friday, November 18th, the scene shifts to the main ballroom of the luxurious Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco. There 22 of the Bay Area's most renowned chefs will prepare a delicious four-course gourmet meal, accompanied by an array of fine wines and hors d'oeuvres. Guests at both these stellar events will have the chance to participate in unique live

and silent auctions, featuring stunning Tibetan art pieces, unique dining experiences, and exclusive vacation getaways to such destinations as Thailand, Morocco, India, and Ireland.

To reserve a ticket for the New York or San Francisco event, please visit www.tasteandtribute.com, or call 800-338-4238. ♦

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Save trees! You can choose to receive this newsletter online. Email your request to tap@tibetanaid-project.org and we will switch you from snail mail to email.

Continued from first page: World Peace Ceremony

Even today, few organizations are providing this kind of support to the Tibetan people. But thanks to your gifts, this unique and precious culture, once on the brink of extinction, is slowly recovering from the trauma of foreign invasion in exile. There are about 150,000 Tibetan refugees on the Indian subcontinent and most wish with

all their hearts to preserve their heritage. Thanks to generous donors like you, they have the chance to make their dream a reality.

Today more than 3,300 centers in exile have received books at the World Peace Ceremony. Literacy rates are rising. For the first time, women have the opportunity to pursue higher education in Dharma sub-

jects. A vast transformation is underway.

Please join us as we work to fulfill our mission of rebuilding this unique and irreplaceable culture. By helping to save Tibetan culture, you restore to the Tibetan people their future, so that their wisdom remains available to all humanity. ♦