



## Ottawa Experiences Tibet (continued)

After the delicious dinner catered by Rinag Foods, Jurme Wangda, President of OFT, presented slides that described the story of OFT's past 10 years and its projects. He spoke passionately about one of its biggest goals—to raise funds for the Kalimpong Seniors Home for Tibetan refugees. "The challenge for OFT and its supporters is to raise \$400,000 to build this home." Elia Saikaly, an Ottawa film maker setting out soon to climb Mount Everest, added to this message through his powerful OFT promotional film.

We were so fortunate to have a world renowned Tibetan artist share his inspirational music with us. Nawang Khechog's haunting flute music dazzled the audience. Can such unique sounds be coming from one flute? Nawang's great spirit soars through his music. Guests were also moved by the music of Gompo Dhundup, who plays the danyen and sings traditional Tibetan folk songs.

**OFT dinners are the major vehicles used for raising funds for the Kalimpong Seniors home.** The sales table, silent auction and donations at the 2006 OFT dinner raised \$9,000. We sincerely thank all of our supporters for their generosity, and we look forward to seeing you at the 2007 dinner, on Friday October 26th, at the Hellenic Banquet Centre. This dinner will be full of exciting entertainment and wonderful crafts.

### There is something we must share with you.

Costs for putting on the annual OFT dinner have risen. The \$40 ticket price now only covers the expenses of putting on the dinner event, but does not raise any extra money for the charity. That being said, we know you will understand the necessity of raising the ticket price for the next fundraising dinner.

Our special thanks to Leslie Baird, Barbara Haddad, and Robin Berry for donating their time and energy to co-ordinate our weekend events. A team of compassionate volunteers worked hard to make the three events a big success. Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of you.



Nawang Khechog

Courtesy Pei-Ju Wang

## A Voice (continued)

to their homeland. All the above reasons make the choice of our location and project, in Kalimpong, necessary and viable.

### A Progress Report

We have the site, the site permit and the required experts such as an architect and engineer. The plans for the building have been drawn up and can be easily adapted for other senior structures. The plan for the home was viewed at our tenth anniversary dinner event. There have been many difficulties and roadblocks on our voyage to pursuing this project. The natural Tibetan inclination to practice patience has held us in good stead! Facing difficulties, but overcoming them has taught us that we can be successful! I appeal to you to assist us to create a well-deserved home for our elderly Tibetans. I know that we can make it happen.

Finally, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to all of you for your kind and generous help in the past. I offer you the opportunity to help us fulfill our collective dream of seeing this building completed in a timely manner. Please give generously. I look forward to seeing you at our annual dinner on October 26th 2007.

—Jurme Wangda

## Painless Charitable Giving Offers You a Tax Break

Here are two suggestions on how to offer "painless charitable giving" to OFT's Seniors Home Project. Why is it painless? In both cases the funds are not coming out of your monthly cash flow. Since OFT is a registered charity (# 87685 9919 RR0001), they offer a tax receipt for all donations, which offers you a tax benefit in the year the donation was made.

### From Our Home to Yours

Here's a thought on how you can donate to the Kalimpong Seniors Home Project with the special sentiment that it is truly coming from your heart and home to the future home of senior Tibetan refugees. If you have a mort-

gage, think about using this as a vehicle to make a charitable donation to the Seniors Project. Here is how it works:

**Step 1** you go to your financial institution where your mortgage is being held;

**Step 2** you "add on" to that mortgage whatever amount you would like to contribute. For example, it could be one month's mortgage payment, or whatever amount you feel comfortable donating;

**Step 3** your financial institution deposits that amount into your bank account;

**Step 4** you write out a cheque for that amount to OFT. Please be advised that this approach works with many mortgage situations, but not necessarily with all of them.

### Charitable Giving and Tax Breaks— It's a win-win situation

Financial markets, particularly in Canada, have been very strong in the last few years offering Canadian investors very sizeable financial benefits. If you own stocks or mutual funds that have had substantial capital gains, you can receive a significant tax break by donating them to registered charities such as Ottawa Friends of Tibet. It's a win-win situation for you and OFT.

