

# SONGTSEN NEWSLETTER

Patron:  
SONGTSEN LIBRARY; Center for Tibetan and Himalayan Studies His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche

ISSUE - I

31st DECEMBER 2003

Dear Members and Friends,

We are very happy to welcome you as sponsors and members of Songtsen Library, Center for Tibetan and Himalayan Studies. This is the first Songtsen Newsletter and I am very honoured to begin it.

I also take this opportunity to thank all our supporters who helped to make this Center of Knowledge come into being. This is a great contribution to humanity and your role in this project is most appreciated. Many of the public have told us how beautiful the Library is and how beneficial this place is for research and studies.

“I believe that this Library will provide the necessary environment to increase the wisdom and knowledge of a large number of people and contribute to peace and happiness.” H. H. the Dalai Lama.

The above is an excerpt from His Holiness’s message on the auspicious occasion of Songtsen Library’s inauguration on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

Our library has launched a website for your information and following is the address:  
[www.songtsen-library.net](http://www.songtsen-library.net)

The staff of Songtsen Library and I wish you a Happy New Year with good health, much happiness and joy.

Namgyal L. Taklha (Ms.)  
Director

## INAUGURATION

There was an exhilarating energy on the morning of **6<sup>th</sup> March 2003**, the inauguration of Songtsen Library. The weather was perfect. The colourful banners fluttered in the cool breeze, the gate of the library was beautifully decorated to welcome our Honoured Chief Guest, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s visit during the inauguration of the Library

Over one thousand people from all corners of the world waited with much excitement for the arrival of our Chief Guest. He walked from the gate accompanied by two dancers dressed in yak costumes and musicians welcoming Him with the beat of the cymbal and the drum.

His Holinesses Sakya Trizin Rinpoche and Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche offered the auspicious welcome scarf, and our Chief Guest lifted the veil of the Songtsen statue in front of the Library building. He then opened the main door of the library with prayers and amidst scattering of flower petals.

The speeches and the ceremony concluded in the Conference Hall with a beautiful song in praise of Avaloketesvara, Buddha of Compassion by Ms. Chuki Tethong and the enthusiastic 'Good Luck' dancers from the Tibetan Homes Foundation School, Rajpur. Thereafter, lunch was served to all the guests and the library was opened for the public.

The Library has been named after the 33rd Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo (617-650 A.D). Yumbhu Lakhar, popularly known as Tibet's first castle and built in the second century B.C by King Nyatri Tsenpo, is the architectural inspiration behind the design of the building.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TIBETAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

The first Songtsen Library's International Conference was held from **29<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2003**. The theme of the conference was on Tibetan language and literature. The chief guest for the occasion, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin Rinpoche inaugurated the conference and gave his keynote address thanking Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche in establishing Songtsen Library and for organizing the International Conference on Tibetan Language and Literature.

The Tibetan language is under threat of becoming obsolete. Inside Tibet, the language was under threat from the policies pursued by the government of China in diminishing the Tibetan language by employing Tibetans who speak only Chinese. The Tibetan Diaspora has no choice but to live in the environment of host countries. As such Tibetans living in exile has to be well versed in the language of their countries of adoption. Therefore, younger generation of Tibetans find less use of their mother tongue. Under such realities the conference was held to discuss the challenges faced by Tibetan Language in the modern day world and to coin new words for new terms.

The five-day conference was participated by 16 scholars including 63 observers. Indian scholars like Professor, S. K. Pathak, former visiting professor in Tibetan studies at the Asiatic Society, Calcutta and from the Himalayan regions deliberated and presented their papers in Tibetan. Foreign scholars too presented their papers and gave their views and discussed in preserving and promoting the Tibetan Language.

Invited observers consisted of *Tashi Kyil* monastery, *Sakya Center*, *Sakya College*, *Sakya Ngor* monastery

Tibetan Homes Foundation, *Khenpos* and Tibetan teachers from *Drikung Kagyu* Buddhist Academy and *Drikung Kagyu* nunnery.

A number of Tibetan scholars from TAR and China sent in abstracts of their intended presentations. Unfortunately they could not attend the conference. Similarly, some scholars from the West could not attend the conference due to Gulf War-II and the recent outbreak of SARS.

Mr. Tashi Tsering, Director of Amnye Machen Institute in Dharamsala was the convener of the conference. His Holiness Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche, who made much effort to make the conference a reality thanked him for a job well done.

As the concluding speech, His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon mentioned that the conference is not an end in itself but is the beginning of the long process to achieve the conference's aims, which needs more discussions and elaborations in future.



The conference in progress

## LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

From **July 7<sup>th</sup> to July 11<sup>th</sup> 2003**, our Secretary Mr. Norbu Wangchuk, the Librarian in charge Mr. Tashi Tobgyal and our Computer Administrator, Ms. Pema Zomkyi arranged an education programme to introduce students to know about the journey of a book from the publishers to the library shelves. Methods of accessing modern library facilities and the role of computers in the library were introduced.

Talks and demonstrations took place from 9.00 AM to 1.00PM with a tea break. At the end of the talks our Public Relations Officer, Kusho Tsewang Dorji

took the students for a tour of the Chenrezi temple.

Students of class VIII and above joined us from the Indian Government High School of Gujrara, Tibetans Home's Foundation, Rajpur and Sambhota School, Dekiling Tibetan Settlement. The Assist. Headmistress from Tibetan Homes School, Rajpur writes, "We thank you for inviting our students to your library as educational cum workshop. We appreciate your kind concern towards enhancing library knowledge and encouragement given to our students. This will definitely help our students to develop a reading habit as well as frequent visits to libraries."



Students from Indian High School

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

From **2<sup>nd</sup> October to the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2003**, twenty-three college students from Bhutan, Nepal, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttaranchal, Ladakh and the Tibetan Community in India joined this workshop.

The resource persons on this workshop were staff from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun and Mr. Rahul Ogra, Founder and Director of MERU (Mountain Ecosystem Rejuvenation Urge) from Manali, H. P.

Following are some of the comments from the participants: "We belong to the Himalayas, the Himalayas belong to us and we should help the Himalayas to help us."

"I came to know many things about environment, which I have never heard. The workshop was indeed an eye opener. Many people are ignorant of environment conservation, when this kind of workshop is organized then we know the importance of the environment we are living in." "We, the people

of Himalayan are bestowed with beautiful and rare species of plants and animals, so we have to protect it and use it in sustainable way." "We would appreciate if the Songtsen library could organize more workshop, trainings, seminars and questionnaires on preservation of beautiful Himalayan in future. We are definitely going to spread the knowledge we gained from the valuable workshop to the people who are not aware of environment and to new generation."



Resource person and students on site survey

## CORPUS FUND

To maintain the activities of this library it is very important to build a Corpus Fund. An initial capital is invested. Your contribution towards the Corpus Fund is extremely urgent. Sponsorship of the library is US \$ 300.00 or Rs. 10,000.00 in South East Asia. The sponsorship and the membership fees are also invested in the Corpus Fund.

For further details contact

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