

# LONGSHO SUMMER RESIDENTIAL TRAINING CAMP 2009



**Contact:**

Longsho\_tym@yahoo.com

<http://www.longsho.org>



## TIBETAN YOUTH IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP

TCV SCHOOL, CHOGLAMSAR, LADAKH

July 2009

*A Final Completion Report*



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

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## I. INTRODUCTION:

### 1.1 What is Longsho?

Longsho is an organisation endorsed by His Holiness The Dalai Lama to preserve Tibetan cultural identity among youths in exile through Jewish model of **informal education**. As the Tibetan civilization is facing with tremendous destruction in its own homeland under china's occupation and in exile too, Longsho tries to bring together all Tibetan youths in exile around the world to take pride, preserve Tibetan Buddhist culture and above all persuade strong connection with Tibet, which the China is trying to divide by categorizing exile Tibetans as Hindi speaking Tibetans. Longsho believe that only strong preservation of Tibetan culture in exile can keep the hope of Tibetan struggle. Besides Longsho also provide platform to young Tibetans to become responsible members of the Tibetan community and prepare for future leadership.



Longsho in Tibetan means to arise, to stand up. The star in the Longsho logo is the Jewish Star of David. The two colours and the rising sun represent the Tibetan flag and its identity. Thus the logo represents the ongoing youth exchange of Inter Diaspora culture between Tibetan and Jews. These exchange programme are fully support by Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange U,K (TJYE). The learning from the exchange programme and from the Jewish camps are the

source of knowledge and inspiration to Longsho activities.

Longsho does not desire to be a political entity. We believe that, although it is hard to separate politics from identity, it causes a lack of attention from the individuals in their journey of making their own decisions and opinions about their lives.



Longsho is entirely run by youths with two youth workers and bunch of youth volunteers. After very two years, new president and youth workers are elected giving platform to fresh youths graduate from universities. Longsho conducts **training camps** at school and college level and those youths inspired after graduation join Longsho as youth workers and volunteers. These youth again inspire schools and college youths thus; Longsho works in a cyclic form maintaining it's purely youth movement from one generation to another generation.

## 1.2 The History:

In 1999, Kalela Lancaster, a young Jewish woman from London, UK visited Dharamsala. She involved herself in the community as a volunteer for a few months. When she participated in a seven day peace march to commemorate the Tibetan uprising in 1959, she saw how transformed these young people were when they had an outlet for their passion, for their country and their identity and how eager they were to take on leadership roles. Her experience not only moved her deeply, but also reminded her of the powerful atmosphere created at the Jewish summer camps she had attended as a teenager in the Orthodox Zionist youth movement Bnei Akiva. The idea suddenly came to her, maybe she could give the young Tibetans a chance to come and see the youth movement structures that exist in the Jewish community; some kind of exchange. Though some of the 'secrets' of Jewish survival are not transferable, like Shabbat, kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) and other religious rituals, but the educational aspect is. Lancaster is not the first to draw links between Tibetan and Jewish experiences. Back in 1990, a group of mostly American Jews met with the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan political and spiritual leader, who called on them to share the secret of Jewish survival in exile.

She begin to form committee called Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange (TJYE) to pursue the idea - which drew several graduates of Zionist youth movements - and brought in members of the 300-strong Tibetan community in the UK. She also secured funding from the UK Jewish Aid and International Development charity and the Tibet Relief Fund. Kalela Lancaster runs first informal education techniques with a group of Tibetans, who later become youth leaders. These Tibetan youth leaders latter run own training programmes in Tibetan refugee schools and an organization called Longsho was formed. In 2001 they were invited to meet with the Dalai Lama, where they received his blessing for the project. His Holiness said

*I am happy with the TJYE project for two reasons: firstly I have always believed that the Tibetans can learn from the experience of over two thousand years of Jewish Diaspora. Secondly exchange program of this kind are always useful in creating exposure for the Tibetan youths and an opportunity to learn new skills. Both these*



*are important to the Tibetan people particularly at this very critical time of our history. I fully support the work of TJYE and would like to appeal others to do the same.*

Thus with the blessing from the His Holiness on 8 June 2001, Longsho came into birth and celebrate it as its foundation day.

In summer 2001, the Summer Training Exchange Programme was established, planned and organised. Four Tibetan youth leaders, the founders of this project, Kalsang Dorjee, Namgyal, Sonam Dechen, Nyima Wangmo were sent to the UK to experience a six-week intensive informal education training programme and to participate in three Jewish summer camps. The programme was a massive success. The Tibetan youth leaders gained new skills and understanding as well as a lot of new friends and support for the project. On their return, they organize residential camps by themselves and since then, every year Longsho run two residential camps in summer and winter. The story of Longsho then begins....

