



AMERICAN HIMALAYAN FOUNDATION | FROM THE HEART





Nyingje, from the heart

Although generally translated simply as compassion, nyingje has a wealth of meaning. It connotes love, affection, kindness, gentleness, generosity of spirit and warm-heartedness. But most importantly, nyingje denotes a feeling of connection with others.

We can understand nyingje in terms of a combination of empathy and reason. When the two are put together, the combination is highly effective.

— His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Calligraphy by Tsherin Sherpa









Human trafficking is the third largest illegal industry in the world, just behind guns and drugs. In Nepal, the ruthless arms of predators reach into rural villages where parents,

made desperate by poverty, can be persuaded to give up the least valued members of the family, their daughters.

These girl children become slaves, their lives filled with abuse and sorrow.

Two decades ago, we teamed up with Dr. Aruna Uprety to prevent this heartbreak. Her revolutionary idea was that girls could be kept



Growing up with nothing — poverty and low status put girls at high risk.



For Laxmi, it has been an unusually tough road. Her younger sister is an indentured servant and her elder sister has an abusive husband. Her mother eloped after the death of her father and sent Laxmi to work in a hotel where she was mistreated by the customers. After nearly eight

safe by keeping them in school. From 52 girls the first year, when Aruna had to go door-to-door to convince the families, we enrolled our 22,000th girl this year.

The backpacks and school uniforms of STOP Girl Trafficking girls can now be seen in more than 500 schools across Nepal. Watchful eyes and ears in the community, education about how to spot traffickers, and Friday teachers who act as mentors as well as help with classwork, together weave a safety net for these girls.

As a girl becomes educated, her status in the family changes. We have seen parents who once did not value their young daughter weep with pride at her graduation. And the girls themselves are now becoming role models and confident examples of what an educated girl can do — creating positive change for other women and girls in their communities.

Many girls are still at risk. But the progress is visible, and hopeful. \$100 a year per girl delivers backpacks, books, uniforms, school fees, mentoring, and a future.

STOP GIRL TRAFFICKING

22,000 girls
are safe because of SGT.
Prevention is rescue
without the suffering.

years, Laxmi was found and brought into SGT. She's safe now, poised, determined, and at the top of her 11th grade class. But a hint of her past comes through as she watches a fellow student refuse a snack. She leans over to whisper, "never say no to food."



In a country with many mountains and few roads, this hospital is a beacon of hope. If a child falls in an open kitchen fire or breaks a leg tending the goats, there are precious few options in Nepal. The nearest health post could be a day's walk away, have no doctor and, even so, be unaffordable to a subsistence farmer.

CARE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Hospital and
Rehabilitation Center
for Disabled Children

80,000
young lives healed

If the injury is bad enough to keep a child from walking to school or helping out, they are often left isolated. There's little choice.

Twenty years ago, one could only dream of a place in Nepal where these broken children could receive expert, compassionate care. But this place, where dreams come true, now exists — thanks to Dr. Ashok Banskota.

No matter how they arrive at HRDC, by bus



Dr. Banskota's vision has transformed orthopedic care for children in Nepal. Now his son, Dr. Bibek Banskota, has joined him. Their goal: to give all children in Nepal their very best lives. This year, they saw 23,500 young patients.



or carried by a parent, every young patient is taken in and cared for with great kindness, regardless of their ability to pay. Dr. Banskota has built a team that daily transforms the lives of Nepal's most vulnerable children, and they do it with skill and love. Their focus is healing the whole child, with surgery and physical therapy and orthotics, in an atmosphere of warmth and encouragement. There is even a classroom in the hospital where patients can sit together, learning and laughing.

Dr. Banskota had the drive and the vision to make a difference — a big difference. When we first met him, he was operating a small clinic out of a rented house. His determination to use his hands, literally, to change the fate of children with disabilities, one child at a time, has been inspirational. Together we've built a hospital, and a great partnership, that has now healed over 80,000 children.





BACK FROM THE BRINK

Mustang, the Kingdom of Lo, a jewel of Tibetan culture tucked in a high, windswept corner of Nepal, was spared by a twist of history from the ravages of the Cultural Revolution. But it was isolated by geography and decree, leaving its people impoverished and the ancient, sacred gompas slowly crumbling.

When the doors to the ancient kingdom were opened, AHF was invited in to help. The king made a surprising appeal: begin by restoring the gompas and the monastic school,

they are the heart of our culture. Today, the gompas are structurally sound and glow with butter lamps that illuminate the magnificent fifteenth-century wall paintings, now returned to their splendor. And the king was wise; the restorations sparked a revival that has made the Lobas, the people of Mustang, once again proud of their heritage — and connected to their community. We've helped there too, with education, health care and infrastructure.



