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# The Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange: The Importance of Youth in Exile and Diaspora Communities

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*SIT Study Abroad*

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# The Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange

## The Importance of Youth in Exile and Diaspora Communities



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Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for  
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## Abstract

How is the identity of a people living in diaspora maintained? The people of Tibet have been living in exile since the Chinese occupation began in 1959. As a result the Tibetan people have been working to find ways to maintain their identity, religion and culture. In Many ways the current Tibetan plight can be compared to the experiences of the Jewish people in exile and diaspora.

In every community around the world, it is through the youth of the community that a culture, a religion, a people and an identity in exile and diaspora is both maintained and changed. The youth are the future and bonds that hold everything together, they are the carriers of the lessons, the stories, the traditions, the history, and eventually the wisdom; the youth are the core of the culture and the culture is dependent on the youth. Especially in exile and diaspora, the youth organizations keep the entirety of the culture connected across any distance. The Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE) and Longsho are organizations that have been created to provide support for the perpetuation of a distinct Tibetan identity. TJYE utilizes social tools and models of the thriving Jewish youth movements. In particular, TJYE focuses on informal education for providing social and cultural connections for the Tibetan youth in exile.

In this project I explore the importance and centrality of youth education to the perpetuation of a culture in exile. I ask why it may be helpful for communities in exile to have vibrant youth organizations. In doing so I analyze the work of TYJE and Longsho while making comparisons to the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), one of the Reform Jewish youth movements in America. As an aspiring Jewish youth worker, I base much of the comparisons between my fieldwork studying TJYE and Longsho in Dharamsala, India, with my personal experience in NFTY in the United States. I also look at the modes of support and the ways in which the growth of a Tibetan youth movement had contributed to the perseverance of the Tibetan people in exile.

Finally, I conclude with the realization that TJYE, and the connection between the Tibetan and Jewish people could provide a model by which other displaced communities around the world could look to for an example of survival through the formation of connections and sharing of experiences.

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## Introduction

In 1959, due to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the instability of the government,<sup>1</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama fled into exile followed by one-hundred thousand other Tibetans.<sup>2</sup> Since 1959 Tibetans have been restricted from practicing their religion and culture, and have been imprisoned and tortured inside their own homeland, Tibet. Approximately 1.2 million Tibetans have died at the hands of the Chinese government over the past fifty-one years of occupation. There are approximately six million<sup>3</sup> Tibetans in the world and out of this six million only one-hundred and fifty thousand living in exile and diaspora in Nepal, India and increasingly all over the globe. It is only these one-hundred and fifty who are allowed to use their voices and work to link Tibetans together and preserve the roots of their religion, culture, and memory.<sup>4</sup>

How is the identity of a people in exile or diaspora maintained? Since the beginning of the Tibetan exile the Tibetan people have been working to find ways to maintain their identity, religion, memory and culture. In many ways the current Tibetan plight can be compared to the past struggles of the Jewish people in exile and diaspora. “*L’dor va’dor*, from generation to generation” is a core principal of Judaism, taught and repeated throughout Jewish education, and especially in the Jewish youth movements. The youth are the future and the bonds that hold everything together, they are the carriers of the lessons, the stories, the traditions, the history, and eventually the wisdom. The

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<sup>1</sup> Akestor, Matthew

<sup>2</sup> Posman, Ellen

<sup>3</sup> I am continually struck when I hear that there are six million Tibetans in the world because six million is also the number of Jews that were killed in the Holocaust. This is beyond the scope of this study but I thought that it was important to make a note of this both because of the strange and upsetting significance of this number for both Tibetans and Jews, but also as a personal point of interest and conflict, as this number represents a juxtaposition of living versus dead people.

<sup>4</sup> Tuch, Keren. Please refer to Appendix B.

youth are the core of culture and identity, and culture and identity are dependent on the youth. Especially in exile or diaspora, the youth organizations keep their people, their culture, connected across any distance. It is through the youth that a culture, religion, people, identity, memory in exile and diaspora is maintained.

Only four days before I left the United States to study abroad with the School for International Training (SIT) for the fall 2010 semester, I attended the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Kutz Camp. I was talking to my friend, Cantor Zoe Jacobs, about my upcoming semester abroad. I told her that I was going to Nepal to study Tibet. When she heard this she immediately told me to look up something called “TJYE”. That night I went home and searched for “TJYE” on the internet and found the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange.

The URJ Kutz Camp is a place of great importance to me and to this project. Back in the summer of 2006 at age fifteen, I was a participant, a camper, at the Kutz Camp. After that summer I became very eager to be further involved in the URJ, Union for Reform Judaism, and NFTY, the North American Federation of Temple Youth; A Reform Jewish youth movement and branch of the URJ. All of the URJ camps across North America, as they are also part of the URJ, are deeply connected to NFTY and many of the children who attend URJ camps become involved in NFTY later when they enter high school. The URJ Kutz Camp is known as NFTY’s summer home and leadership training camp. The Kutz Camp participants are all high school students and the focus of their summer is on enriching their Jewish identity and growing as leaders. Many of the leaders and future leaders of NFTY attend the Kutz Camp. Rabbi Mike Mellen, the current Director of NFTY and Rabbinic Dean of the URJ Kutz camp explains,

NFTY has members in every state in the U.S., every province in Canada, and occasionally members in Puerto Rico. Our 19 regions range in membership from around 205 members to over 1000 members. Altogether NFTY has approximately 8000 members, about 7000 individual participants in events, and about 13000 total registrations for events, and about 130 events per year. This doesn't include the thousands of youth programs happening within congregational Temple Youth Groups. Beyond the Youth Movement, NFTY runs Israel Programs, works with the URJ Camping system, especially with the URJ Kutz Camp which is NFTY's summer home.<sup>5</sup>

Since the summer of 2006 I have grown deeply connected to NFTY and the Kutz Camp. This sincere interest and passion that I have for my own roots in NFTY and as a Reform Jew, have led me back to the Kutz Camp for the past three summers to be on staff, to (hopefully) pursue a career in a similar area in the future. All of this has led me to my work with the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE) and my interest in understanding how youth education is central to the perpetuation of people living far from their native homeland.

TJYE was formed in 2000 following dialogue in October of 1990 between Tibetan and Jewish leaders inspired by the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to 'share the secret of Jewish survival in exile'. This dialogue is documented in Rodger Kamenetz's "The Jew in the Lotus," which I will discuss later. TJYE is a partnership between Jewish youth in England and around the world and Tibetan youth in Dharamsala, India. TJYE was started in order to share the Jewish model of informal education, education outside of the formalities of classrooms. Through the exchange, Jewish and Tibetan youth have strengthened their identities and increased their global and cross-cultural understanding. Across the Jewish community in England, Jewish youth have been brought together, across the denominations that often deeply divide the Jewish

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<sup>5</sup> Mellen, Rabbi Mike



people, through their Jewish identities and shared understanding of diaspora experience to support the Tibetan community, another community currently in exile and diaspora.<sup>6</sup>

In the following August of 2000, in Dharamsala, India, Longsho was formed with the assistance of TJYE, with the goal of bringing together Tibetan youths in exile to take pride, preserve Tibetan Buddhist culture and to encourage a strong connection with Tibet. The word “Longsho” in Tibetan means “to stand up” or “to rise up.” Longsho is an organization endorsed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and “does not desire to be a political entity” in the sense that identity is separate from “political”, defined more in the sense of protesting, rallying, and becoming involved in activities of this sort.<sup>7</sup> Sonam Dorjee, who worked with Longsho as a youth worker in 2004 explained,

freedom is not all about getting rid of Chinese flag and putting Tibetan flag...the world needs Tibetan culture. Identity is very much important...Tibetan movement is not [only] about freedom, it is about Tibetan identity. ...we may be in India 100 years, but if we loss of Tibetan identity there is no point. ...they (the Chinese) invade our country but they fail to invade the heart of Tibetan people.<sup>8</sup>

Longsho teaches these values by running bi-annual camps during winter and summer holidays. The governing structure of Longsho’s leadership consists of a president who handles most of the logistics, organization and office work, a youth worker who assists the president (both of these are paid positions), volunteers who are usually in their late teens and twenties, and the student participants whose ages range from approximately between ten to fourteen years old (classes six through nine). At each camp Longsho has about thirty to forty participants and ten volunteers.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange: About TJYE: The History of TJYE and Longsho. 2009. <<http://www.tjye.org.uk/about/history-of-tjye.html>>

<sup>7</sup> Longsho: About Us: Introduction to Longsho. <[http://www.longsho.org/home/about\\_us/intro.html](http://www.longsho.org/home/about_us/intro.html)>

<sup>8</sup> Sonam Dorjee. 17 November 2010.

<sup>9</sup> I have gathered information about the structure of the leadership and who is involved in Longsho

In the pages that follow, I explore the value of youth agency and why the education of the youth is particularly important. I also look at the importance of youth leadership in Longsho and NFTY, and why it is most valuable for youth to take on leadership roles.

### **Youth Activism: “We Fight to Win”**

In her book “We Fight to Win; Inequality and the Politics of Youth Activism” Hava Rachel Gordon claims that youth in general are discriminated against, suppressed, and ignored because they are under age. In her study of American teenagers in high schools on the American West coast, Gordon says that “youth are socially constructed as citizen participants only in future tense: ill-equipped to participate in social and political decision making as youth, only capable of this participation as adults.”<sup>10</sup> From this Gordon goes on to discuss the concept of “creating citizens” and provides a unique and challenging approach to what she calls the “creation of citizens out of the youth”. From this perspective, youth are derided and discriminated against because they are only important to society on the basis of their future adulthood.

Gordon’s work informs the framework of my study, however I find that in the case of the Tibetan and Jewish people in exile, many of Gordon’s claims do not hold true. For example, preparing for the future is one of the main goals of both the Tibetan and Jewish youth movements. In this fashion, a common understanding of “the future: is seen in cultural terms rather than political. It is for this reason that Longsho is not a political movement per se, but an organization that promotes the cultural perpetuity of the Tibetan

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through conversations with Sonam Dorjee, Lhundup Wooser, Jamyang Dorjee, and Pema Tenzin.

people. Lhundup Woesser, who was president of Longsho in 2007 and 2008, said to me “We are not like strict political...we are preserving identity and having camps.” He explained that one “cannot do political things” in the name of Longsho,<sup>11</sup> meaning rallying or protesting. While Lhundup Woesser was careful to add that an individual person can do “political things” of his/her own accord, but these activities are not tied to or in association with Longsho.

Interestingly, the young people involved in Longsho are taught through the Jewish model of informal education. Informal education is a way of teaching outside of lectures, and structures usually used in a formal classroom. Informal education provides a venue for learning through games, group projects, presentations, activities and every day interactions. Through this model Tibetan culture and identity through the contexts of Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan language, Tibetan customs such as wearing the traditional *chupa* and eating *tsampa* (barley flour mixed with tea and other ingredients to make a thick sort of batter) and even democracy.<sup>12</sup> What is most striking to me though is that Longsho dedicates, sometimes as much as a fifth of their camps to Jewish history and the Jewish-Tibetan connection.<sup>13</sup> All of these topics not only preserve identity and culture, they also educate the youth about the importance of continuing these practices and traditions not only now but into the future. Through informal education youth build upon their knowledge of their own traditions and in Longsho it is most unique that Tibetan and Jewish youth are also given a venue to learn about each other and the importance of partnership to surviving and moving forward.

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<sup>10</sup> Gordon, Hava Rachel, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Woesser, Lhundup

<sup>12</sup> According to my conversations with Sonam Dorjee, Lhundup Woesser, Pema Tenzin, and Jamyang Dorjee, these are all topics that are taught at Longsho’s bi-annual camps

Of course, Gordon might say that all of these topics used in the informal education model actually suppress voice of Tibetan youth, and only focus on preparing them only for their adult lives and identities. Moreover the effort to seemingly silence Tibetan adolescent political activity by disassociating Longsho from the broader political atmosphere might be misconstrued as “political inactivity” as a way of preparing the Tibetan youth for their future as adults. However, from Longsho’s perspective, not taking to the streets in rally and protest is not political inactivity or suppression. To the contrary, “non-political” organizations like Longsho are highly political insofar as they are the main lifelines for the sustenance and connection for Tibetan culture, religion and identity in exile and diaspora. Like the American feminist mantra, “the personal is political”, Longsho sees Tibetan culture transmitted through the daily affairs of the young people. Here, even Gordon admits “At the same time, youth movements also signify an instance of collective youth agency, which, unlike many forms of subcultural agency, is explicitly and self-consciously political.”<sup>14</sup>

Inevitably, promoting non-political activities among the youth is also a pragmatic way of ensuring their safety, and hence, the perpetuity of the community. In effect, this builds the foundation of cultural leadership. In the Reform Jewish community in NFTY, there is also a system of creating leaders. Rabbi Mike Mellen explains,

there are two primary ways in which leaders are raised - peer mentored and adult leader mentored. Both are important and fairly consistent across programs and regions. We encourage teen leaders to intentionally identify and work with younger teens, adult leaders also work to identify younger teens who might prove to be fantastic.