### **1.3 The missions:**

Overall goal being to preserve Tibetan cultural identity among youths in exile through informal education, the specific missions of Longsho are as follow

- a. To create a platform for young Tibetans to learn and keep their unique identity alive.
- b. To share informal education techniques used in Jewish youth movements and empower Tibetan youths to implement them in the Tibetan community.
- c. 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
- d. To create a National Longsho Network and global and cross-cultural awareness.

### **1.4 The activities**

- a. Residential Training camps
- b. Travelling camps
- c. Tibetan JewishYouth exchange
- d. Fund raising

## II. CAMP PREPARATION:

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### 2.1 Introduction:

Longsho organises 10 days of two residential training camps every year in the month of June (summer) and January (winter) for school going Tibetan refugee children in India. The objective is to aware children the importance of Tibetan unique cultural identity through informal education and inspires them to preserve and internalised the peaceful Tibetan cultural. Informal education is technically a different system of providing education to children which we are inspired and embraced it from Jewish youth movement. In training camps, we teach children how we do on occasions like Losar (New Year) and Marriage etc... We teach from playing Tibetan musical instruments, folkdance, and Tibetan opera to telling Tibetan mythology and history from Nytri Tsenpo, the first king of Tibet. We let know the biographies of His Holiness and other great leaders like Amdo Gonpo Tashi. We also teach Buddhism from basic principals like 4 noble truths to practices like 8 offerings and describe all religious festivals. Besides cultural activities, we also try to shape their leadership qualities by assigning group responsibilities. Through active participation in the camp, we try to empower children to think and decide of their own and understand between good and bad.

This year, Longsho summer training camp was held at TCV School Ladakh in July. This time we are able to educate about 42 students. We got every care from the school side to have a quality camping. This is our first residential training camp in Ladakh region and also the first time for Ladakh children to receive such kind of activity in their life.

The reasons for choosing TCV School Ladakh as 2009 summer camp spot are:

- a. Firstly the Ladakh region is so far away that no camps were held so far. Since educating at new place and to new participants is a part of Longsho's struggle, we choose this place.
- b. Secondly Ladakh is one of the major Tibetan populated area cut-off from rest of the country, Longsho need to educate younger generation particularly on Tibetan identity and its importance in the struggle movement. Besides youth empowerment is also very important in the region.

Our expectation at beginning of the training camp was quite low because it is our first training camp but when we saw the student's involvement and their participations, it really turned into a very successful camping and also it become a great inspiration to the leaders.

## 2.2 Camp leaders

We contacted Mr. Marc & Anna TJYE U.K. about Jewish youth leaders to attain Longsho summer camp and 4 of Jewish youths Ben Tankel, Seb Vandermolen, Adam and Rachel Wootliff all from U.K. came to help us for the camp..

In total, we have 9 efficient leaders, 4 youth leaders from U.K and remaining 5 leaders From Dharamsala. We want to thank Mr. Marc and all TJYE members for giving us such a spectacular helping hand to bring successful camping. Jewish youth leaders did wonderful job. We found them very talented to lead the camp. Thank you Ben Tankel, Seb Vandermolen, Adam & Rachel Wootliff.

## 2.3 Pre-camp session:

At the very beginning, Longsho planned to conduct summer camp 2009 at school which is located nearby Dharamsala but after having series of discussion among leaders we finally decided to conduct the summer camp 2009 at TCV School Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir State, north India.

On 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2009, we took the first step to communicate with concern school heads, after getting good response from school, we immediately had youth meeting on theme for summer camp. Finally, **Tibetan Youth Identity/Leadership** was decided and simultaneously we begun our camp preparation from 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 till 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2009. On 25<sup>th</sup> we had pre summer camp at



*On the way to Ladakh*



Longsho office and on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> we remain busy writing camp banners and purchasing stationary items for camp and final conformations call to the school.

After finishing work at Dharamsala, we started our journey towards Leh Ladakh by bus and hold overnight at Manali next day we left to Ladakh and reached Ladakh on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2009.

