Generosity is a great treasure. No thief can steal it, no fire destroy it, no water can ruin it, no king can command it. Generosity cleanses the mind of selfishness and greed, relieving our weariness as we travel through life. It is our best and closest friend, constantly giving pleasure and comfort.

This excerpt is from the Jātaka tale “A Small Portion of Gruel,” the story of a benevolent and powerful king who realizes that his good fortune has arisen from his generosity in a previous life. The Jātakamālā, a collection of stories describing the Buddha’s past lives, forms a part of the Kangyur collection that was freely distributed at the World Peace Ceremony for the Tibetan people to study from, share with others and enjoy.
Victoria Riskin’s passion for human rights and openness to other cultures was inspired by her father, the son of Jewish immigrants, and her movie-star mother. “My father was naturally sensitive to the struggles of the underdog,” she said. Robert Riskin became an Oscar-winning screenwriter whose concern for social justice infused his work in such films as Meet John Doe, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town and Lost Horizon. Her mother, actress Fay Wray, had a keen interest in theosophy, a turn-of-the-century spiritual movement which encouraged the study of comparative religion and philosophy.

Ms. Riskin, a writer-producer and psychologist, is a strong voice for international human rights and social justice. A founding member of the California Committee South of Human Rights Watch, she has received multiple awards for her impassioned advocacy. For years she has had a special place in her heart for the Tibetan people. “I always thought of Tibet as a romantic, protected place like in the movie Lost Horizon,” she said. “Then I learned of its brutal treatment and the destruction of its temples and sacred writings. That was shocking to me.”

When she met Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche at the Nyingma Institute in 1972, she was impressed with his clear focus on preserving the culture of Tibet. “As time went on I could see he was producing tangible results. He was restoring texts and artwork vital to the Tibetan heritage.” She also felt secure in choosing Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche’s organization “because of its low overhead and the commitment and continuity of its staff.” Her goal was to provide flexible, long-term support. Her strategy was to include a bequest in her living trust that would create a permanent endowment to support TAP and other Nyingma organization projects with the principal preserved and the income used to meet changing needs.

She sees the emphasis Tibetan culture places on equanimity and compassion as worth preserving, as a necessary counterbalance to the prevalent grasping materialism. “I hope others consider a bequest. It’s a way to have a significant impact. Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche does not just talk about his vision. He manifests it. That’s amazing.”

Continued from first page: Bodh Gaya

Monasteries and nunneries throughout the Himalayan region will have new, durable copies in their libraries, allowing for years of study and transmission to future generations.

Heather Gunther, a volunteer who helped to produce the books, recently returned from Bodh Gaya. She wrote in an email, “I have an especially memorable moment in mind: the very last person I distributed books to, took every box, lifted it to his head and then put it into the tuk-tuk [motor rickshaw] - the whole time chanting mantra. He told me several times, ‘I am so grateful for these books.’”

As the Tibetan Aid Project touches lives and replenishes libraries across the Himalayas, our sister organizations are reinvigorating holy sites throughout India. Next December, the Light of Buddha Dharma Foundation International will work in conjunction with Theravadin Buddhists from nine countries to sponsor the sixth annual International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony, also held in Bodh Gaya. LBDFI has several other projects underway, all aimed at beautifying the ancient and sacred places where the Buddha walked and taught. These projects and ceremonies are restoring and transforming the physical and spiritual landscapes of Bodh Gaya and other holy places.

The Tibetan Aid Project celebrates forty years of service knowing that our free distribution of sacred texts has preserved the teachings that form the foundation of Tibetan culture. Wangmo Gellek Dixey, who serves on our Board, attended this year’s ceremony. As she told the staff on her return, “You couldn’t offer a better gift than a book for the future generation.” The gesture of giving the gift of a book is as profound as it is simple: an offering of compassion and hope.

Save the Date: Tibetan Aid Project’s Annual Benefit Dinners RSVP at 800.338.4238
**Thank you to Our Donors of 2009**

As a way to acknowledge and honor your contributions, all names were read aloud in Bodh Gaya at the January 2010 ceremonies.

*indicates member of Community of 1,000 Blessings

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### Thank You for Your Generosity

*Names are alphabetized by surname.*
Continued from previous page: Donors of 2009

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