When I asked Rabbi Mike why this raising of leaders is an important part of NFTY

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<sup>13</sup> Bergen, Marc.

<sup>14</sup> Gordon, Hava Rachel, p. 19.

and/or the greater Reform Jewish community, he answered,

I believe that Reform Judaism and NFTY have something unique, meaningful and life-enhancing to offer to the world. We need individuals capable of leading others, guiding others, mentoring others to create strong life-affirming communities that can help share what Reform Judaism has to offer. I think we have an opportunity to provide skills, attitudes and knowledge that can set a foundation for generations of Reform Jews to play essential roles in guiding our world.<sup>15</sup>

The process of raising leaders has been an important one in the continuation and growth of NFTY. Longsho is on a very similar path of working towards its own system of raising leaders. By having youth led camps and inviting younger students to participate, the leaders of Longsho set an example, very similar to the one set by the leadership of NFTY, that those participating in the camps this year, will become the next generation of leaders in future years. This generation to generation leadership give the youth of Longsho a voice, agency and empowerment.

Certainly NFTY has a pattern of youth empowerment and agency in a way that even Gordon may agree is effective and gives youth a voice not only in the present as young leaders, but as they grow and further their experience of both mentorship and leadership moving into adulthood. Rabbi Mike went on to discuss why it is important that youth are the leaders of informal education. He says,

We also work to provide the tools necessary for teens in key elements of Jewish education. This is both because we understand that leading education deepens one's own understanding of knowledge and because teens participating in the program connect with a program more profoundly when peers do it well.<sup>16</sup>

The methods of informal education and youth leadership are vitally important aspects of many of the Jewish movements, not only NFTY, and it is through this

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<sup>15</sup> Mellen, Rabbi Mike

<sup>16</sup> Mellen, Rabbi Mike

empowerment and this unique understanding of the importance of youth in the survival of a community in exile or diaspora that has brought Jewish and Tibetan youth into contact with each other.

### **Partnership of Tibetans and Jews**

Kalela Lancaster, a founder of TJYE and Longsho, wrote an article published on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 in *Ha'aretz*, Israel's oldest daily newspaper (which can be read on the internet in English) entitled "What About Tibet?" In this article she expresses not only her concern and thoughts about the uprisings that had recently taken place both in Tibet and in the Tibetan exile community in March of 2008, but she also shares some pieces of her story as a Jewish person deeply connected to the Tibetan people. Several years after founding TJYE and Longsho in 2000, Kalela made *aliyah*, moved to Israel, and became involved in her new life and what she calls "our own issues here." After the events of the Tibetan world in March of 2008 Kalela was moved, once again, to think about why the Tibetan-Jewish is so important.

Here was a community that was living out the themes of the Jewish Zionist education I had grown up with: a story of refugees fleeing persecution, exiled from their homeland... Surely it was incumbent upon me, as a Jew, to think about Tibet, to care about Tibet, to do something about Tibet. ...we Jews, as a people, were in a position to make a specific contribution to a nation in crisis, drawing from our own collective experience and history. What a profound compliment, what a generous gift to the Jewish people... We in Israel and our neighbors in the Palestinian territories desperately need the Tibetan case to show us the way in the field of nonviolent struggle.<sup>17</sup>

Marc Bergen, a former member of the Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY) a pluralist Jewish youth movement in The UK, lawyer and trustee of TJYE for the past four

years, said in a conversation explained how the Tibetan Jewish exchange began:

I think the reason why the exchange happened is more due to the exile and diaspora...less religion... [the] main connection is that Tibetans have been in exile for 50 years and they are assimilating into other societies...a similar experience is happening and has happened with diasporic Jews. The original founders (of TJYE) had a vision of sharing the model of Jewish youth movements with the diasporic Tibetan community...*hadracha*, informal education, as a means of fighting assimilation, and this is how Longsho was formed from the Jewish experience.<sup>18</sup>

There are many different connections that can be drawn between the Tibetan and Jewish people. Both Marc and Kalela emphasize a connection though identity and survival in exile. This very connection is what led to the dialogue in 1990 between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a delegation of Jewish educators and rabbis. His Holiness the Dalai Lama requested the dialogue because he wanted to know ‘the secret of Jewish survival in exile’.<sup>19</sup> Rodger Kamenetz’s book “The Jew in the Lotus” is a record of this dialogue and of the experience of the Jewish delegation throughout their time in Dharamsala, India. The title of the book is actually a play on the words of the Tibetan Buddhist mantra of compassion “*om mani peme hum*” meaning “the jewel in the lotus”. In the book, Kamenetz quotes the initial idea of a Tibetan-Jewish dialogue said by His Holiness the Dalai Lama,

When we became refugees we knew our struggle was not easy, would take a long time, if not generations. Then we very often referred to the Jewish people. Through so many centuries, so many hardships, they never lost their culture and faith... So there are many things to learn from our Jewish brothers and sisters.<sup>20</sup>

Kamenetz also writes about the comparison between the current Chinese occupation of

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<sup>17</sup> Lancaster, Kalela

<sup>18</sup> Bergen, Marc

<sup>19</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger

<sup>20</sup> Said by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Kamenetz, Rodger, pp. 184-285.

Tibet and the memory of the Nazi Germans of the Holocaust. While there are many differences between the Holocaust and the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Kamenetz claims, “The Holocaust took place quickly, and extermination was the conscious goal of the Nazis...the result of their (the Chinese government) suppressing Tibetan nationality, culture, and language through decades of brutally repressing rule may well be a genocide played out in slow motion.”<sup>21</sup> Kamenetz goes on to discuss the similarity of the inactivity of the world while these horrific events occurred and are occurring, once again, in Tibet today. There is a feeling amongst the Jewish community that the Holocaust was a distinct and separate event from other genocides, cultural or ethnic cleansings, and other horrific events of the like. It is interesting though that through comparison to the Holocaust other atrocities, and in this case, specifically the current Chinese occupation of Tibet is brought into a more global light.

Certainly the Jewish experience of exile and diaspora is an important link for the Tibetan people in the dialogue of 1990 between Tibetan and Jewish leaders, but this was only the beginning. It was the beginning of making these connections and acting upon them to find basis for discussion and partnership. These discussions, eight years later, inspired Kalela Lancaster to think about the youth and the importance of youth in holding together exile and diaspora communities.<sup>22</sup> From here TJYE took form.

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<sup>21</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup> Lancaster, Kalela. Please refer to Appendix A.



## **The Importance of the Youth**

The discovery and preservation of identity is a key goal of both Longsho and NFTY. Through the discussions I have had over the past couple of months in the context of this project, I have come to define identity as an understanding of the history, religion and culture to which one is connected to, both through family ties and inner, personal, possibly spiritual ties, and discovering how one fits his/herself into this connection and understanding. Through this definition, I understand that there are two parts to identity, one's own, personal, individual identity and the collective identity. Both pieces of identity are important to the religious and cultural survival of a people in exile, and especially important to pass down, *l'dor va'dor*, from generation to generation, to the youth of the exile and diaspora community.

NFTY and Longsho are both focused on the method of informal education. It is through informal education that youth not only gain empowerment and the skills to become leaders, but they also attain and project a deeper understanding of their identity. In conversation with all of my informants who were once, or are currently, involved with Longsho, they all spoke about the importance of teaching identity. My question in return was always, alright, then what is it that you teach exactly? The most common initial answer was 'Tibetan culture and identity'. As a person who grew up in NFTY, I understand that it is difficult to explain exactly what we informally teach in order to help youth to understand and find their places within their Jewish identity. As Rabbi Mike explained, informal education does not only mean games, presentations and small group discussions, it also means taking the everyday conversations, interactions and actions we take while gathered together as a group for several days at camp and recognizing these

learning experiences in normal, daily life.

Experiential education aims to make the learning we do real in the world. The informal setting provides...moments - personal interactions, prayers before meals, services, *mezuzot*<sup>23</sup> on doorposts, the language that's infused into everyday conversation - to make Jewish education living real.<sup>24</sup>

Informal education is not only structured games, it is also encouragement of conversation and questioning about what we do in our everyday lives that makes us who we are and what contributes and shapes our identity and our connection to the greater identity of our community.

In her dissertation "The Politics of Nostalgia" Amy Lavine explores the ways in which individual and group identity in diaspora revolve around "notions of loss, displacement, exile, and dispersion as well as hope, memory, fidelity and anticipated return."<sup>25</sup> How do the youth keep these notions, these memories and hopes alive? Sonam Dorjee explained, "If you have a tree, there is a root, but no leaves, you cannot tell what kind of tree it is...there are things which attach us and make us Tibetan... it is really important something unite us... it is really important to educate them (the youth) about Tibetan culture and Tibetan life<sup>26</sup>." This exact description, the tree, is one of the informal education activities used at many Longsho camps where a bare tree, with no leaves, is hung and each student participating in the Longsho camp writes what makes them

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<sup>23</sup> *mezuzot* are the small rectangular, often decorated, cases that are hung on the doorway of a Jewish place containing a small piece of scroll with two prayers written on it. One is the *Sh'ma* a prayer that declares the oneness of God, and the other is called the *V'ahavta*, the prayer that I previously mentioned, from "The Jew in the Lotus" on page 11, that reminds Jews to always remember, to teach the laws diligently to your children, and bind them for a sign upon your house (hence why *mezuzot* are hung on the doorways of Jewish places).

<sup>24</sup> Mellen, Rabbi Mike

<sup>25</sup> Lavine, Amy

<sup>26</sup> Dorjee, Sonam 17 November 2010.

Tibetan on leaves that are then glued to the branches of the tree.<sup>27</sup>

Returning to the same question of “why is it important to educate Tibetan youth about Tibetan culture and identity?” I asked each of my Tibetan informants who were once, or who are currently involved in the leadership of Longsho, why is it important to educate the youth about Tibetan culture and Tibetan life. Sonam Dorjee responded,

Young Tibetans must take part in any activity that makes them feel Tibetan... They must take leadership in the Tibetan community. It's not just the monks and nuns to save Tibetan culture, we are the future seeds. Old generation must pass to young generation and young generation must be ready to receive it. Every young Tibetan must understand own roots to where they belong.”<sup>28</sup>

Lhundup Woesser had a similar response, “Kids are the future seeds of Tibet... to know them our identity, how to maintain and how to keep. There are people in other countries (indicating the Tibetan diaspora outside of India) who hardly know... without education you are nothing.”<sup>29</sup> Here, the connection between the Jewish youth education and the Tibetan youth education is due largely to the belief that children are the key to securing and perpetuating the unique qualities of these respective cultures. For example, in “The Jew in the Lotus” one of the members of the delegation of Jewish educators and rabbis, Rabbi Yitz Greenberg tells His Holiness the Dalai Lama about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. In 73 CE, when the Romans ruled Jerusalem and the Jewish people were in exile, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai reportedly “told his students they would outlast the exile by teaching, interpreting, and preserving tradition... if we don't have our Temple, but we have our learning, our texts... we have the power by learning to create the equivalent of

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<sup>27</sup> Dorjee, Jamyang.

<sup>28</sup> Dorjee, Sonam. 17 November 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Woesser, Lhundup

the Temple. It's a portable homeland."<sup>30</sup>

This idea of a “portable homeland” for the continuation of culture and identity is an important one. It is especially important for the Tibetans and Jews in exile and diaspora, and especially for the youth of these communities. As Amy Lavine states, the memory of life before exile and diaspora, glorification of the homeland, and feelings of strong ties with other members of the group through a shared remembrance, culture and identity are all important to maintaining unity amongst the exile or diaspora community.<sup>31</sup> In the Tibetan context, “political action” refers to taking to the streets, rallying and protesting as important ways to publicly demonstrate the push for Tibetan identity politics. However, as the work of Longsho demonstrates, what is even more empowering to the community of Tibetans in exile is the continuation of education outside of the formal classroom, building of connections and a shared unity that youth are brought together and become empowered as leaders and able to keep the memory of their past and to connect to the hope for the future of their community.

As Professor Nathan Katz states, “we construct our memory in the present, and by constructing memory we create our identity. What we remember constructs who we are, and that’s an insight of Buddhist philosophy also. What we forget also makes us who we are.”<sup>32</sup> This insight recorded as significant to the Jewish struggle for cultural and religious survival is what Rabbi Yitz Greenberg goes on to explain as “the Jewish secret”. He describes the importance of constant reminders, and of the sacralization (making sacred), of memory, tradition, of taking responsibility and of returning to the homeland.<sup>33</sup> He

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<sup>30</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. pp. 94-95.