#### 2.4. Camp preparation:

On 7<sup>th</sup> of July we went to school to meet school heads at the same time to take glimpse of camp spot and over handed camp spot. On 8<sup>th</sup> all the leaders hold overnight at camp spot to make an every arrangement for camp and for participants



*Longsho youth leaders preparing at camp spot on 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2009*

*View of Longsho 2009 summer residential camp spot.*



### III. DAY ONE

#### 3.1 Morning session:

On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009 morning 7:00 am, we welcome all the 42 participants (18 boys & 24 girls) at camp spot. We first had a group photo and then served rooms and breakfast. After having breakfast, we then began the Longsho summer residential training camp, 2009 at 9.00 am with photos exhibition of Longsho's previous camps and others activities at spots atrium. After that, Longsho president introduced rules & regulations of the camp, followed by participant's individual introduction. All participants are then divided in **4 core groups** namely A, B, C & D. Each group had 10 children and 2 leaders (1 Tibetan and 1 Jew). After playing few games like name game to know each other better in the core groups, at 10:00 am begins the first topic on **"Introduction to Longsho TJYE"** by Longsho president Mr. Jamyang Dorjee. Under this topic, we focused on 3 main things firstly, what is Longsho? Secondly why Longsho is working with Jewish Youth Movements? And finally why Longsho involves school going Tibetan children and youths? After the presentation, we had 15 minutes for refreshment & refreshing games.



*Photos exhibition of Longsho's past camps*



*Group photo on the day first of training camp*



On 11:15am we had tea break for another 15 minutes and soon after the tea break began question answer sessions followed by group wise presentation on what they learned from the first topic on Introduction of Longsho.



*Group wise chart presentations on topic introduction to longsho TJYE*

After presentation we divided students into again 4 different groups' completely base on their sense of creativity called "**creative group**". In creative group, children themselves form another groups based on their interest and skills in creativity things e.g. in the this camp we have four creative groups namely, Art group, dramatic group, song & dance group and camp in motion group. Every day from 12:15 till 1:00pm, children work in their creative groups and produce something at the end of the camp, which then will be presented to people during closing ceremony.



*Students actively participating at their creative groups*





*1:00pm to 2:00pm: lunch time with their core group members.*

### 3.2 After lunch session:

After lunch at 2:00pm we had mind refreshing games for few minutes and started second topic on **“Tibetan culture identity, its significance and threats”** for 45 minutes followed by **“Role of youth in preservation of cultural identity”** by using interesting informal method such as tree of identity and group wise skit play on importance of keeping identity & youth responsibility in exile.



*Students putting up their own definition of identity on leaves to form identity tree and skit play on youth responsibility.*

Soon after skit play we had light refreshment with snacks and soft drink, some interesting games related to topic. From 4:30pm to 5:30pm we had long break to take bath and wash their cloth outside camp spot. On 5:30pm we had video show on Tibetan culture songs and dance by Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts (TIPA). On 6:30pm we had Tibetan cooking class traditional dishes in camp kitchen followed by games. On 7:00pm we had dinner.



*Watching Tibetan folk songs on video*



*Dinner time with core group members*

### **3.3 Evening session:**

At 7:30pm we had evening programmes on cultural night. In this particular programme, students can show their talent related to Tibetan culture and tradition. Latter, Jewish leaders taught some new and interesting games. From half past eight till nine, we played some games and at 9:00pm, it was time for bed.

The leaders met at 9.00 pm for an hour to review and feedback on the today's finished activities and plan for tomorrow's programme.

## VI. DAY TWO:

The bell rang at 7:00 in the morning. Children wake up and get ready for a new day.

### 4.1 Morning session:

From 7:30 to 8:00 am, we had Morning Prayer followed by aerobic exercises which includes meditation, Yoga and jogging. Around 8:00am, breakfast was served.



*Morning Prayer and exercises/meditations*

At 9:00am, we began with the new topic on **“Importance of Tibetan language”**. Here we discussed why Tibetan language is important for us particularly in exile situation. We also discuss what will happen if Tibetans no longer read/writes Tibetan language. We then discussed methods to strengthen our language and prevent it from mixing with other languages. After tea break at 10:00am, the children core group and gave presentation on what they had learned from the topic. After presentations we had some games.

### 4.2 After lunch session

At 2:00 pm, after having heavy lunch, we had some refreshing games to make children active and began with next topic on democracy entitled **“How important the democracy is?”** We had an interesting game to find out the letter of democracy by students in their groups which is hidden by leaders and whoever finds faster is rewarded. We then celebrated the democracy day with cake and soft drink, snacks.





### *Celebrating Democracy Day*

At 3:30pm, we introduced Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), Tibetan government in exile and talked about Tibetan Democracy, explaining three pillars of our democracy by informal education method. We let know, how members of parliament “Chetus” and Prime Minister Kalon Tripa are elected in Tibetan democracy. We also talked about various departments of CTA (Executive part) and functioning of those various departments under Kashag.

