



The NYEMA Sun

NYEMA Projects' semi-annual newsletter on humanitarian projects in eastern Tibet

Determination, Persistence, and Sheer Grit

Dear Friends:

It is one thing to embark on an ambitious project; it is another thing not to give up when things become difficult. As you will see in the following pages, the perseverance of the people of Nangchen is almost legendary. Monks at Korche are continuing to study in a building with faulty foundations; nuns at Kala Rongo are insisting on completing their three-year retreat in spite of a rock slide that recently destroyed several of their rooms.

We at NYEMA Projects would like to express our deepest gratitude to those who have supported these natives of Nangchen who simply will not quit. Together we can make an enormous difference in their basic standard of living. We can foster education, provide health care, and even help to preserve the culture of a place that most of the world has forgotten.

Thank you all!

With warm wishes,

Alexandra Strelka
Editor



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If you would like to be notified via email of future newsletters—as well as important new developments in Nangchen—we cordially invite you to join our mailing list. Sign up on our website at www.nyema.org!

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Photos:

Top right: Young monks of Korche Monastery's *shedra* ©2003 NYEMA Projects
Bottom left: View of Kagyu Shedrup Chöling's upper level ©2003 NYEMA Projects



Monastic Initiative: Kala Rongo Palchen Gön

Great Fortitude and Growing Reputation

Three-year Retreat to Relocate

Five nuns' retreat rooms were recently badly damaged by rocks falling from the mountain behind the retreat building. Miraculously, no one was injured. The rooms have been repaired, but this event has driven home the fact that the three-year retreat facility must be moved to a new location, away from the mountainside and falling rock zone.

Consequently, the foundation for a new retreat facility is under construction. The new facility will be safer and stronger than the previous building and will be located away from the mountainside, near the new stupa. The cost of this project is estimated at \$40,000.



News from the Main Monastery



Electric supply wires to Kala Rongo are now in place so that when electric power reaches the local area in the future, the monastery will be ready to receive electricity.

Recently fifty nuns from Kala Rongo went on pilgrimage to two monasteries far away from Kala Rongo. They visited **Achunga**, an abbey where 6,000 nuns reside and practice, as well as to **Jikpingar**, a monastery of 7,000 monks. The nuns paid their respects to the lamas there and had the opportunity to make offerings and participate in the practice at both institutions.

Nuns' Monastic College Achieving Renown

The students at Kala Rongo's monastic college (*shedra*) are as enthusiastic as ever. The *shedra* now has an excellent reputation throughout Nangchen. Its growing renown in a region where women traditionally have remained completely uneducated underscores the nuns' intelligence and determination.



It is customary to hold exams twice a year. The six Khenpos who examined the nuns in early summer will return to Kala Rongo this winter for the next round of examinations.



The *shedra* library, currently the *shedra*'s most ambitious undertaking, has moved from the planning stage to the development stage. There are now a few books; more are being printed. Many more texts will need to be located and purchased, and the library still needs interior furnishings. The cost of this project is estimated at \$30,000.

Photos:

Top right: View of Kala Rongo's retreat location ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Middle left: Kala Rongo ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Bottom right: Class at Kagyu Shedrup Chöling ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Bottom left: Kagyu Shedrup Chöling's shrine room ©2003 NYEMA Projects



Monastic Initiative: Korche Monastery

Some Improvements at Korche Monastery Completed; Others Still Needed

Running Water Linked to Improved Health

The monks of Korche would like to thank their sponsors who made it possible to supply running water to the monastery.

In addition to making their chores less work-intensive, the running water at Korche has already provided the monks with significant health benefits. The high salt content of Korche's previous water source was causing significant physical stress, with resulting high blood pressure and stomach symptoms. Drinking the pure water that is now arriving at the monastery has begun to reverse those symptoms. The monks' blood pressure is now considerably lower than it was a year ago, and stomach problems, previously a common complaint, have been noticeably reduced.



Shedra Building in Need of Repair



Twenty young monks have recently arrived at Korche to study Buddhist philosophy, ethics, history, and other subjects at the *shedra* (monastic college). Khenpo Tenpa Rabjay is very impressed with their discipline and the intensity of their studies.

Unfortunately, all of the monks in *shedra* are currently trying to learn under dangerous conditions. Due to heavy rains, mud slides, and continual leakage, the *shedra* building has been

pushed off its foundation. In the West, a college in this condition would close and the students would suspend their studies. It is a testimony to the *shedra* monks' determination that they are carrying on in the face of their present hardship. NYEMA is currently seeking funds to fortify the *shedra* building. The cost of repairs required to make the building safe is estimated at \$15,000.