<sup>31</sup> Lavine, Amy

<sup>32</sup> Said by Professor Nathan Katz. Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> Said by Rabbi Yitz Greenberg. Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 99.

mentions several ways in which Jews are urged to remember. There is an important prayer in Judaism which is meant to be said daily, in which Jews are reminded “to speak of the law constantly and teach it diligently to your children.”<sup>34</sup> Not only does this recitation of prayer encourage memory and cultural preservation, it encourages this through teaching, through education of the future generations: the youth. Similarly Sonam Dorjee emphasizes the importance of transmitting Tibetan history, culture and identity in similar ways to the Jewish secret according to Rabbi Greenberg. Like the Jewish diasporic experience of connecting to Israel, Hebrew language and community building outside of the historical Jewish homeland, Sonam Dorjee particularly emphasized the importance of connection to Tibet, Tibetan language, and building of the Tibetan community through connecting the youth, “that’s what we learn from Jewish youth camp, never forget your root.”<sup>35</sup>

Knowing your roots is a major point of focus in both the Tibetan and Jewish youth movements. Another important point of focus is how to remember and connect to your roots and how to bring this connection into everyday life in today’s modern, diasporic communities. In “The Jew in the Lotus” Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi discusses the difference between renewal versus restoration. In his opinion, he sees himself as doing “Jewish renewal, not Jewish restoration.” He goes on to explain that there is a need for people who not only carry tradition, but also live it. He says, “It’s not enough to have books...you need people who are living the books.”<sup>36</sup> Like the Jews, the Tibetans are now facing the dilemma of choosing what to preserve and what needs to be

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<sup>34</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. pp. 99-100

<sup>35</sup> Dorjee, Sonam. 17 November 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Said by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 45.

renewed.<sup>37</sup>

For the Jewish people in diaspora, even today with the modern state of Israel, this process continues. Judaism has been, and continues to be, adapted to the world as it modernizes. This is where the denominational distinctions become most prevalent. As a Reform Jewish youth movement, NFTY is constantly exploring what it means to remember but also to renew, especially within religious practices and prayer. I asked Rabbi Mike about the fact that NFTY is non-pluralist, a specifically Reform movement, and how that might work to form not only a connection to the collective Jewish memory, as far as un-denominated Judaism, but also fosters a more specifically, strongly Reform Jewish identity amongst participants in NFTY. Rabbi Mike acknowledged in response to this that many of the values of NFTY are uniquely seen in the “Reform” denomination but there is still a belief, to some extent, of a collective connection and responsibility of the Jewish family.<sup>38</sup>

Building upon “The Jew in the Lotus” Ellen Posman’s dissertation, “There’s No Place Like Home,” discusses the choices and future of Tibetan Buddhism in diasporic communities. When looking to the future of the community, the question becomes, will Tibetan Buddhism eventually see something resembling Jewish denominations due to the differences in choosing what aspects to renew and what aspects to preserve? In teaching the importance of identity, culture and Tibetan life, this question is one that arises for all Tibetan youth and especially Longsho. Here, Posman offers a particularly interesting argument that Tibetan Buddhism is actually a better equipped religion to deal with exile

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<sup>37</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 45.

<sup>38</sup> Mellen, Rabbi Mike

than Judaism.<sup>39</sup>

Judaism is a very family and community centered religion whereas Tibetan Buddhism is highly dependent on individual understanding and practice. Jews always pray in groups, in fact there are prayers that cannot be said unless there is a *minyan*, a group of at least ten Jewish adults.<sup>40</sup> As the Dalai Lama explains, “Tibetans quite easily adapt to new situations...Buddhist teaching is the glue that holds most Tibetans together.”<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, from Posman’s dissertation and in discussion with Jamyang Dorjee I came to discover the variations and the distinctly unique differences between every Tibetan Buddhist. Posman notes that Tibetan Buddhism is a very personal practice that varies from family to family and person to person. Also, Jamyang Dorjee explained that when Longsho teaches Buddhism, they have a Lama come in to teach because “...Buddhism is very vast so we are not able to teach.”<sup>42</sup> Meaning, for example, Jamyang could not teach Buddhism because the way he understands it is possibly very different from other people, and he would, essentially, not be able to teach in a more general sense, outside of his own practices and understanding.

It is interesting to think that the community aspects and the strong ties to synagogues of Judaism may actually make Judaism less fit for survival in exile. Buddhism as a more individualistic religion has therefore moved more easily because, in a sense, it is more portable without every person being tied to a building.

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<sup>39</sup> Posman, Ellen. pp. 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> There is debate about the meaning of *minyan* and who counts for the group of 10 or more. For example, in more traditional, literal interpretations, a *minyan* is a group of at least ten Jewish adult men, “adult” meaning that the individuals have each had a *bar-mitzvah* (*bar* translates to “son,” indicating a male, and *mitzvah* translates to “of the commandment”), a ceremony of coming of age (at age 13) and being accepted as an adult into the Jewish community. In Reform Judaism a *minyan* may be a group of simply ten Jewish adults, or even more simply a group of at least ten Jews, not necessarily who have had their *bar* (male) or *bat* (*bat* translates to “daughter,” indicating female) *mitzvot* (plural of *mitzvah*).

<sup>41</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 214.

## Religion as Glue

No matter the differences between Jews and Tibetan Buddhists, both have a similar experience of this constant struggle about which aspects of their religions to preserve and which to restore in their own context. This is especially an exceptional challenge for the youth of both religions, but this challenge also fosters inspiration for further informal discussion and therefore education, connection and unity. The discussion that takes place over how to adapt religion to be relevant in modern, daily life today, is part of the process of keeping the essence of Tibetan Buddhism and Judaism alive. For example, Kamenetz notes that “young Tibetans growing up in India or in Europe are not always interested in cultivated Buddhist practice...the Dalai Lama and the rabbis share a problem: how to keep religion relevant in a highly materialistic and secular culture; how to renew without losing continuity.”<sup>43</sup>

The answer that I have to offer in response to this shared problem has two parts. The first, brings us back to the discussion of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai and the “Jewish secret”. According to Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai saved Judaism because he “worked democratically, transferring the burden of religious practice...to every Jewish household. His secret was to get the average Jew involved.”<sup>44</sup> Getting the average person involved is part of “the Jewish secret” and can be equally applied to the Tibetan community in exile. By spreading the burden of the challenge of preserving and adapting religious and cultural practice the discussion is broadened and deepened causing

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<sup>42</sup> Dorjee, Jamyang

<sup>43</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 106.

<sup>44</sup> Said by Rabbi Yitz Greenberg. Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 101.



a larger majority of Tibetan or Jewish people living beyond the borders of their respective homelands to become involved and connected in a more meaningful way as individuals in a greater sense of community identity.

This leads to the second part of my response which is the youth. The youth makes up a large part of both the Tibetan and Jewish communities. As cliché as it sounds, the youth are literally the future of their people. Youth involvement in discussions of religion, culture and identity is vitally important for building connections and surviving in diasporic and exiled experiences. In the Jewish case, this is especially proven in the worldwide Jewish youth movements. In the Tibetan case, young people involved in Longsho realize these challenges, and this is why “non-political” organizations that foster exchange, education, leadership and identity are absolutely necessary, and are another part of the “secret” to survival in diaspora and exile.

### **Challenges for the Youth**

There are many challenges that the youth of any community face while working to learn about, preserve and renew their culture and identity. There is a huge responsibility that is placed on the youth. The older generations contribute a great deal of pressure and their opinions to the way they feel identity and culture should be preserved, and this resonates with the youth, but also causes them a further struggle in the challenge of making decisions that will affect the future of their community. This responsibility of balancing the preservation of the past with the changes that will inevitably come up in the renewal, or making the past ideas of culture and identity relevant in the present, is certainly recognized by the youth. There is also a further responsibility that Sonam

Dorjee mentioned to me as a challenge for Tibetan youth that is similar to the challenges facing Jewish youth, “Tibetans outside of Tibet have a moral responsibility to support the Tibetans inside Tibet.”<sup>45</sup> The youth have an immense responsibility for their community, and this leads both to some struggle but also to an increased feeling of significance, which in turn leads youth to take a more active role in education and leadership.

A common challenge, touched upon earlier in Kalela Lancaster’s article, that comes up in discussion of youth in particular, is the idea of nonviolence. In many ways this is a huge draw to the Tibetan cause. Many people around the world are inspired by the Tibetan people and their extremely strong value and commitment to nonviolence. Rodger Kamenetz explains, “we are all caught up in the notion of justifiable violence - it is built into our political thinking and our law. In the West there is such a thing as righteous indignation and justifiable homicide.”<sup>46</sup> Kamenetz later goes on to discuss the fact that Judaism does not have such a commitment to nonviolence. In fact he presents the questions:

Is Jewish anger, however damaging in some respects, essential to Jewish survival? Or will a Judaism that continues, in some ways, to dwell on and even nourish a sense of anger over past injustices prove to be an increasingly burdensome heritage to pass on to our children as we enter the twenty-first century?<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, amongst many Tibetan youth there is a growing sense of frustration, which seems to have been the case with the Jewish people. In talking with Lhundup Woesser, Jamyang Dorjee and Pema Tenzin, I learned that Longsho has some trouble getting volunteers for their camps because many of the youth who are high school and college

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<sup>45</sup> Dorjee, Sonam. 17 Novemeber 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 186.

age are more involved in the more “political” organizations. Within many of these “political” organizations there is a struggle and a continuing dialogue amongst the Tibetan youth about maintaining the value of nonviolence and what is considered “violent” and what is not. There is much discrepancy about where the line is drawn, about what is against the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and about what needs to be done. While this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that this desire for quicker results and a speedier return to Tibet lead many youth to struggle with the question of whether nonviolence is worthwhile endeavor. This is significant to this study and to Longsho because although Longsho considers itself a “non-political” youth movement, surely, these thoughts and struggles are on the minds of most of the Tibetan youth.

It is difficult to address this issue from the Jewish perspective, because in Judaism the commitment to non-violence does not exist in the same sense. The Jewish perspective is more of one that Rodger Kamenetz describes as the mentality of the “West,” the notion of justifiable violence. There is even suggestion that fighting is one of the Jewish secrets. But, this is not what youth movements are focused on. The youth movements have the educational and identity-exploring purpose of moving away from violence. In her article “What About Tibet?” Kalela Lancaster, a founder of TJYE and Longsho and a Jewish woman living in Israel, says “We should look to the Tibetans to provide us with a model of how to make concrete gains, without violence, toward resolving questions of self-determination and competing claims to land.”<sup>48</sup>

Previously, through discussion of Rabbi Mike’s input, the writing of Ellen

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<sup>47</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 188.

<sup>48</sup> Lancaster, Kalela. Please refer to Appendix A.

Posman and Rodger Kamenetz's "The Jew in the Lotus," I entertained the possibility that it might be possible that Tibetans may see a divide in the Tibetan Buddhist religion due to the changing mentalities of youth and the need to adapt traditions to modern life today. This is only one supposition, that may never actually come to fruition, but even still, this raises the question of cultural assimilation. Also, in previous discussion of what to preserve and what to renew, I explored the idea of the pressure that falls on youth in making these decisions. These decisions are vital to the greater community not only for the preservation of culture and identity, but also for the prevention of assimilation. But can assimilation really be prevented?

There is a feeling that change is bad. Change is a loss of identity. Change is a loss of tradition. This is exactly why Longsho, and youth organizations that focus on "never ever forgetting your roots" are so important.<sup>49</sup> Not only do organizations like Longsho and NFTY teach identity and culture they also teach history, memory and collective identity. They go to prove that change is nothing to fear, change is not bad, change is inevitable and that is perfectly acceptable, as long as you carry the stories, the memories, and the connection.

## **Conclusion**

In "The Jew in the Lotus" Rodger Kamenetz reflects on how the understanding of exile, diaspora, and this "secret" that the Jewish people have has always, to him, seemed like a burden, like something that Jews always remember, cling to, and carry in sadness and nostalgia. After being present for the meeting of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the

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<sup>49</sup> Dorjee, Sonam. 17 November 2010.

delegation of Jewish educators and rabbis, Kamenetz describes a feeling of true partnership with the Tibetan people and of honor and pride in being a Jewish person. The discussions recorded in “The Jew in the Lotus” that took place in 1990 had this affect not only on Kamenetz, but also on people such as Kalela Lancaster, the founder of TJYE, and Marc Bergen a Trustee of TJYE for the past four years.

In the 1500s there was a *kabbalist*, a Jewish mystic, Rabbi Yitzhak Luria taught that “in the first part of creation God made light and made vessels for the light. The vessels were too fragile, they broke, and from the broken vessels of the supernal lights, the material world was created.”<sup>50</sup> Rabbi Luria taught that pieces of God, or God’s light are in everything, every person, every particle that makes up the material world, and it is the responsibility of human beings to live in the material world and to return all of the sparks, all of the light, to the vessels, thus creating a whole God. Rabbi Luria proposes that humans carry this out through living mindfully, with compassion and loving kindness. In these ways *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, will be completed. It is through this kabbalistic interpretation that the Jewish exile took on a deeply spiritual significance in understanding that the world is spiritually and, thus, materially broken and needed repair.<sup>51</sup>

While Rabbi Luria’s story is clearly a reflection of Jewish monotheism and is an interpretation of the Old Testament, genesis creation story, which is not relevant to every religion or creed, this story is a beautiful metaphor for a wider understanding of the brokenness of the world. The world is not only broken, in terms of exile and diaspora for

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<sup>50</sup> Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 99.