After having short break at 4:30pm, creative session began at 5:00pm. From 5:45pm till 6:30pm, we had some new games and other activities such as sing a song hour.



### *Out-side games playing with Jewish leaders.*

From half past six to seven pm, we had discussion with Jewish leaders about democracy and other related topics and then we had dinner.

### **4.3 Evening Session:**

After dinner from 7:45pm till 9:00pm we had group wise debate on “**democratic government better than Socialist/communist government**” in both Tibetan and English languages. After that children went for bed. The longsho leaders met again at 9.00 pm for an hour to review and feedback on the today’s finished activities and plan for tomorrow’s programme.

## V. DAY THREE

At 7:00am, we wake up again after the bell and get ready for Morning Prayer exercises.

### 5.1 Morning session

At 7:30am, we started the day with Morning Prayer followed by basket ball match followed by delicious and nutritious breakfast. At 9:00am, we began our programme with a new lesson on **"Career Counselling"** we invited school teachers to speak on their teaching subjects and explain



*Teacher counselling & sharing stories on career*

possible careers/profession that are related the subject. The teachers also share their career story to children, which were found eye opening and quite inspirational to the children. The talk by teachers is followed by questions answers session. After that, creative groups met again and got into actions from 12.pm till 1.00pm

### 5.2 After lunch session:

From 1:00pm to 2:00pm was lunch break and from 2:00pm, we begin our discussion with a new subject on **"Personality development"**. We talk about what is personality, how do we differentiate between good & bad personality



*Children doing skit on personality development*

and finally share some tips on personality development. Besides, we talked about other personality development related things like how to face an interviews etc... through short play and group wise presentations. After that, we have some nice mind refreshing games



*Children playing mind refreshing games*

From 4:00pm to 4:30pm, we break for short period with snacks & fruit juice. After that, we had football matches among the core groups. From 5:00pm to 6:00pm, the creativity group met again and continue their works. At 6:00pm, we showed an award winning documentary called "Unwinking Gaze" to the children.



### 5.3 Evening session:

*Drawing creative group in action*

At 7:00pm we had dinner in the core groups.

After dinner, we had quiz competition among the core groups on Tibetan cultural identity related issues. The winner groups as well as children getting the right answer received prizes. At 8:30 till 9:00 pm, the children and leaders together sang Tibetan songs and enjoy folk dance (Gorshae).

At 9.00 pm children went to bed and leaders met again to review and feedback on the today's finished activities and plan for tomorrow's programme.



## VI. DAY FOUR

We considered this day as a Jewish day and the whole day we learned about Jewish youth movement. The programs were entirely run by Jewish leaders, others leaders simply help them.

### 6.1 Morning session:

At 7:00am, the bell rang. Children wake up and got ready for Morning Prayer & exercises. At 7:30 am we had Morning Prayer and yoga. At 8:00am we had breakfast and began our day's main programme on **"Introduction to Jewish Youth Movement"** by our Jewish leaders. They talked about the history/origin of Jewish youth movement, its objectives and its past achievements. They also talked about Tibetan Jewish Youth Exchange programme (TJYE) and introduced some of the popular Jewish Youth Movements in Europe and America. Finally they conclude by relating Jewish Youth Movement with Longsho. The Jewish leaders then played skit on how Jewish struggled in exile. After the lesson, the children break into core group, discussed and gave presentation on what they had learned on the subject. Overall, it was a great learning for children in the camp. From 12:pm to 1:pm, the children reassemble into different creative groups and continue with their yesterday's works.



*Student's giving explanation on the history of Jewish and Israel and making a Jewish temple in Jerusalem.*

## 6.2 After lunch session:

After lunch from 2:00pm 3:00pm we discussed on a new subject “Similarities between Jews and Tibetan in exile”.



*Students finding out the main similarity between Jews and Tibetan in exile*



From 3:30pm to 4:30pm we had core group discussion on “**Jewish achievement in 2000 years of exile**’ followed by questions and answers session with Jewish youths. We then had a little break and from 5:30 pm to 6:30pm we had documentary movie show on Tibetan history and traditional folk dances and songs.

## 6.3 Evening session:

At 7:00pm we had dinner in core groups and after dinner from 7:45pm to 9:00pm we had a special program lead by Jewish youths. It is called Outdoor chill evening programme. At 9:00pm, children went for bed and leaders met to review and feedback on the today’s finished activities and plan for tomorrow’s programme.