Seventh Retreat Cycle Nearly Complete

The monks in the lower retreat facility will finish their three-year program on November 16th, Lhabap Dunchen, a very auspicious day on the Tibetan Buddhist calendar. This will be the seventh retreat completed since Korche's reconstruction. The retreatants in the upper facility began their three-year program last year, and all are doing well. The retreat at Korche's affiliated monastery, Domka, is in its second year.

Photos:

Top right: Korche monks in summer retreat ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Middle left: Young monks of Korche *shedra* with Khenpo Tenpa Rabjay ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Middle right: Monks of Korche *shedra* ©2003 NYEMA Projects



Education, Medical and Community Initiatives

Educating the Most Underprivileged

The abbot of Kala Rongo's *shedra*, Khenpo Tsepa Dorje, has begun to hold classes for orphaned children from the local area. They are learning to read and write in Tibetan. They also study Buddhism and mathematics. Khenpo Tsepa Dorje teaches the classes with the assistance of several nuns. Since there is no school facility, the children are attending class in a *shedra* classroom,



which creates some distraction for the nuns. Khenpo Tsepa Dorje has begun

to build two classrooms outside the *shedra* where the children will eventually study. The projected cost for the classrooms is approximately \$10,000.

The children currently sleep in the monastery, wherever there happens to be enough room for them. We hope to provide dormitory space for them in the future. Donations to help build a dormitory are welcome, as are donations to help cover the cost of food for the children, as Kala Rongo monastery is currently feeding them.



Kala Rongo Medical Clinic Now Open

The building housing the Kala Rongo Medical Clinic is finished and in use. Guru Tsering and Lama Tenpal are teaching classes to their medical students. A small clinic dispensing Tibetan and Chinese herbs is in operation. The clinic will slowly expand and will grow considerably when the students eventually graduate.

Stupas Nearing Completion

One billion mantras for each of a hundred Tibetan Buddhist deities (for a total of one hundred billion mantras) are ready to be placed inside the prayer wheel of the Village Stupa. The outside work has been finished, but the stupa's interior has not yet been sealed or painted. Because the stupa is not yet watertight, workers will wait for the rains to stop before placing the mantras inside the wheel.

Also with the arrival of the clear fall weather, blessing substances will be put into the second stupa at Kala Rongo, and consecration ceremonies will be held.



Photos:

Top right: Children's class at Kala Rongo's *shedra* ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Middle left: Khenpo Tsepa Dorje ©2003 NYEMA Projects

Bottom right: Stupas at Kala Rongo ©2003 NYEMA Projects

NYEMA Projects, Inc. Donation Form

Through investing financial resources, educational or medical supplies, time or skills, you can help the people of Nangchen improve their standard of living and protect their unique cultural heritage. Less than 5% of funding provided by our donors goes to administrative overhead.

I would like to contribute to the following projects. *(Please print clearly to ensure proper handling.)*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monastic Initiative (general) \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Initiative (general) \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kala Rongo Monastery \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yongten Gatsal Ling \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kachö Dechen Chöling (three-year retreat) \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Satellite Schools \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kagyu Shedrup Chöling (monastic college) \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Korche School \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korche Monastery \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Initiative (general) \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korche Shedra (monastic college) \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Initiative (general) \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Korche Three-year Retreats \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Project \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domka Monastery \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Housing \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samten Ling \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar Power Project \$ _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> NYEMA Projects (general) \$ _____ |

Sponsor food at:

- Kala Rongo: \$150 \$100 \$50 \$25
 Korche: \$150 \$100 \$50 \$25

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Total donation: \$ _____ |
|---------------------------------|

Special Instructions (if any) _____

- Check in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed. Make payable to **NYEMA Projects, Inc.** and send to:
NYEMA Projects, Inc., Attention: Donations, 247 Sheafe Road, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590-1103

- Charge \$ _____ to my Visa MC # _____

Expires ____/____. Name as it appears on card: _____

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Important note: For your protection, please **do not** e-mail your credit card number. You may send this form by mail, or fax to (845) 297-5761.

To ensure proper handling, please complete the following:

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I would like to be informed of new developments by: mail e-mail

On behalf of all the people of Nangchen, we thank you for your interest in these initiatives sponsored by NYEMA Projects, Inc. and for your support.

Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent of the law. Receipts for contributions are sent semi-annually.