<sup>51</sup> Dobkowski, Michael. I learned about Rabbi Yitzhak Luria from a course called “Foundations of Jewish Thought” with Professor Michael Dobkowski of the Religious Studies department at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, which I took in my first year of college, spring semester 2009, and did my final project on

only the Tibetans and Jews. Indeed, there are many communities around the world who are struggling for homeland, for the survival of their culture, their identity and for the future of their children. In the context of this project, I believe that the “secret” of the Tibetan-Jewish youth exchange is the exchange itself. It is learning about one’s own roots and about the roots of other communities who have an understanding of the commonalities experienced and shared. In fact, this exchange speaks to the need for the construction of more cross-cultural bridges between disenfranchised and displaced peoples and minorities around the world, including Kurds, Native Americans, and Palestinians.

While building cross-cultural connections is a foundation for future research, it is also important to note that Amy Lavine suggests that exile and diaspora have actually brought the Tibetans closer together as a cohesive community working for the same cause, returning to Tibet.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, not only have the Tibetan people been brought together for preservation of their identity and culture, they have been brought together with the Jewish people because of common ties to struggle for homeland and survival as a community in exile. Again, this leaves room for interesting and compelling future projects with an array of displaced peoples around the world.

Finally, it is especially important, as TJYE recognizes, that connections are built through the youth. The youth carry the burdens of the challenges, the victories of successes, the stories, the memories, the culture, the continuation of identity and the “secrets.” The youth of the Tibetan and Jewish communities in exile and diaspora are faced with an immense responsibility for survival. As Professor Nathan Katz says, “the

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this teaching of Rabbi Luria’s relating to the vessels.

<sup>52</sup> Lavine, Amy. p. 63.

danger is failing to transmit the beauty, the joy, the profundity. If we fail to do that...then we're not going to survive."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Said by Professor Nathan Katz. Kamenetz, Rodger. p. 234.

## Appendix A

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# What about Tibet?

**As the world watched the eruption and brutal repression of the protests in Tibet over the past week, the question of Tibet was catapulted onto the global agenda.**

By **Kalela Lancaster**

Tags: [Jewish World](#)

As the world watched the eruption and brutal repression of the protests in Tibet over the past week, the question of Tibet was catapulted onto the global agenda. Here in Israel, mired within our own protracted conflict with our neighbors and our fractious relations with each other, what can we really say or do - or feel - about Tibet?

Ten years ago, over endless cups of chai in Dharamsala's Sunrise Cafe, the question of Tibet was one that captured my imagination. For a 23-year-old backpacker in India, torn between the search for fun and escape, and the search for meaning and personal purpose, the question epitomized the dilemma. To zone out or switch on? To "get in touch" with myself or connect with the "real life" of the local community? To focus on enjoying my own freedom or to concern myself with a larger question of freedom that would necessitate commitment: What about Tibet?

The burning question  
made me linger in  
Dharamsala. Eventually,  
the plight of the Tibetan  
people, their passion for  
their cause, and the  
dignity of their  
commitment to attaining  
it through non-violent  
means moved me to  
stay and learn more.

Dharamsala, known  
among Tibetans as  
"Little Lhasa," is the  
beating heart of the Tibetan exile community, and is home to  
approximately 8,000 of the 130,000 Tibetan refugees who have fled  
their land. It is the seat of the Tibetan government in exile headed by  
the Dalai Lama, whom Tibetans regard as their spiritual and political  
leader.



As I became increasingly involved with the community there, the issues with which its members were wrestling began to reverberate for me in a way that drew me deeper into my own identity - not as a rootless backpacker, but as a Jew. Here was a community that was living out the themes of the Jewish Zionist education I had grown up with: a story of refugees fleeing persecution, exiled from their homeland. A story of yearning to return, and of a struggle to preserve identity, culture and faith in a "strange land." Surely it was incumbent upon me, as a Jew, to think about Tibet, to care about Tibet, to do something about Tibet.

I discovered that I was not the first to have drawn this conclusion. In 1990 the Dalai Lama had hosted a delegation of American Jewish leaders to discuss the parallels between the Jewish and Tibetan stories. During this encounter, the Dalai Lama famously asked his guests to "share the secret of Jewish survival in exile." As I read about this eight years later, the power of the request affected me deeply: Its implication was that we Jews, as a people, were in a position to make a specific contribution to a nation in crisis, drawing from our own collective experience and history. What a profound compliment, what a generous gift to the Jewish people was buried in that request for support.

By the time I left Dharamsala and returned home to England, there had crystallized in my mind a kind of answer to the gauntlet the Dalai Lama had thrown down: youth movements.

Explaining this answer and securing partners for its realization kept me busy for the next three years. It wasn't easy. Many in the U.K.'s Jewish community wondered how they could legitimately make space for a project telling them to focus energy on Tibet. But when the project took shape and Tibetan youth came from India to Jewish summer camps in Britain, to learn informal education techniques, the impact on the Jewish end was incredible. Our young people encountered what I had: a very Buddhist call for compassion and universal responsibility, requesting a very Jewish response from within the meaning and imperatives implicit in our own heritage. Interestingly, a large proportion of those who were involved in setting up the project, including myself, later went on to make aliyah to Israel.

Since my arrival in Israel six years ago, I have busied myself with "our own" issues here. Somehow I haven't found much time for Tibet. But the past week's events have reached out from behind the headlines to shake me up once more. What about Tibet? Now, as an Israeli, I find the crisis in Tibet calling for an Israeli response.

Since my arrival in Israel six years ago, I have busied myself with "our own" issues here. Somehow I haven't found much time for Tibet. But the past week's events have reached out from behind the headlines to shake me up once more. What about Tibet? Now, as an Israeli, I find the crisis in Tibet calling for an Israeli response.

A fundamental and agonizing conversation is currently taking place between the Dalai Lama and his people. Should they seek full independence or make do with cultural autonomy? Persevere with non-violence or resort to more aggressive approaches? As I write, the Dalai Lama is indicating openness to adapt to the will of his people regarding the aim of their struggle, but steadfastness in his attitude to the means they employ. He is threatening to resign as their political leader if they abandon the path of non-violence. That possibility fills me with pain and sadness. Suddenly, the devastating consequences of such a scenario for us as Israelis are all too clear to me.

We in Israel and our neighbors in the Palestinian territories desperately need the Tibetan case to show us the way in the field of nonviolent struggle. We should look to the Tibetans to provide us with a model of how to make concrete gains, without violence, toward resolving questions of self-determination and competing claims to land. And it's little wonder that young Tibetans have become frustrated with the path of non-violence when, after a half-century, it has failed to bear fruit.

It is time for the international community to get involved. Now, on the eve of the Olympic games, international leaders must concern themselves with the message that will reverberate around the globe, and especially in the Middle East, if they miss this opportunity to provide an answer to the Tibetan struggle while it is still non-violent. It is time for the international community to help the Dalai Lama to give his people, and my people, and all peace-craving peoples everywhere, hope.

Kalela Lancaster founded the Tibetan-Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE) in 2000, which led to the establishment of Longsho, a Tibetan youth movement, in India. She now works as a development consultant to social-change organizations in Israel.

## Appendix B

### *Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange*

#### **A story we know only too well**

Keren Tuch wonders if Jews can often be absorbed by Jewish struggles and history at the expense of others, and ask whether, as we delve into other people's persecution stories, do we not have a duty to be engaged to their cause as well?

As I sat sipping chai in a tea shop in the Indian town of McCleod Ganj, home to the Tibetan government in exile, I contemplated how it came to be that I could be so ignorant of the details of every conflict in the world except the one which is closest to home, the Israeli-Palestinian one. I began thinking, as the warm brew ran down my throat, that we Jews can often be so absorbed by our own struggles and history that we tend to forget others. As we delve into other people's persecution stories do we not have a duty to be engaged to their cause as well?



This week marks the 50th anniversary of self-imposed Tibetan exile led by the spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

Since March 10 1959 it has been unsafe for Tibetans to practise their religion and celebrate their culture in their own homeland. Tibetans are routinely imprisoned and tortured. Peaceful protest and demonstrations are prohibited. Persecution, exile, religious restriction, I thought - a story we Jews know only too well.

McCleod Ganj, also known as Little Lhasa, is a scenic and quaint town in North India, found at the chilling altitude of 2000m. The mesmerizing Himalayas loom majestically in the backdrop. It is a home away from home for approximately 50 000 Tibetan refugees. The narrow streets are lined with colourful Tibetan prayer flags. The musky smell of Tibetan incense pervades the handicraft shops. Elderly Tibetans dressed in traditional attire fervently clasp their rosary beads and mutter ancient mantras. The trendy younger generation, dressed in jeans and sporting fancy haircuts, meander the streets aimlessly – they have no jobs. Buddhist mantras re-mixed with Trance beats are repetitively played from shop windows while Save Tibet beanies and t-shirts fill up the shelves of the souvenir shops. But out of the 6 million Tibetans in the world, only 150 000 of them may wear these t-shirts – in Tibet, it is illegal to even whisper the words printed on the t-shirt. World media and international organizations report that the Chinese are imprisoning Tibetans merely for peaceful protesting and teaching Tibetan history, which in many cases also leads to torture. Over the past 50 years of the Tibetan struggle, it is estimated that 1.2 million Tibetans have died under the hands of the Chinese government. To my Jewish consciousness, this staggering figure brings up many images of our own suffering through history. This is another story we know all too well.

It is for this reason that thousands of Tibetans risk their lives every year to flee to Nepal or India. Parents and families gather huge sums and go into debt in order to send their children with mercenary Nepali guides, who promise to lead them through the perilous Himalayas. They do not know if they will ever see them again. The refugees walk at night for a month out of fear of being caught by Chinese patrols. Some develop frostbite but continue anyway, as the only other option is death, which often catches up with a few people along the way. Once across the border in Nepal or India, they are taken to a Refugee Centre to be medically treated and fed. Again, to my mind, this brings up our own stories – of destitute columns fleeing across Europe to escape Nazi persecution during WWII, Spanish Jews fleeing the Inquisition. A story we know only too well.

In the past fifty years, the Tibetans in exile have done an incredible job of establishing a new home. One of the first actions of the Dalai Lama after fleeing Tibet was to consult with the Jewish community in New York to find out how the Jewish Diaspora kept its character through 2000 years of homelessness. The Tibetan community has also been generously aided by the Indian government and Western sponsors. For myself, as a former Jewish youth camp leader in Australia, I was particularly struck by how they took care of the children of refugees, many of whom are orphaned.

These children are sent to a boarding school called Tibetan Community Village (TCV). No matter old they are, and despite what grade they are coming from, all the children start from grade one again. They are assigned a 'home mother', a substitute figure who cooks and cares for groups of 30 students. They are nurtured, disciplined and are given a top Tibetan education, which is also one of the main reasons they escaped. In January this year, I was fortunate enough to encounter 27 of these students from three different TCV's. In a fortuitous set of circumstances and because of my own previous experience as a madricha, I was able to help lead a Tibetan Youth Movement called Longsho (meaning "Rise Up" in Tibetan). In 2000, a British woman named Kalela Lancaster established the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE). Kalela incisively saw that the Tibetans faced one of the problems that Jews in exile have been facing for 2000 years - loss of identity and how to preserve it in exile.

The aims of TJYE are to enhance the cultural identity of both Jewish and Tibetan youth through informal education, mainly through a summer and winter camp each year. Every year, Tibetan leaders are sent to England to learn how Jews successfully run youth camps, promoting culture and religion while uniting the community. When they return to India, they attempt to bring their knowledge to the Tibetan community. And as part of the program, Jews who are traveling through McLeod Ganj and have been through the Jewish youth camps can help out and input their skills. The camp turned out to be a replica of the camps I have grown to know so well, over my years of being involved with the Australian Youth Movement of Hineni. All I had to do was substitute the Jewish content and context for a Tibetan one. Surprisingly, they even chanted the same songs that were so familiar to me, including the one about Netanya. The students, fiercely proud of their identity, all shed tears at the end of the 10 day camp, realizing what a special experience this was and the importance of retaining their culture.

By the end of the camp, I realized that for we Jews, this is one small way we can help another people in need. We may not be able to directly convince the Chinese government to give autonomy to the Tibetans, but we can support initiatives such as TJYE, which are beneficial to both sides and make use of our own expertise in surviving the galut. This may be a story we know too well but that is no reason for not helping to prevent another 2000 years of hardship.

*Article by Keren Tuch*



## Appendix C

This is a letter from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to TJYE, which can be found on the TJYE website: <http://www.tjye.org.uk>



THE DALAI LAMA

### MESSAGE

I am very happy with the Tibetan/Jewish Youth Exchange project for two reasons: Firstly, I have always believed that Tibetans can learn from the experience of over two thousand years of Jewish diaspora. Secondly, exchange programs of this kind are always useful in creating exposure for Tibetan youths and an opportunity to learn new skills. Both of these are important to the Tibetan people, particularly at this very critical time in our history.

I have met with the young participants of the TJYE project recently on June 8, 2001 and have been encouraged with what they have achieved so far and of their determination to continue the good work. In this context I am happy to learn about the Cultural Exchange & Leadership Skills Training Programme that TYJE is undertaking presently. I fully support the work of TYJE and would like to appeal others to do the same.