*Outdoor chill evening programme by Jewish youth leaders*



## VII. DAY FIVE

### 7.1 Morning session:

As usual, we wake up after the bell at 7.00 am and get ready for Morning Prayer exercises. At 7:30am we had Morning Prayer followed by aerobic exercises and at 8:00am, we had breakfast.

At 9:00am we began with our day's main topic on "**substances abuse**". One of the local school teacher Gen Tsering Ngodup la introduced the concept substances abuse and explained how youths come under the clutches of these substances and suffer deadly consequences. One of our Jewish leader Mr Ben introduced some deadly diseases caused by these substances and guided children not to take those drugs. After that, skit competition was organised among the core group on the theme drugs abuse. After that from 12:00pm to 12:30pm, creative session held and from 12:30 pm till 1:00 pm, mind refreshing games were played.



*Groups performing at Skit competition on the theme "Drug abuse"*



### 7.2 After lunch session:

After lunch at 1:00pm, we had documentary movie show on drugs abuse and effect of smoking followed by questions and answers from the leaders and discussions among the core groups. At 4:00pm we had a tea break and after that again creative session went on. From 5:00pm to 7:00pm we had football semi final match between core group B and group D and final match between core group B and after group B wining the semi final match.

### 7.3 Evening session

At 7:00pm, we had dinner break, followed by talent night till 8.30pm and children went to bed by 9.00pm. Leaders met again for review and plan for tomorrow's programme.



## VIII. DAY SIX

### 8.1 Morning session:

As usual, we wake up after the bell at 7.00 am and get ready for Morning Prayer exercises. At 7:30am we had Morning Prayer followed by aerobic exercises and at 8:00am, we had breakfast. Since today is the last day of the training camp, the two important work of the day is dissemination of what we have done in last five days to the local public and packing up camp spot and bags of children.

At 9:00 am, all children gathered and start we clean up their rooms and their surroundings. At 11:00am, we had a small tea-break and continued cleaning camp site till 12:30pm. Thereafter, we prepare atrium for conclusion ceremony.



*Campus cleaning*

### 8.2 Afternoon session:

After lunch at 1:30pm, we had dress rehearsal of creative groups. At 3:00pm, we had final foot ball match between core group A and B and finally core group B came out as winner of 2009 summer residential training camp at Ladakh.

On 4:30pm we had closing ceremony of the camp. We have invited TCV School administrators as chief guests and children's parents at the function. The output of past five days by children during

creative session was displayed at the function. Art group and Camp in motion group displayed their drawings and daily camp's journal report. Dance group and Dramatic group performed skit and



dance at the function.

*Creative drama group performing dramatic act at closing ceremony*

After student performance, prizes were distributed to better performers and creative groups. In the end, Longsho President delivered a thank you speech and with that concluded the ceremony and the 2009 Longsho summer residential training camp.

### 8.3 Evening session:

At 7:30pm, we had especial dinner with school heads arranged by school. After dinner we had



*Children returning home after 5 days of training camp*



*Seven camp leaders (One missing)*

some time for Tibetan traditional group dances. In between, children become busy exchanging departing greetings to each other and slowly they all went to home with their parents.



## IX. Conclusions

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After having a week long interactive camping, all children participants become closer to each other and above all, had gained lot of new information and exposure on the various topics. Since this kind of informal education training was first of its kind in the region, the children as well as teachers and parents like it very much. Unlike class room education, we found children learn faster with fun. Besides some of the functional education like learning how we celebrate cultural festival and occasions really reinforce their learned knowledge and broaden their general awareness about the Tibetan culture and issue. Besides, side by side emphasis on individual personality development by leaders has also made little impact on the empowerment of children. We believe these kind of essential social skills will definitely these children in near future.

We regret for not able to enjoy the camp longer period as usual because school permitted us for a week camping .But end of the day our camping brought much wonder and smile on the face of young school children.

As we organise residential training camp twice every year, any physical or financial support to the camp is welcome. Frankly, we require more volunteer Tibetan youth leaders for running camps. Our anticipation for future support and concern towards Longsho from our friend from different parts of world will definitely be more acquisitive for camping. Please contact [Longsho\\_tym@yahoo.com](mailto:Longsho_tym@yahoo.com) or log on to [www.longsho.org](http://www.longsho.org).

We again want to thank our Jewish leaders namely Ben Tankel, Seb Vandermolen, Adam & Rachel Wootliff and Tibetan leaders namely Lobsang Dhargyal, Tsering Nodup, Karma Namgyal and Karma Tenzin for running the camp. You all know, this camp won't be as successful without your selfless effort.

Thanking You

Mr Jayang Dorjee  
Longsho President