# The Potala Project

In September-October 2006, students of College catholique Franco-Ouest in Bells Corners took part in a unique project: the recreation on canvas of the Potala Palace, the Dalai Lama's winter residence in Tibet. Our teacher (and secretary of OFT), Mme Haddad who visited Tibet the year before, shared her vision with us. The artistic project was to be presented to Jurme Wangda and Ottawa Friends of Tibet in honor of their 10th anniversary celebration.

This unbelievable feat began simply enough with a photograph of a carpet depicting the giant palace. Making use of some space in the gym, a team of volunteers, along with Leslie Baird, her husband Rudie and Mme Haddad constructed a frame to support the giant canvas measuring approximately 20 x 10 feet. The image was then projected onto the canvas and traced in a pitch-black gymnasium. Our Collège's art teacher, Mme Denise Pelletier, guided us into the next stage by first mixing up the colors by eye. Next, she delivered the necessary instructions to enable the students to successfully begin with confidence.

Once the project took off, other students were found peeking through the glass of

the gym doors every morning, following our progress as anxiously as we were. From then on, the artistic undertaking took hold of all who set their eyes upon it, some of them joining in. Their assistance was to be invaluable to the completion of the canvas. There were those who participated, including myself, who had no artistic experience, while still others were incredibly talented artists. Yet no matter the experience, the age, or the cultural background of the students, all came together as friends and colleagues to complete the ambitious project.

Morning, noon and evening, our initial tracing began to reveal the true shapes and colors as we constantly consulted the picture of the Potala. The strokes of our brushes moved meditatively to the sounds of Tibetan music, helping us focus on the task. Mme Haddad compared us to the skilled monks who spend years perfecting their strokes to create the most beautiful thangkas.



Courtesy Barbara Haddad

On October 12th, the artists of Franco-Ouest presented the "Potala" to Jurme Wangda in the presence of the principal and several hundred students.

When it was finished, all students gazed upon it in wonder, amazed by the colors, the size, and the magnificence of the structure. It had been an important part of the gym for several weeks, rapidly becoming an integral part of the scholastic community. We would all pass by, gazing at the piece of art before class. Though no one had signed it, it held a part of us all. We will all recall the painting of the Potala Palace at Franco-Ouest.

*Gianfranco Varriano and Laurence Dionne*  
Graduating students of the  
International Baccalaureate Programme

# Tibetan Musical Journey

On Saturday, October 14th at Bell Street United Church, OFT presented its first Tibetan Musical Journey Concert, featuring world-renowned Grammy Award nominee Nawang Khechog and international recording artist Gompo Dhondup, along with local percussion artists Leo Brooks and Rob Graves, and WombBoom and Exhale's Jessie Steinberg. The much anticipated concert left the audience stunned and deeply moved by the spiritual power and beauty of the soundscapes.

Jessie Steinberg opened the concert on a unique crystal didgeridoo, transporting us to another world with a phenomenal twelve minutes of circular breathing. Jessie's drone created rhythmical vibrations and undulating cries, familiar sounds in the Australian outback, and evoked a feeling of being in some lush jungle, surrounded by the howling of elusive creatures. Rob and Leo joined in gently, accompanying Jessie's drone with African and world instruments: kola nut rattles, rainstick, and temple chimes; then thunder tube, cymbals, violin bow, cow bell, and djembe. The melody became hypnotic and meditative. As the two men gradually silenced their rattles and bells, leading Jessie into her final long exhalation, the set came to a close.



Courtesy Barbara Haddad

Gompo Dhondup, Nawang Khechog and Jessie Steinberg

Rob and Leo began the next stage of the musical journey with instruments from the four corners of the world. Starting with a tiny drum and curved stick, Leo complemented Rob's thumb piano, then transitioned to resonating slaps and pops on a clay udu drum. From udu to congas, bells to chimes, the sounds rose and danced, then faded to a trickle as this universal set ended.



Courtesy Pei-Ju Wang

Leo Brooks and Rob Graves

—Continued on page 4

## Musical Journey (continued)

Gompo Dhondup, vocal artist and master of the dranyan, a Tibetan six-stringed lute, shared his melancholic themes of the Motherland, and of love, honour and strong Tibetan pride. Inspired by his fellow Tibetans and Buddhist teachers, his messages were simple, yet profound.