July 9, 2001

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Lama' followed by a stylized flourish.

## **Appendix D**

The following is a copy of a document given to me by Sonam Dorjee. It is a very early write up about what Longsho is, how and why it was formed and plans for the future. I believe this was written in 2002.

ཐོངས་ཤོག



**LONGSMO**  
(Tibetan/Jewish Youth Exchange)

A groundbreaking project set up by  
Exile Tibetan Youth and Diaspora Jewish Youth

"I have been encouraged with what they have  
achieved so far and of their determination  
to continue the good work"

- His Holiness The Dalai Lama -  
July 2001

President Kalsang Dorjee, Co-ordinator Dawa Tsering  
Community Centre, Bhagsu Road, Meleod Ganj  
Dharamsala HP India - 176219 India Ph-21059

C/o NOAM, 1097, Finchley Road, London NW11 0  
United Kingdom Ph- 0044 (0) 208 952 3743





ལོང་ཤོ་ཤོ་ག

## A groundbreaking project set up by Exile Tibetan Youth and Diaspora Jewish Youth

"If we are coping, we are coping from the recorded history of two thousand years. There are many things to learn from the Jewish Diaspora". *Tenzin Sangpo, Principal, Tibetan Children's Village (TCV)*



"In Longsho camp we get the opportunity to use our talents and I liked the quiz program on Tibet". *Lobsang, Student, TCV*

"I never hesitate to speak in front of people in the camp. It was full of fun and I got many new lessons about Tibet which I didn't know before" *Tenzin Lhamo, Student, TCV*

# LONGSHO

Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE)

"I have met with the young participants of the project and encouraged with what they have achieved so far. I fully support the work of TJYE and would like to appeal to others to do so" *His Holiness, The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama*

### LONGSHO'S PHILOSOPHY

In creating a Tibetan Youth movement, we believe that young Tibetans will come together to share ideas related to their own identity, history and culture through informal education and socialising. The young Tibetans will have an experience that will shape the people they become, assist them in becoming active members of the Tibetan community, prepare future leadership as well as help them engage in social activities.

"Tibetan youth face numerous challenges in every aspect of social, cultural and educational means of life. Failure to tackle such challenges can develop frustration, anger and loss of self-esteem within them. Moreover, the gradual loss of identity and cultural de-valuation is inevitable. Therefore, a well-planned programme of this kind will produce positive changes in our youths' daily lives." *Ngodup Tsering, Secretary for Education, Tibetan Government in Exile, India*  
"This project will go a long way to engender a sensitivity to other peoples and create a link between those peoples who have been the subject of oppression". *Darren Kleinberg, Education Director, Union of Jewish Students, UK*

President: Tsering Phantok    Youth Worker: Tenzin Namsay  
LONGSHO Community Centre, Bhagsu Road, Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala -176219, HP India  
Telephone: + (1892) 220714    E-mail: longsho\_tym@yahoo.com



# LOOKING AHEAD

Longsho Tibetan Youth Development is a unique project within the Tibetan community and, while the formal Tibetan education system has its own role, Longsho focuses on youth empowerment and confidence building. The need for this type of identity-strengthening organisation is great, not just in Dharamsala, but in other Tibetan settlements across India, Nepal and throughout the world. In fact, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has personally requested that Longsho particularly expand its work to Darjeeling where the Tibetan community is assimilating very rapidly.



## LONG TERM PLAN

**January 2003:**  
Longsho holds its Winter Camp in Dehradun for 100 young Tibetans, from settlements in Dharamsala and Dehradun, and 25 leaders from Dharamsala. During camp, the Jewish volunteers from the UK will hand over to the next pair of Jewish volunteers from the UK who will work in Dharamsala from December 2002 – June 2003. The Jewish volunteers will also help to expand the work of Longsho to the Tibetan settlement in Dehradun by visiting there and carrying out a feasibility study.

**March 2003:**  
The Jewish volunteers will make contact with the potential leaders in Darjeeling and more leaders will be recruited there.

**May 2003:**  
Gain the National Council Camp proposal to begin.

**June 2003:**  
Longsho will hold its national Summer Camp where 150 kids and 40 leaders from both Dharamsala and Dehradun settlements will be involved. The camp will be held in Dehradun. The camp will be held in Dehradun with leaders from the Darjeeling

to Darjeeling where they will start to run regular activities with the help from the next set of Jewish volunteers from the UK (June 2003 – October 2003). The Jewish volunteers will help the Darjeeling leaders to recruit and train more youth leaders as well as build up an office structure there.

**July 2003:**  
Longsho will send eight youth leaders from Dharamsala and Dehra Dun to the UK for the Summer Leadership Training Programme.

**October 2003:**  
The next set of Jewish volunteers from the UK (October 2003 – January 2004) will continue to develop the Darjeeling region of Longsho, in terms of leadership training and office development.

**January 2004:**  
Longsho will hold three separate regional Winter Camps (Dharamsala expects 120 kids, Dehradun expects 70 kids and Darjeeling expects 50 kids).

**June 2004:**  
Longsho plans to hold its third national Summer Camp where participants and leaders from all three settlements Dharamsala, Dehradun and Darjeeling will come together, working with over 50 Longsho leaders and 200 kids.

**July 2004:**  
Longsho will be formally inaugurated in the Tibetan community. By then, the leaders will be sufficiently trained and experienced to become self-sustained ready to run their own training programme. All the founding members from both the Tibetan and Jewish communities and all others who were involved in this great project will be invited to the Longsho Inauguration.

## How You Can Help

Longsho is currently in search of funds to continue to thrive and grow. Funds are needed for summer and winter camps, monthly activities and general administration. These funds are essential for Longsho's future development.

Longsho has prepared a budget, which presents our yearly financial needs. This budget includes funds for winter and summer camp, monthly activities, communal activities and administrative costs. The total budget of our program is 4300 GBP per year. A full version of the budget will be provided upon request.

Longsho  
Tibetan Youth Development  
National Council Camps, Youth Workers, Summer Camps  
Executive Committee, Dharamsala, Dehra Dun

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## TIBET IN EXILE

1949: Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) invades Tibet.

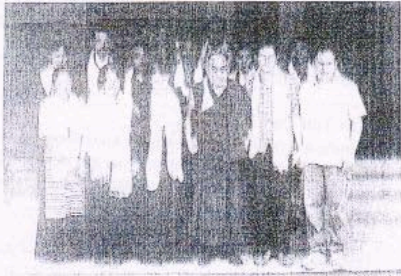
1959: PLA fully seize control of Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and 80,000 of his followers flee Tibet into exile.

1959-1988: Over 1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the PLA's persecution, imprisonment, torture and starvation.

**Today in Tibet:** Tibetans have become a minority in their own land due to the massive and unending influx of Chinese settlers. Educational opportunities, basic human rights and the practices of the Tibetan culture are prohibited or, at best, made extremely difficult.

**Today in exiles:** The survival of the Tibetan people lies in the strength of the exile community.

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama has encouraged and praised the establishment of Tibetan organisations and centres, including Loughsho, to preserve and promote the unique Tibetan culture.**



## THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF INFORMAL EDUCATION

- Greater **participation** and creative involvement of young people in their own education often penetrates more deeply than classroom education.
- Provision of a **forum** for youth to discuss crucial issues, encouraging young people to take personal responsibility for the dynamic survival of the Tibetan community in exile.
- Teenagers are provided with **positive role models** in the form of youth leaders.
- Youth leadership positions provide a **meaningful channel** for the energies of young people and pave the way for a **new generation of community leadership** in community building.
- Activities instill **cultural pride** for leaders and participants, bring history, culture, religion and values to life, and contribute to a sense of unity among the youth.
- Informal Education seeks to create a **relaxed and safe environment**, where young people can express their views freely where questioning is encouraged rather than suppressed.
- Creates opportunities for young Tibetans to build **social networks** and communities of like-minded young Tibetans.

## KALELA'S JOURNEY

In 1999, Kalela Lancaster, a young Jewish woman from London, UK, visited Dharamsala, India. She involved herself in the community as a volunteer for a few months and, as a result, gained insights into some of the issues facing the Tibetan community. She felt the youths' frustration and fear of the rapid loss of their Tibetan identity, often replaced by outside influences.

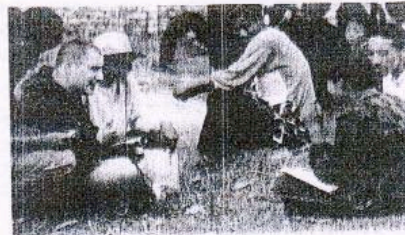
As a Jew herself, themes of exile and Diaspora were familiar to her and she saw many similarities between the present situation of the Tibetan people and the past history of her own people. The need for a sense of belonging within exile was evident. Drawing upon her personal experiences from the Jewish community in UK, and from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's request to Jewish leaders for the '*secret of Jewish survival in exile*', Kalela was inspired to bring about a Tibetan Youth Movement similar to a Jewish Youth Movement.

## THE JEWISH CONNECTION

The *Jewish Youth Movements* started in Eastern Europe 100 years ago to bring young Jews together, share their culture, history and ideas, and talk about philosophies of 'going home'. They have become very popular and successful, providing some of the best 'informal education' for young people, and are now in action all over the world. Many issues are **shared** with Jewish youth movements, including Zionism, **assimilation**, and the importance of maintaining a Jewish identity.

## WHAT'S YOUTH GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Youth empowerment plays a prominent role in community building. The challenge, faced by Tibetan youth, to take a personal responsibility to strengthen the community is very important, particularly at this very critical time in Tibetan history.



## **Appendix E**

The following is the most recent, but not yet printed for distribution, Longsho brochure, which I received from Jamyang Dorjee.



growing up in exile are also influenced by the global pop culture, consumerism leading to fragmentation and a sense of loss. These have led to the loss of identity. Youth in Tibet are even more focused by the Chinese Policy to side line them without opportunity for education, basic human rights including the rights to practice their own culture and religion.

The survival of Tibetan People lies in the strength of the exile community. In this, Youth involvement in community building plays a prominent role. The challenges faced by the Tibetan Youth to take personal responsibilities to strengthen the community is very important, particularly at this very crucial time in our history.

#### ORIGIN

The Tibetan/Jewish Youth Exchange (TYJE) is a partnership of Exile Tibetan youth and Jewish Diaspora youth operating between India and UK, which was a first of its kind. The idea of dialogue between Tibetan and Jewish youths in Exile was first conceived by His Holiness The Dalai Lama's computer to Jewish leaders to 'share the secret of Jewish survival in exile' (1990). After successful pilot year during which TYJE was officially endorsed by His Holiness The Dalai Lama at special private audience for its founders.

It was felt that it would be useful to share the Jewish model of informal education and youth leadership skill training from Jewish Youth Movements with the Tibetan youths facing the challenges of exile, and that the process



Founding Leaders blessed by H.H. the XIV Dalai Lama

of doing so would strengthen both Tibetan and Jewish communities and youths own identities and alongside increased global and cross cultural awareness. TYJE was founded in April 1999 and set up in August 2000 with the blessing from His Holiness The Dalai Lama.

#### YOUTH MOVEMENTS

The Jewish Youth movements have been in existence for the last 100 years. Starting from Eastern Europe, the Jewish Youth Movements eventually expanded in entire



Europe. The movements were the centres for young people to come together, share ideas, retain their history and culture, and to provide a safe space for them. The first Jewish Youth Movement was founded in London in 1940's, where members of these various Jewish Youth movements. In 1948 when Israel finally came in to being, the youth-movements had a new job to deal with the issue of many young Jews not returning 'home'. Even with freedom came questions of westernisation and the ever-growing importance of retaining Jewish identity.

Now in 2002, there are Jewish youth movements in action all over the world. They have developed a lot and now are thought upon as being some of the best informal education youth organisations in the world.

#### BIRTH OF LONGSHO

In Summer 2001, the 1st summer training exchange programme was set up, planned and organised. Four longsho leaders, the founders of this project were sent to the UK to experience 6-week intensive informal education training and to participate in three Jewish summer camps. The programme was a massive success

The Tibetan leaders gained new skills and understanding as well as a lot of new friends and support for the project. On their return they were then ready and felt confident enough to set up a real Tibetan Youth Movement, named 'Longsho' (Rice Up). Longsho is a movement in learning from the experiences of Jewish Diaspora.

#### PHILOSOPHY & ULTIMATE GOAL

In creating a Tibetan Youth movement, Longsho believe that young Tibetans will come together to share ideas related to their own identity, history and culture through socialising. The young Tibetans will have an experience that will shape the people they become, assist them in becoming active members of the Tibetan community, prepare them to become future leaders as well as help them engage in social activities.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 1) To create a platform for young Tibetans to learn and keep their unique identity alive.
- 2) To share informal education techniques used in Jewish youth movements and implement them to create and implement these methods in the Tibetan community.
- 3) To facilitate cultural exchanges between the Tibetan and Jewish youths by providing an opportunity for them to work in partnership, drawing explicitly on the common themes of their heritages.
- 4) To run an informal education leadership training programmes for potential young leaders.
- 5) To run a spectrum of regular activities all year round for its members.
- 6) To focus on running informal education through the residential camps.
- 7) To create realistic role models in its leaders, who will learn to live and lead by 'personal example'.
- 8) To create a National Longsho Network and global cross-cultural awareness.