14 day care centers, 7 health clinics, 65 teachers, 100+ restoration artists trained, and 33 essential public works projects: bridges, trails, irrigation, drainage, and community centers — many run by the 11 local youth groups we support.



Life for a Tibetan in the 21st century is not easy. Inside Tibet, economic opportunity is scarce, nomads are being forced off the land, and religious freedom is ever more

repressed. In the refugee settlements, many are stateless and jobs and travel are restricted. Tibetans, especially younger ones, often look to

the west, but the west is not always kind or welcoming.

Tibetans who have fled the oppression

in their homeland, whether six decades or six months ago, face the uncertain and precarious life of refugees. How does AHF help?

We work with every Tibetan settlement in Nepal, from Kathmandu and Pokhara to tiny mountain villages near the Tibetan border, and in some of the most remote camps in northeastern India. Our partnerships with community leaders make it possible to respond quickly to pressing needs. A community building or solar lights. More housing for a crowded camp, water tanks, a revolving loan fund for an innovative cooperative. Stipends for destitute elders, emergency medical funds, an ambulance. Support for schools, and for the nunneries that anchor Tibetans to their Buddhist faith.

Whatever it takes to help Tibetans survive, find their way in the modern world, and hold on to their culture.

LIFE FOR TIBETANS

Helping Tibetans survive a dark period in their history

And the winner is...

This November, 15 Tibetan refugee families from Jampaling Camp had a little help taking their dreams farther. Each won a drawing to open a shop in a bustling retail area near the camp. We funded the shop construction through our Tibetan Enterprise Fund and were graciously invited to hand out the keys. There was bated breath before each name was called in the drawing, and much enthusiasm after. We could see that this opportunity to be entrepreneurs felt life-changing for them. It was heartwarming.





Keeping the Faith

Keydong Nunnery is a joyful place for the 126 nuns who live and study together there. We are honored to support their earthly needs so they can nurture the spiritual heart of the community, and the world.

EDUCATION, THE KEY TO THE FUTURE

Thank you for your contribution towards me and for giving us the wings to catch hold of our brighter future and also to acknowledge our true and full potential.

—Tashi



For Tibetan refugees, scattered across the settlements, a modern education, one that honors their language and traditions, is essential for their cultural survival. It gives them a place at the table in the 21st century, and is the one thing that cannot be taken from them. It is the most important way we support Tibetans' struggle in exile.

From day care to college, we fill the gaps that keep kids from learning: from uniforms, books and salaries for teachers to school lunches — math is hard on an empty stomach!

And since children can't learn if they can't get to a school, we support hostels where children from the most remote camps can live (and study and play) near a good Tibetan school. It's a testament to how vital education feels to Tibetan families that they're willing to send their children away to continue their studies. So, no matter where they are, they'll still grow up Tibetan.

College is the final hurdle. The cost of higher education in Nepal or India is a fraction of that in the West, but even so, many poor Tibetan families could never dream of sending their children. For those students we offer funding, and 290 have now gone to university. They are so appreciative, and they are becoming a new generation of leaders in their communities.

And the winner is...

Sports Day at Manjushree Primary school in Pokhara was full of student races, prizes and gleeful high spirits. The entire settlement came to watch — even participating in the tug of war, with much attendant tumbling and hilarity. The children singing the Tibetan national anthem followed by the Nepali anthem was a reflection of how they keep their traditions alive in this small settlement. And no one minded the goat that kept wandering onto the field.









Amongst Sherpas he was revered and his photo sits on family altars next to those of Buddhist monks. Sir Edmund Hillary would be embarrassed by such adulation, but it

is the Sherpa way to honor him. His love and dedication for the Sherpas was unconditional.

The changes he brought to the Sherpas over the past half century have been transformative — 6,500 students in 63 schools, two hospitals and a dozen clinics opened, over a million trees planted, safe drinking water systems, bridges and miles of trails built and repaired in the Khumbu. Just as important, he was sensitive to keeping centuries-old traditions alive, traditions vital to our Sherpa way of life.

AHF's partnership with Sir Ed and his Himalayan Trust spans three decades, and what we've accomplished together is impressive. It continues with scholarships for children following the death of 16 mountaineering workers caught in the avalanche on Everest.