He sang passionately of the preservation of Tibetan culture, and of fundamental Buddhist beliefs: a peaceful environment comes from a compassionate heart and a forgiving nature; true courage is the ability to face the oppressor and forgive; Om Mani Padme Hung, a universal mantra of wisdom and compassion, is the essence of dharma; dharma is for the benefit of all sentient beings. His voice left an echo of sadness and hope throughout the sanctuary.

The evening's featured performer, Nawang Khechog, former monk and renowned flautist, took us on a unique and passionate musical journey. His profound and peaceful words drew us into meditative stillness. With his bamboo flute, a popular instrument in rural Tibet, he summoned the vast, majestic landscapes of the Himalayas. As each song ended, his flute gently conjured up delicate sounds of nature, leaving his audience awestruck. Nawang delivered words of wisdom through Tibetan spiritual chants: universal love, kindness, and compassion are the form and substance of a peaceful world.

In the last and most powerful set, largely improvisational, the five artists created an uplifting mosaic of international sounds. With Gompo on keyboard, Leo and Rob on light chimes, cymbals, shakers and marimba, Nawang magically filled the atmosphere with sounds of birds and nature on his flute, infusing all with tranquility. Later the beat of Leo's drum and the rumble of Rob's cymbals set the tone for a more upbeat tempo. Like a Tibetan monastic celebration, Nawang's Tibetan horn billowed alongside Gompo's mournful chanting. Switching to didgeridoos, Nawang and Jessie accompanied Rob, Leo and Gompo to the song's climax. Nawang orchestrated all to a soft and gentle finale of soft moans, chanting, tinkles and chimes, ending with the sound of a single bell.

OFT wishes to thank the audience and all those involved in the organizing of this one-of-a-kind Tibetan Musical Journey Concert.



Courtesy Barbara Haddad

Leo Brooks, Rob Graves, Nawang Khechog, Gompo Dhondup, and Jessie Steinberg

## Coming Events:

### Tibetan Cultural Awareness Evening

**When:** Friday, March 30th, 2007

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.– 11:00 p.m.

**Location:** 67 Nicholas, The Arts Court at Club Saw

You are invited to a Tibetan cultural evening to benefit OFT's seniors' project in Kalimpong, India. Come, enjoy and learn about the mystical culture of Tibet from a whole range of perspectives. The evening will feature the film *Tibet: The Cry of the Snow Lion*, as well as speakers, film makers, musicians, photographers authors and poets. Vegetarian platters supplied by The Wheat Berry.

A limited number of 150 advance tickets (at \$10 each) are available at The Wheat Berry (206 Main St.), Sounds Unlikely (5 Arlington) and at Arbour Environmental Shoppe (800 Bank St.). Tickets are also available at the door. The event is supported by The International Campaign for Tibet, The Canadian Tibet Committee (Ottawa Branch), and Tashi Delek (a shop that will sell Fair Trade Tibetan goods– opening in May 2007).

### His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Birthday Celebration

**When:** Wednesday, July 4th, 2007

**Time:** Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa

More details to come. Please check our website [www.ofc.ca](http://www.ofc.ca) for updates.

### OFT Eleventh Annual Benefit Dinner

**When:** Friday, October 26th 2007

**Time:** Doors open at 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Hellenic Banquet Centre

Ottawa Friends of Tibet cordially invite you to join them for their 11th Annual Benefit Dinner. Each year attendees savour a first-rate vegetarian meal and are enraptured by Tibetan musical performances and a wide range of handcrafted treasures from Nepal, India and Tibet. The 2007 benefit dinner will be no exception! OFT benefit dinners are the major vehicle for raising funds for the Kalimpong Seniors Home.

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Many thanks to Jurme Wangda, Barbara Haddad, Elaine Kenney, Pei-Ju Wang, Leslie Baird, Gianfranco Varriano, Laurence Dionne, Elizabeth Dwivedi and Natalie Lanthier for their contributions to this issue of OFT's Newsletter.