#### ACTIVITIES: TIBETAN/JEWISH YOUTH EXCHANGE

Every year in the month of July/August, Longsho youth leaders will be sent to UK Jewish community on exchange programme for approximately 6 weeks. In UK Tibetan leaders will participate in informal education and leadership training in 4 different Jewish camps. Learn from the story of Jewish survival and



Longsho Leaders along with Jewish Youth during Youth Exchange in London

'return', and the challenges of contemporary Jewish Diaspora experience, considering relevant implications for the Tibetan Diaspora and be in a position to raise awareness of the distinct Tibetan culture, leading to increase support to the Tibetan cause within the Jewish community.

#### JEWISH VOLUNTEERS

In the month of September-January, the Jewish youth volunteers will be invited to spend approximately 4 months in Dharamstala and other

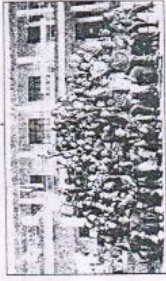


Group of Jewish Volunteers in Dharamstala

Tibetan settlements in India. To share with them the experiences of the Tibetans in exile and their beliefs. To forge closer links and understanding between the Tibetan and Jewish communities to help the continued development and expansion of Longsho's infrastructure, leadership skills, and informal education techniques in Longsho. Thus helping the Tibetans to learn and strengthen their Tibetan community as a whole.

#### RESIDENTIAL CAMPS

Longsho organises biannual residential camps - a summer and a winter camp, where Tibetan school children participate during their summer/winter holidays over a period of 1 to 2 weeks. The Informal Education is an effective tool for education in Longsho camps. Every week Longsho leaders meet and discuss the programmes,



Group picture of participants during camp.

write educational materials, and finalise the education theme of the camps. Methods such as brainstorming, discussions, quiz/games, role-plays, fun station, drama, music and talent shows, etc. are used in the Longsho camp.

The atmosphere of camp is one of the most important aspects of the youth movement. A feeling of being part of a group makes the young people come back and to take active part in the youth movement. Prayer time in the morning and before meals are as important an aspect of camp as creative learning time especially evening. Having fun, creativity in art, exhibitions, etc. are also important in building atmosphere of camp. In the informal education take place, camp leaders encourage the young Tibetans to be leaders themselves. The 'inspirational leader' is one of

the methods of imparting education. In this way, Longsho is empowering young Tibetans both the youth leaders and its members.

**REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

The development of a youth movement means the creation of regular activities. This is vital to its evolution because to create a Longsho community, one needs frequent interaction with its members. To educate for 1 week, a year is finite and for real long-term learning and effect, one needs to do it regularly. Frequency also helps the development of the community.

- 1) Bi-Annual Residential Camp
- 2) Travelling and Mini Camp
- 3) Youth Discussion

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

Longsho provides an opportunity for its members to participate in various social works, such as many clean up of the surroundings and the elderly helping old age home which is also keeping our unique Tibetan culture of helping others and the culture of good-will.

Longsho members do volunteer the importance of loving and caring for other people. It also organizes fund-raising events and camps in the community and we believe it has a responsibility to initiate various social service activities, which will help Tibetan youths to understand the challenge of the community and encourages youths in community building. And provides a structure where Longsho ties the youths into the bigger network of the community.



Participant cleaning up the Environment

Longsho is solely depending on individual donation and also received funds from friends of Longsho through annual membership fees. Longsho is currently in search of funds to continue to thrive and grow. Longsho also raises funds through Multi cultural shows performed by leaders and also donations received from photo exhibition. Your generous support will be highly appreciated!



A year of raising photos exhibition of Tibetans

**You can Help**

You can contribute by sponsoring to the following activity:

- Amount
- Rs 5000 Longsho Youth Discussion
- Rs 10,000 Organize one Travelling Camp & Leadership Training Programme
- Rs 1000 Sponsoring one student to take part in Longsho Residential camp.
- Rs 60,000 Organize a 10 day Residential Camp for 50 Students.

You can make your donation in Cheques/Draft in favor of: Longsho, Tibetan Youth Movement, A/C # 859, Alhabad Bani, Bhagsu Road, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Dist Kangra, H.P, India

**ORGANISATION**

Longsho is a Tibetan Youth Movement through the ground breaking project "Tibetan Jewish youth exchange" set up by

exile Tibetan youth (Dharamsala and Jewish Diaspora youth United Kingdom).

Longsho has a steering committee members consist of senior members from all over the world and direct in Longsho who worked since 1997.

Three office bearers: President and two youth workers. Also an elected annual democratic process by working committee for the term of 2 years. They ensure the overall running of the organization in all the regions. They also organize camps, fundraising events and taking part in local activities.

Longsho currently has 100 members who are dedicated to Longsho activities across 10 different regions of a national Longsho network.

Longsho has already run 14 successful residential camps in 10 different Tibetan schools in India including South east regions.

**CONTACT**

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Community Centre, Bhagsu Road, McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala - 170219 District Kangra HP, India  
Ph: 91-1892-229713  
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Website - www.longsho.org

**Introduction and Background**  
**Tibetan Community in Exile**

In 1949, The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) invaded Tibet. Ten Years Later, they fully seized control, which led to the flight of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and some 85,000 of his followers in exile. Over 1.2 Million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the PLA's persecution, imprisonment, torture and starvation. Today, Tibetans have become a minority in their own land due to the massive and unending influx of Chinese settlers. The majority of them are Han Chinese. They have been forced to give up their Tibetan language and culture. They have to live in the very shadow of the Tibetan lake and to feel Buddhist Culture.

**Tibetan Youth, their identity and the challenge in exile.**

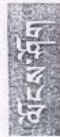
Under the Vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Various Tibetan Centres and Settlements were established in exile in India to preserve and promote the unique Tibetan Culture. As such, Tibetans have succeeded in imparting not only modern education but also the age-old Tibetan Buddhist culture to our younger generation.

Nevertheless, the danger of losing our own culture identity still persists. The exile Community is



Tibetan youth in Exile Sharing their ideas.

scattered within various other cultures posing a threat of assimilation. To add to these challenges, the youth



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**LONGSHO**  
(Tibetan Youth Movement)

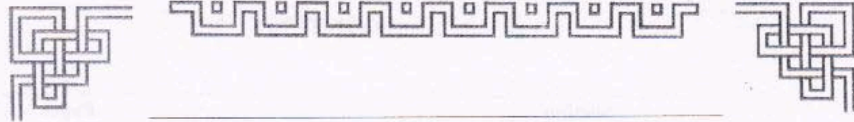
**“I have always believed that Tibetans can learn from the experience of Two thousand years of Jewish Diaspora.”**

H.H. The XIV Dalai Lama

## **Appendix F**

The following is a project proposal for the Longsho camps of 2006 and 2007. This document, given to me by Sonam Dorjee, shows all of the background planning and logistics that goes into the planning and running of Longsho camps. In this document you will find background information on Longsho and on the camps as well as a plan for the activities that the camp will run and a proposed budget.





# **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

## **Youth Empowerment Camp**

On

Tibetan cultural preservation and development of leadership quality to teenage Tibetan refugees in exile

*Submitted to: -  
Tibet Relief Fund (UK)*

**Project Recipient & Implementing Agency:**

**LONGSHO, Tibetan Youth Movement**  
Community Center, Bhagsu Road  
McLeod Gunj, Dharamsala 176215  
E-mail: longsho\_tym@yahoo.com  
<http://www.longsho.org>



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## Youth Empowerment Camp, Kalimpong, Dickeyling and Dharamsala

<p><b>Project Title:</b> Youth empowerment camp.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Dharamsala H.P</p> <p><b>Beneficiaries:</b> Teenage Tibetans in Dharamsala</p> <p><b>Project Duration:</b> One year</p> <p><b>Proposed Budget:</b> Rs</p>	<p><b>Implementing Agency:</b> Longsho, Tibetan Youth Movement, Dharamsala</p> <p><b>Project Supervisors</b> Tenzin Gekhyong and Karma T. Gyaltsso</p> <p><b>Project Manager</b> Tenzin Sherab</p>
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### 1. Project Background

When Tibet was illegally occupied by China in 1959, Tibetans under the leadership of His Holiness The Dalai Lama temporarily refuge in India. The first task for Tibetans in exile was education and preservation of culture. His Holiness personally urges Prime Minister Nehru for a separate schools and settlements for Tibetans to uphold language and Tibetan Buddhist culture. Thus education and cultural identity from initially was perceived as a means to struggle for motherland.

During 45 years in exile, some 80 Tibetan schools were built and more than fifty refugee settlements were incepted in India, Nepal and Butan. Tibetan Buddhist education and cultural was much strengthened. In fact, the overall long-term goal of Tibetan exile government was formulated to preserve the Tibetan language, religion and cultural identity. But at the same time in these 45 years, there also experience large migration of Tibetans to outside refugee settlements due to economic reasons. Some issue Indian citizen for better economic opportunities and some due to the problem unemployment, compromise to live among Indian community. Besides, exile born youths due to lack of awareness on such issues and plus the strong impact of globalization distract them away from the purpose of coming to exile. Hence, on the other side, the community is also experiencing loss of own culture and accumulation of new one, which is a threat not only to the survival of Tibet as a nation but also to the world for extinction of a culture which has the potential to make world a better place for living. The most visible of such threat can be seen in the northeast state of India such as Gangdok, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

Thus to resolve such conflict, the activity of education on awareness creation of rich Tibetan culture and issues related are identified and targeted to Tibetan youths and high school students. The project will informally educate Tibetan culture, tradition, and history. In addition leadership skills training and academic counseling will be provided so that they can involve and take the responsibility of this movement when they grow up. The project will inspire youths to preserve own culture through internalization and support to continue this movement even after achieving motherland Tibet from China.

### 2. The statement of problem:

As per plan of His Holiness to integrate Tibetan community and above all to preserve Tibetan Buddhist culture, five settlements in northeast region (Bomdila, Miao, Tezu, Rawangla and Sonada) were incepted from 1960s with some livelihood activity to sustain in the settlements. But with the passage of time, the inability to sustain in the settlements let to the migration of Tibetans and now there are more Tibetans staying outside the settlement than inside. The last census took place in 1998 by Planning Commission C.T.A has identified some 20 locations in the northeast where Tibetans are inhabitant including five settlements. According the census, there are 15049 Tibetan people mentioned in that region and out of which 60.1% stays outside the settlements. Thus, such alarming population merging along the local community exerts huge negative consequences on the Tibetan culture and Tibetan identity in particular.

Last year, Longsho did a feasibility survey in the region and found most of the Tibetans in the region speak Nepali even among the family members. Some of the of the teenagers we interact express the need of training camp with their parents as they also don't know much about Tibetan history and tradition. Looking at their way

of living, perception and behavior, it seems Tibetan culture is weathering away. Tibetan identity in the region is almost at the verge of extinction

Such a situation in the region is common in whole exile. In Tibet, China deliberately die out or makeover Tibetan cultural identity to the Chinese and if we did not act now in exile, we wonder, if Tibet can be called as Tibet without those rich Tibetan Buddhist culture and identity, when we get back in future.

### **3. Aims and Objectives:**

As a youth-led movement based on the model of informal education, Longsho aims to provide a creative space for young Tibetans to come together to engage with their identity, history, culture and Buddhist values and to develop their knowledge and leadership skills. The specific objectives of the project are as follow:

- To inspire young Tibetans and empower them to engage with Tibetan culture by discovering it for themselves.
- To instill in leaders and participants a sense of community pride and identity and a responsibility to actively work to preserve Tibetan culture.
- To play a key role in the Tibetan community by providing an opportunity for 20 - 25 yrs old youth to make a meaningful contribution as a role model to the younger generation.

### **4. The need assessment and justification:**

The needs assessed to address the problem of loosing Tibetan identity through three stated objectives can be broadly put into three categories. The first is the need of training camps on Tibetan culture and leadership training to the teenage Tibetans. The second is the capacity building of new and old youth leaders of Longsho who actually interacts with the children and implements the activities. The third is the identification of new need-based areas where the activity of cultural preservation and youth responsibility is most required.

#### **a) Need of camps**

Four training camps and 4 mini camps, 2 in each Kalimpong and Dickeyling and 15 traveling camps, 5 in each Kalimpong, Dickeyling and Dharamsala are needed. In the training camp, the youth leaders organize 10 days camp in some empty place and some 50 children from different Tibetan schools are invited. The participants will spend whole 10 days in the camp in between youth leaders and will conduct programs on Tibetan identity & leadership skills. The mini camp is similar to that of training camp but conducted for one whole day. In traveling camps, the youth leaders visit schools for two three hours and create awareness on Tibetan issues and Longsho movement.

Camp is the very innovative tool we have for interaction with the children. We build brotherhood and sisterhood relationship with the kids in the camp and create awareness identity and develop personality and leadership skills. We do that in very informal way with more activities and since the kids love us brothers and sisters, they listen to what we say and get very much inspired. Thus, these activities are very much required to promote Tibetan cultural values in exile and to equip younger generations with leadership skills to share such responsibility.