The earthquakes in 2015 led us to explore ways to partner directly with local communities. One was rebuilding the Namche Dental Clinic in Namche Bazaar, destroyed but now rebuilt and serving locals and the occasional climber. On a recent trip to the Khumbu, we saw the impressive reconstruction of the 400-year-old

ON THE SHOULDERS OF EVEREST

Khumjung Gompa, and, in Thame, the monks were excited to show us their near-completed quarters as well as the sacred shrine, both destroyed by the earthquake and now brought back by AHF, and you.

All this was accomplished over many cups of tea. AHF has deep roots in the Khumbu and there is still much to be done as we work with local partners who are dedicated to making the greatest impact in their communities.

— Norbu Tenzing

Cultural restoration has become more important than ever before. It is our duty to preserve our cultural heritage for our future generations.

— Tengboche Rinpoche
Nawang Tenzing Jangbu



As we walked the trails, we met with our partners and community leaders and, along the way, I spoke with many Sherpas about their welfare and concerns. While most Sherpas are back on their feet, there are still those who struggle with basic needs, like the elder monks in Thame.



Some people are in desperate need and have no one.

Their circumstances may be heartbreaking and sometimes complicated, but their immediate needs are simple: shelter, warmth,

something to eat, and a respite from fear and loneliness. Tibetan elders have withstood extraordinary challenges — fighting a guerilla war or building roads

by hand as refugees, losing all their family to decades of displacement, often coming to their twilight years alone and penniless. We offer them simple

comforts: the dignity of a home, a cup of tea with friends and time to spin their prayer wheels.

Children born with disabilities and developmental issues can be neglected by despairing parents who don't know how to look after them. In Ngoenga, a boarding school for Tibetan children with disabilities, these very children are tenderly looked after, and they have hope and a sense of belonging in a world that would otherwise forsake them. At Navjyoti, too, the amazing day school for special needs children in Kathmandu, children are coached to learn and develop as far as they can, and their childhood is full of affection, and voluble joy.

These most vulnerable people, the ones we take out of danger and misery, the ones for whom your help makes all the difference — they speak to the heart of what we do.

CARE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

Taking care
of the most
vulnerable is
at the heart of
what we do.







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OUR COMMITMENT



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Dear friends,

This coming year marks five decades since I first went to Nepal. Lukla airport wasn't paved, most of Kathmandu's streets had as many cows as cars, and Mustang was still a mystery. Much has changed. What hasn't, though, is the beauty of the mountains — they don't look older — and the warmth of the people. That has always made me feel at home, through many trips.

Since a group of fellow climbers and I started AHF, we have been working to make life better for the people of Nepal and for Tibetans. When I look at how we have been able to touch the lives of over 300,000 people in need throughout the Himalaya every year, I am both proud and humbled.

Thank you so much for helping make all of this possible. We work with heart, and you are at the heart of what we do. Please stay with us. Make a gift to AHF and let's keep going, saving and changing lives.

Thank you,

Richard C. Blum
Chairman



AHF lost a great friend and director this year. Pierre de St. Julien, aka Scot Macbeth, aka Balu, was my first trekking and climbing partner in Nepal, some 49 years ago. He was a mountain man of the very best kind, with a big heart and a great story, and we will miss him very much.

There isn't anyone who doesn't appreciate kindness and compassion.

– His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Save a life, change a life. Please be generous!

STOP Girl Trafficking

\$100 saves a girl from being sold and keeps her in school for a year. **\$1,000** pays for her entire education.

Healing

\$170 turns a child's suffering into smiles with life-changing surgery at HRDC.

Caring

\$55 keeps a Tibetan elder in a loving home (with plenty of tea!) for a month. **\$660** offers comfort for the year.

Dharma

\$360 frees a nun from earthly concerns so she can study for a year. Ah, the merit!

Building futures

\$500 sends a young Tibetan refugee to college for a year — or **\$1,500** for all three years. They will be forever grateful.

Safety

\$295 replaces a smoky open fire in a Tibetan home with a new stove, improving health for the whole family.

Water to the high desert

\$400 buys the pipes and tap that will bring clean water to a village in Mustang. **\$6,000** for the whole system.

Opportunity

\$75 gives a Nepali family a gift that keeps on giving: a goat, and four legs up out of poverty.



THANKS DAVID!

*Tigers need love too.
Protect them. Fight
poaching in the forests
and the courts.*

A gift to last a lifetime

Leave a lasting legacy in the Himalaya.
Help people in need for many years to come by naming AHF
as a beneficiary of your will, living trust, or retirement account.
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