#### **b) Need for the capacity building of Longsho leaders**

Longsho is an ever-increasing youth movement in exile. Many Tibetan youths in Dharamsala and Dickyiling join the movement and many of them also pass out due to personal problems after contributing years in Longsho movement. Every year some 30 new leaders join the movement and it is very important to train them first in the informal education, interaction with the children and increasing their knowledge on Tibetan culture. Thus Longsho movement indirectly targets the grown up youths like us to discover own culture and developing leadership skills on the Longsho platform.

We need 6 capacity building workshops, 2 (summer & winter) in each branch. The workshop will lead by the senior and skilled youth leaders on understanding the Longsho movement, informal education skills, and office management and fund raising skills. Resource person from the community on culture related themes are invited.

#### **c) Identification of new need-based areas (Location & people):**

Since the fading away of Tibetan identity is not restricted to one or two location in exile, we continuously put effort to identify new need based area and aim to create some positive changes. In 2002, we did a survey in the



scattered Tibetan communities in Northeast India and found people losing their Tibetaness and their sense of belongingness. A year later we set up a branch there with one new leader trained from T.J.Y.E, U.K. Now there is a need to do a similar survey in Tibetan settlements in south India. If we find the area need based, we will focus our efforts in coming years to set up of new branch there.

Also under this section, for the first time, we are conducting a camp for college students in Shimla on Tibetan culture awareness. The need was identified by the college students themselves and requested to Longsho. We took this as an opportunity to strengthen the outcome of our efforts by increasing coverage. If this becomes successful, we will plan such training programs in the future.

#### **5. The implementing agency**

Longsho, Tibetan Youth Movement is a McLeod Gunj based non-governmental organization initiated first in 1999 by Miss Kalela Lancaster, a young Jewish woman from London. She experienced the youth's frustration and a big fear of rapid loss of Tibetan identity, often replaced by western values. Drawing upon her personal experiences in U.K. Jewish community and from His Holiness's request to Jewish leaders for the secret of Jewish survival in exile that felt her the need of some youth movement and inspired her to set up a Tibetan Jewish youth exchange on the line of Jewish Youth Movements to strengthen Tibetan identity and create a sense of belongingness. Longsho is a Tibetan word meaning "**Rise Up**" awakening all Tibetan youths to share the responsibility of preserving Tibetan rich Buddhist culture to maintain our own identity under Chinese occupation and to promote peace in the world. Longsho at present has spread over three places of Dharamsala, Dheradun and Kalimpong with some 20 youth volunteers, all university graduates and some working.

##### a) Longsho Vision:

Longsho's vision is of a vibrant youth movement reaching all parts of the Tibetan community in exile, which inspires, connects and empowers youth across the Tibetan Diaspora.

##### b) Longsho activities:

Every year we organize two training camps: one in summer (Gopalpur) and another in winter (Dickeyling). In the camp we teach, make aware of Tibetan culture and develop youth responsibility. Our way of education is very informal and contrary to the classroom environment. The method has more activities and has a child-centered approach. We first built a friendly relation with children through games and slowly with their participation education and awareness are created. Till now, Longsho has organized more than 10 such training camps and some 50 traveling camps. We have some youth leaders turned up from training camp after finishing their studies. Besides, we also participate in social services like cleaning town, plantation of trees and organizing resource talks to the public. For such activities we generate funds by ourselves. With the help of volunteers' Core Working Groups, we host fete on festive occasions and perform cultural shows to the public.

#### **6. The work plan:**

The respective branch will conduct a workshop for its own new leaders in the beginning. Two trained youth leaders from Dharamsala will be sent to Dickeyling and Kalimpong. Programs are then prepared by the local leaders and will conduct training programs in their schools. Longsho Dharamsala will assist and monitor in all their activities. Besides, Longsho Dharamsala will also conduct a training program in Shimla with the college students and a feasibility survey on culture awareness among the Tibetan community in south India. The detail plans are as follows:

##### a) Key activities:

- A group meeting among the Dharamsala youth leaders and formation of a resource team to the branch office.
- Coordination and discussion among the executives of Longsho branch with the Dharamsala on preparation capacity building workshop.
- Commencement of workshop.
- 2 Mini camp's program preparation by local leaders together with new leaders in Kalimpong and Dickeyling.
- Commencement of mini camps and feedback collection at the end of training camp.
- 5 traveling camp's program preparation by local leaders together with new leaders in Kalimpong and Dickeyling.
- Commencement of traveling camp and feedback collection at the end of training camp.

- 2 training camp's program preparation by local leaders together with new leaders in Kalimpong and Dickeyling
- Commencement of training camp and feedback collection at the end of training camp.
- Training program to Shimla college students by Longsho Dharamsala.
- Feasibility survey on culture awareness among Tibetan community in south India.

b) Time Line

Gantt chart showing time framed on project activities

	2007			2006								
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Longsho Dharamsala general body meeting												
Discussion among the branch executives												
6 Capacity building workshors												
2 Mini camps												
5 traveling camps												
2 training camp's												
Training program to Shimla college studs												
Feasibility survey on culture awareness												
			Preparation						Implementation			

c) Co-ordination and distribution of responsibility:

The two executive members, Miss Tenzin Gekhyong and Mr. Karma T. Gyaltsso will share the responsibility of the project. At the local level the executives of local branch office in consultation the Longsho Dharamsala will implement the project. The project manager will monitor the project and prepare report to the donor. Mr. Ngodup Thinley, our accountant will take care of the expenses and responsible for shopping the required materials, hiring vehicle etc.

7. Project output and outcome:

After implementation, the project is expected to achieve following outputs and outcome:

a) *All new youth leaders are trained in informal education, office management and fund raising after the implementation of the project. (Output)*

- Capacity and confidence is built among the new leaders in running the training camp more effectively and efficiently after implementation of the project.
- Some degree of self-sufficiency is achieved in organizing camps and office management after the implementation of the project.
- The whole youth movement is strengthened in the region after the implementation of the project.

b) *Children participants have gained insight knowledge of Tibetan history, religion and traditions after finishing the training camps. (Output)*

- The sense of responsibility on preservation of Tibetan culture and identity is created after the training camps.
- Internalization of rich Tibetan Buddhist culture among the participants is began after the training camps.
- Dissemination of information from the camp and positive peer pressure by the participants is begin after they get back to schools



## The Breakdown Cost Of Each Activity

### Cost of one Training camp

Descriptions	Cost	
	Requested (Rs)	In kind (Rs)
<b>Traveling</b>		
Traveling cost of participants from near by schools to the camp. Approx Rs 1000 each school (to and from) 5 schools x Rs 1000, in kind from schools		5000
<b>Food</b>		
No of students plus G.L. (20 + 50) X Rs 50 per day X 10 days	35000	
<b>Rent at camp site</b>		
8 rooms, kitchen, dinning hall and play ground X Rs 500 per day X 10 days, in kind from Sambota Day school		5000
<b>Medical</b>		
First aid box, 3 X Rs 62 per unit	186	
<b>Refreshment</b>		
3 cases of cold drinks in summer. Rs 192 per case (butter tea in winter instead), 5 cases of mineral water, Rs 120 per case, 5 Tang (juice powder) Rs 80 each, 70 chips (large) Rs 25 each, Fruits for Rs 500 and sweets for Rs 200	4026	
<b>Resource material</b>		
Dresses, Posters, Magazines, photos	2000	
<b>Stationary</b>		
Ballpen, scale, color pen, marker pen, pencil, tab, scissor, charts etc..	3000	
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		54,212
<b>Total Amount Requested</b>		44,212

### Cost of mini camp

Expenses	Units	Quantity	Cost/unit	Total
Leaders Traveling expenses from Dharamsala to Bir	Leaders	5	86.0	430
Guest house for Longsho leaders at Bir for two nights	Night	2	150.0	300
Stationary for the education program	Student	46	13.7	630
Refreshments for the kids during the Education program	Students & Leaders	51	13.1	670
Traveling cost of Kids to the camp spot (up and down)	Student	46	14.8	680
Lunch towards Longsho Kids and Longsho leaders	Students & Leaders	51	37.1	1890
Altogether had tea Biscuits before kids left the camp spot	Students & Leaders	51	5.0	255
Longsho Leader dinner at Bir	Leaders	5	50.0	250
Longsho leaders Traveling cost back to Dharamsala	Leaders	5	86.0	430
<b>Total cost of one mini camp</b>				<b>5535</b>

- c) *Children participants have developed some leadership skills at the end of the camp (Output).*
  - Confidence and capacity is built among the participants to lead in future after the camp.
  - Tibetan youth movement is strengthened in the region with more youth having leadership skills after the implementation of the project.
- d) *The Longsho ever first touches college students. (Output).*
  - Penetration of Longsho activities to all section of Tibetan youths (school and college students). Thus mass awareness and consequences of the movement.
- e) *Feasibility report on status of Tibetan culture awareness in south India.*
  - Develop understanding of need based of the region
  - Equip us with what to do, how and where.

#### 8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

The project manager will take the overall responsibility of monitoring the planned activities of the project. He will be assist by the project supervisors Miss Tenzin Gekhyong and Mr. Karma T. Gyaltsso. They together will inspect the progress of the project and prepare reports to the stakeholders. Depending on the T.o.R / agreement between the donor, external evaluation can be carried out by outside agency to access the efficiency, effectiveness and future sustainability of the project

#### 9. The Budget:

Activities	No of activities	Cost per activity	Total cost
Training camp in Darjeeling & Dickeyling (Summer & Winter)	4	54,212	21,6848
Mini camp in Darjeeling & Dickeyling (Summer & Winter)	4	5535	22,140
Traveling camp in Darjeeling, Dickeyling & Dharamsala	15	3000	45,000
College students	2	6610	13,220
Feasibility in the south India	1	16570	16,570
Leader capacity building	2	7000	14,000
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>92,927</b>	<b>327,778</b>
Self Contribution 13%			40,000
Administration, monitoring & reporting 5%			16,388.9
<b>The total amount requested</b>			<b>304,166.9</b>

**Cost of traveling camp**

Expenses	Units	Quantity	Cost/units	Total
Longsho Leaders traveling expenses (up and down)	Leaders	4	100	400
Guest house for the Longsho leaders (one night)	Room/night	2	175	350
Stationary for the education program	Student	25	15.6	390
Refreshment for the kids during the education program	Students & Leaders	29	17.9	520
Traveling cost of kids to the camp spot (up & Down)	Student	25	16	400
Lunch/Dinner towards Longsho leaders (Two days)	Leaders	4	62.5	250
Altogether Tea/Biscuits before kids left camp spot	Students & Leaders	29	15.5	450
Resources for the education program	Students & Leaders	29	8.2	240
<b>Total Cost of one traveling camp</b>				<b>3000</b>

**Cost of program with college students**

Expenses	Units	Quantity	Cost/units	Total
Longsho Leaders traveling expenses (up & down)	Leaders	5	187	1870
Guest house for the Longsho leaders (Three night)	Room/night	3	150	450
Stationary for the education program	College students	25	7.3	730
Refreshment for the College stds during the Edu program	Students & Leaders	30	10.09	1060
Lunch/Dinner towards Longsho leaders (five days)	Leaders	5	96.6	1450
One hall for the Education program	Hall	1	3.8	400
Altogether Tea/Biscuits before kids left camp spot	Students & Leaders	30	6.19	650
<b>Total Cost of one traveling camp</b>				<b>6610</b>

**Cost of program in South India**

Expenses	Units	Quantity	Cost/units	Total
Longsho Leaders traveling expenses (up & down)	Leaders	5	548	5480
Guest house for the Longsho leaders (five night)	Room/night	5	150	750
Stationary for the education program	Students	100	7.3	730
Refreshment for the kids during the Edu program	Students & Leaders	105	10.09	1060
Lunch/Dinner towards Longsho leaders (ten days)	Leaders	5	130	7500
One hall for the Education program	Hall	1	3.8	400
Altogether Tea/Biscuits before kids left camp spot	Students & Leaders	105	6.19	650
<b>Total Cost of one traveling camp</b>				<b>16570</b>

## **Appendix G**

The following document was sent by Marc Bergen and TJYE requesting permission for Sonam Dorjee and Lundhup Wooser to attend an FZY camp in London.



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Marc Bergen  
marc.bergen@klgates.com

Our ref DLT/MEB  
Direct tel +44 (0)20 7360 8196  
Direct fax +44 (0)20 7648 9901  
Your ref

LDE No 58 London/Chancery Lane  
11 July 2008

Dear Sirs

**ADDENDUM TO LETTER OF SPONSORSHIP OF LHUNDUP WOESER AND SONAM DORJEE**

Further to our letter of sponsorship dated 24 June 2008, I write on behalf of Tasha Remington and myself in our respective roles as Director of FZY Keshar and trustee of the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange ("TJYE").

As noted in our letter dated 24 June 2008 Lhundup Woesser and Sonam Dorjee will arrive in London on Tuesday 22 July 2008 and depart on Thursday 14 August 2008. FZY and TJYE will be responsible for all activities and accommodation during this period. For the avoidance of doubt we can guarantee that Lhundup and Sonam will return to Delhi after their 23-day stay in England and accept responsibility in this regard.

As noted in our letter dated 24 June 2008, we can also confirm that we have the funds in place to cover all costs and expenses associated with Sonam and Lhundup's stay in England including flights, food, accommodation, pastoral care and medical allowance. We have in fact already transferred INR 96,678.50 (£1,163.20) to Lhundup and Sonam to fund the costs of the flights, Visas and their travel expenses to and from the British embassy in Delhi from Dharamasala.

Please see a breakdown of how these funds will be allocated:

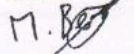
Expense	Cost (£)
Return flight tickets from Delhi to London x 2	991.28
Visa fees x 2	131.87
Travel	225
Food	550
Accommodation	0 (home hospitality/ residential camp)
Medical Allowance	400

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Pocket Money	150
Miscellaneous	200
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,648.15</b>

As Lhundup and Sonam are due to arrive in London in less than two weeks, we would be grateful if you could issue them both with Visas as a matter of some urgency. I am of course very happy to discuss their application with you. My work telephone number is: (0044) 207 360 8196, mobile number is: (0044) 7709 348255, and e-mail address: marc.bergen@kigates.com.

Yours faithfully



Marc Bergen

Trainee Solicitor, K&L Gates

Trustee of Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange



התנועה הציונית בצעירותה  
הציונית בכריסטמה

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Clara Sherman, Tracy  
Benjamin, Michael Freeman,  
Craig Caplan, Robert Helon.

Office Manager:  
Louisa Jacobs

Year Course Administrator:  
Vivienne Stone

Dear Sir/Madam,

24 June 2008

Letter of Sponsorship of Lhundup Woesser and Sonam Dorjee

I am writing to you regarding the travel of two Tibetan youth workers, Lhundup Woesser and Sonam Dorjee this summer to England to take part in a summer camp.

Introduction

The summer camp is called "FZY Kasher" and is organised by the Federation of Zionist Youth ("FZY") which is a large Jewish youth movement in the UK (<http://www.fzy.org.uk>). The camp is based at Chantmarle Centre, Frome St. Quintin, Dorset DT2 0HD. There will be 160 15-year-old participants.

Each of the Tibetans have had extensive youth experience within Longsho, the Tibetan youth organisation based in Dharamasala, India ([http://www.longsho.com/longsho\\_tvm/](http://www.longsho.com/longsho_tvm/)). Each of the Tibetans will sign CRB checks upon arrival in England.

This will be the third time that Tibetans have come over to England to work on Jewish youth movement camps and is part of a partnership of Tibetan and Jewish youth operating in India and the UK, which was formed in 2000 as a grass-roots initiative. The partnership is called the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange ("TJYE"). The Tibetans experienced no problems obtaining Visas during the previous exchanges in 2003 and 2004. For the last exchange in December 2004 our contacts at the British embassy in Delhi were Eric Taylor and Mike Crozier.

On camp we will teach the participants about Tibetan culture and social action and feel that our participants would benefit from meeting Tibetan students themselves who can teach them about their lives. The exchange provides a most valuable learning experience enabling the sharing of cultures and reinforcement of identity. The Tibetan leaders will develop essential leadership skills and build their knowledge in all areas of running a successful camp. The Jewish leaders and participants will hugely benefit from this inspiring and unique opportunity to engage with representatives of a Tibetan community with many parallels to the Jewish people.

1

FZY Letter of Sponsorship (2008) 26/06/08 1.2.doc

24 June 2008

#### Timetable

- 22 July - Tibetans arrive in London. Stay at FZY leaders' house (exact location to be confirmed);
- 23-27 July - Pre-camp residential training at: Cottesmore School, Buchan Hill, Pease Pottage, West Sussex, RH11 9AU.
- 27-29 July - Stay at FZY leaders' house (exact location to be confirmed);
- 30 July - 14 August - Camp at: Chantuarde Centre, Frome St. Quintin, Dorset DT2 0HD.
- 14 August - Tibetans return to Delhi, India.

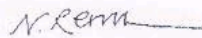
At all times until their return on 14<sup>th</sup> August, FZY will take responsibility for their safety and well-being.

#### Funding

FZY and TJYE will cover all costs of the Tibetan trip including flights and other transportation, food, accommodation and pastoral care. FZY will also provide transport to and from the airport for the Tibetans. FZY have raised £2,500 through a funding proposal to the United Jewish Israel Appeal and TJYE have also raised £2,000 in funds for the exchange. I enclose a copy of TJYE's accounts showing funds in excess of £3,500 (all of which is available to fund the Tibetans' trip if necessary).

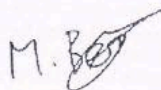
I hope that you can assist us in enabling the Tibetan students to come to our camp; it will be a fantastic opportunity for all involved.

Yours faithfully,



Natasha Remington

Director of FZY Keshar



Marc Bergen

Trainee Solicitor, K&L Gates

Trustee of Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange





## Photos



This photo is of the original founders of TJYE and Longsho with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>



This is a photo from a Longsho camp. This is what informal education looks like in action! This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>





Informal education is fun! This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>



Two Jewish youth participating in TJYE and attending one of Longsho's camps to help share the knowledge of informal education they have gained from being involved in their own Jewish youth movements. Dinner time! This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>



Longsho students having fun participating in a *tsampa* eating contest where someone else uses their arms in place of yours to feed you! This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>



Group photo at the end of the camp! The four posters in the center spell out the Hebrew word *shalom*, peace. This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>





Longsho Residential Training Camp in Ladak, India in the summer of 2009. This photo is found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



Playing games outside! Longsho Residential Training Camp in Ladak, India in the summer of 2009. This photo is found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



Two student participants presenting a poster about the importance of language at the Longsho Residential Training Camp in Ladak, India in the summer of 2009. This photo is found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



Learning about the Tibetan Jewish youth exchange at the Longsho Residential Training Camp in Ladak, India in the summer of 2009. This photo is found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



Building a pyramid! at the Longsho Residential Training Camp in Ladak, India in the summer of 2009. This photo is found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>





An example of an "identity tree" one of Longsho's favorite ways to teach the importance of identity. This is from the Longsho Winter Residential Training Camp in 2009 in Dharamsala. This photo can be found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



Having fun at the Longsho Winter Residential Training Camp in 2009 in Dharamsala. This photo can be found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>





Fundraising for Longsho in Dharamsala in 2005. This photo can be found on the Longsho website, <http://www.longsho.org>



This is a photo I took of what was the Longsho office on Boxer road in Mcleod Ganj, Dharamsala, India. The office has recently moved to a new location on Tipa road in Mcleod Ganj. Unfortunately, due to the disarray from the recent move, neither office was in condition to be photographed!



The Longsho sign that hangs outside of the Longsho office! This photos is a bit old, the sign is more weathered now than it appears in this photo! This photo is found on the TJYE website, <http://www.tjye.org.uk/gallery/>



This is a photo of me with two of my informants, Jamyang Dorjee on the left and Pema Tenzin in the center. We are in front of the new Longsho office location on Tipa road in Mcleod Ganj.

## **Methodology**

When the independent study period first began, I had already been in contact with a few key people, Pema Tenzin la and Marc Bergen. I had previously spoken both Marc and Pema Tenzin, and expressed my interest in Longsho and TJYE. Throughout the months leading up to the independent study period I was kept in the loop, through e-mail correspondence with both Marc and Pema Tenzin, about what was currently going on in TJYE and Longsho. I was copied in conversations conducted through e-mail amongst the organizers of TJYE and Longsho. In late October I received a few e-mails from Marc about Longsho's current financial troubles and possible solutions for this. I was told that Longsho probably would not have a winter camp this year, and if they did manage to have a winter camp it would not be until late December, once I had already returned to the United States following the end of the SIT program.

I was originally quite disappointed to hear about Longsho's financial struggles, but as I have learned over the past month of research for this project, the situation is not as desperate as I had thought. While Longsho is still in serious need of funding, they have recently moved into a new, smaller office and the current president Jamyang Dorjee and incoming president Pema Tenzin have both been working very hard to raise funds and to organize a winter camp for Longsho that they hope will take place at a monastery in Dharamsala later this winter.

Much of this project was inspired by and conducted through my own personal relationships with my informants. While literary research played some part, particularly reading Rodger Kamenetz's "The Jew in the Lotus," the majority of this project has been dependent on conversation and exploring my own interests in the context of TJYE, an organization, now that it is on my radar, which is a point of interest for me personally. While I know that this is not supposed to be a record of my personal journey, I have done my best to allow my passion to show through as inspired academic research.



### **Brief Biography of My Independent Study Project Advisor, Marc Bergen**

Marc Bergen is 27 years of age and is from Leeds, England. Marc is a former member of FZY, The Federation of Zionist Youth, a Zionist, Pluralist, Jewish youth movement in the UK. After high school Marc spend a year in Israel with FZY. Marc is a lawyer and found out about TJYE and became involved after a three week trip he took to Tibet. He visited Dharamsala after this trip and was “struck by all of the Tibetan nationalism there.” Marc found TJYE written on a building, and being “very nosey” went in to see what it was. On the wall he saw many pictures and in those pictures, many people that he knew from his years involved in FZY. Once he returned to England, Marc e-mailed a lot of people who he knew were involved in TJYE. Marc has been a Trustee of TJYE for the past four years and has worked to continue the Tibetan Jewish youth exchange through helping to send Jewish youth to India and to bring Tibetan youth to England.

## **Bibliography**

### **Lectures and Courses**

Akestor, Matthew. Political History of Modern Tibet. 17 October 2010.

Lecture with entire SIT Nepal: Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples Fall 2010 group.

Dobkowski, Professor Michael. Foundations of Jewish Thought. January-May 2009.

Course offered through the Religious studies department in the spring semester of 2009 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges

### **Primary Sources**

Bergen, Marc. Personal Interview via skype and e-mail correspondence. October-November 2010.

Trustee of TJYE for the past four years, lawyer and past member of the Federation of Zionist Youth in England. Marc is my advisor for this independent study project (ISP). I first got in touch with Marc when I sent an e-mail to the “contact us” e-mail address listed on the Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE) website. There is a brief biography of Marc which can be found previously on page 71. (MBergen@reedsmith.com)

Dorjee, Jamyang. Personal interview. 24 November 2010 at 10:30am.

Current and outgoing (2009 and 2010) President of Longsho. I met Jamyang and Pema Tenzin at the same time at the new Longsho office on Tipa road in Mcloed Ganj, Dharamsala, India.

Dorjee, Sonam. Personal interview. 17 November 2010 at approximately 4:00pm .

Longsho Youth Worker 2004. Currently Sonam is the President of the Dharamsala chapter of Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). I met Sonam through the recommendation of Neema-la, one of our, SIT Nepal Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples Fall 2010, Tibetan language teachers in Mcloed Ganj, Dharamsala, India.

Dorjee, Sonam. Personal interview. 20 Novemebr 2010 at approximately 3:30pm

Dorjee, Tenzin (Tendor). E-mail correspondence. 16-24 November 2010

Current Executive Director of Students for a Free Tibet. Studied at the TCV (Tibetan Children’s Village) and at Brown University. Currently living in New York, USA. I met Tendor first when our entire SIT Nepal Tibetan and Himalayan Peoples Fall 2010 group attended his talk in Mcloed Ganj, Dharamsala, India on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2010. Although I do not specifically quote Tendor anywhere in my paper, I am including him here because I spoke to him through out the independent study period and he encouraged my thinking about several ideas presented in this paper. (tendor@studentsforafreetibet.org)

Mellen, Rabbi Mike. E-mail correspondence. 16 - 24 November 2010.

Current Director of the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) and Rabbinic Dean of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Kutz Camp. I know Rabbi Mike from my own involvement in NFTY and through working at the URJ Kutz Camp. Rabbi Mike currently live in New York, USA. (mmellen@urj.org)

Tenzin, Pema. Personal interview. 24 November 2010 at 10:30am.  
Incoming (2010 and 2011) President of Longsho. I was first in touch with Pema Tenzin after sending an e-mail to the "contact us" e-mail address on the Longsho website.  
(longsho\_tym@yahoo.com)

Wooser, Lhundup. Personal interview. 21 November 2010 at 11:00am.  
President of Longsho in 2006 and 2007. He currently works at Village Tours and Travel on Dolma Chowk road in Mcloed Ganj, Dharmsala, India. I met Lhundup through the recommendation of Pema Tenzin.

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### **Suggestions for Further Research**

I would love to see some further research on the people who have participated in Longsho and TJYE. I would love to know what their experience were and how their lives were affected or changed by participating in TJYE and Longsho. It would be really interesting to see what the older, former participants of TJYE and Longsho are doing now. Did they stay involved in activism in some way? Maybe they became involved in the leadership TJYE itself and moved to England! Maybe they are no longer involved in activism at all, but how did Longsho change the way they live everyday? It would be great to know if the informal education continues outside of Longsho and TJYE in Tibetan homes and among Tibetan families and friends.