

Dear Readers,

Tibetan Women's Association would like to wish all the readers a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. With the turn of this New Year, we all aspire to witness a turn of events for the Tibet cause as well. Tibetans everywhere shoulder responsibility to resolve the Tibet issue, but more of a responsibility lies on the youth of Tibet. Thus, youth empowerment has been the goal of the Tibetan Government in Exile as well as many Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Tibet Support Groups (TSG) around the world.

There is a palpable global emphasis on women empowerment, for it is believed that women are the key to bring constructive social change in any community. Someone once wisely said that the best way to spend a dollar is to invest it in a girl's education, as a girl will grow up to be the mother of a family and hence the most influential figure in any child's life.

TWA has also been working towards empowering Tibetan youth; especially young Tibetan females. Of the many TWA projects that are dedicated towards empowering young Tibetan females, our newest program is Tibetan Women Leadership Program (TWLP). TWLP is an annual program that TWA initiated in 2005,

which targets college going Tibetan females. In the Tibetan community, workshops are not given its due importance. The bigger picture of education needs to be painted for each individual at a tender age; an education that goes beyond the knowledge acquired from attending college classes. Many NGO's in our community in exile are offering more objective oriented workshops that are an excellent opportunity for our youth to take advantage of.

I conclude here with the hope that every Tibetan youth in exile will realize how lucky they are for being offered so many opportunities to improve themselves on many different fronts. Thank you and I wish everybody a very happy reading.

The Editor



His Holiness is Awarded the White Lotus Order

On December 10, 2006, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was awarded the White Lotus Order, the highest civilian award of the Russia's Republic of Kalmykia, "for his outstanding merits and considerable contribution to the spiritual revival and prosperity of the republic," by its Presi-



His Holiness the Dalai Lama receives the White Lotus Award from President Mr. Kirsan Nikolayevich Ilyumzhinov (left). Courtesy of OHDL

dent Mr. Kirsan Nikolayevich Ilyumzhinov. On the same day, Tibetans all over the world were celebrating the 17th anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama accepted the award on behalf of the Tibetan people and its Buddhist culture, as Tibetans' compassionate nature can be attributed strongly to the peaceful nature of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Prime Minister in exile, Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, welcomed all the representatives of Kalmykia and stated that this award is an inspiration to Tibetans everywhere. Cultures were shared through songs and dances by Tibetan, Indian and Kalmykian artists.

Content:

| | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1.....Editorial, White Lotus Order | 5.....New Year Resolutions & Tibetan Women Leadership Program | 7.....Health Page & Quotable Quotes |
| 2.....Nangpa-La Protest & Grandmother's Council | 6.....All India Tibet Support Group & Youth Liberation Front Conferences | 8.....RTWAs' Pictures & Activities |
| 3.....Chalo Delhi Movement | | |
| 4.....India Social Forum & Dhasa Protest Against Hu | | |



Nangpa-la Pass Shootings Spur Protest March

On Oct 24, Tibetan Women's Association staged a protest march in Dharamsala to condemn the shootings at Nangpa-la Pass where Chinese border patrol opened fire on a group of defenseless Tibetans on their way to exile less than one month ago; a candlelight vigil in the evening commemorated the victims from the blow. TWA spearheaded the demonstrations with five other Tibetan NGOs: TYC, Gu-Chu-Sum Movement, Friends of Tibet, Students for a Free Tibet, and the National Democratic Party of Tibet.

Seventy-five Tibetans in midst of peregrinating Nangpa-la Pass became shooting targets for Chinese border patrol on Sept 30, 2006. The exiles-to-be began their journey in Lhasa and were headed for the refugee reception center in Kathmandu. Two individuals, including a 17-year-old nun, are confirmed dead as a result of the shootings. A little more than half the refugees, 41, escaped and made it to Kathmandu in separate groups; the Chinese detained the rest after scouring the scene. The detainees' whereabouts are unknown, and a campaign has been launched to pressure the Chinese to release them.

The survivors of the Nangpa-la Pass shootings arrived at McLeod reception center early in the morning of Oct 24, one day after the anniversary of the Tibetan Children's Village. The 6 NGOs held a press conference at Tsuglagkhang temple during which escapees gave testimonies of the incident. Representatives of the organizing NGOs addressed the media thereafter and B. Tsering La, President of TWA, refuted China's absurd, official claim that the border patrol fired in self-

defense. B. Tsering called attention to video footage of the incident captured by Romanian mountaineers, irrefragable evidence that shows the group of Tibetans walking in a straight line and then scattering after shots from Chinese soldiers rained down on them.



Students protesting Nangpa La shootings in Dharamsala

After the press conference, protestors queued up for a peaceful protest march from Tsuglagkhang temple to Kachari. The streets teemed with Tibetans and foreigners chanting slogans and displaying banners for a free Tibet as they wended their way to the main square in Lower Dharamsala. Passion and devotion for the Tibet cause exuded from the demonstrators, and three youth found expression by slashing their arms and smearing the blood on their face. Others hoisted "Free Tibet" banners, waved Tibetan national flags and raised their fists into the air, demanding China to respect human rights in Tibet. At Kachari square more speakers addressed the crowds.

At dusk a candlelight vigil took place at Tsuglagkhang after demonstrators circumambulated McLeod market three times. Everyone sang the national anthem and other songs to remember those murdered and detained by Chinese officers at Nangpa-la Pass. During the vigil, everyone present watched a screening

of the shootings captured on videotape by Romanian mountaineers.

The Nangpa-la Pass survivors are now adjusting to their new lives in exile – one without their homeland or families but with democratic rights and the audience of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The children have been placed in TCV school Suja, Transit school Lower Dharamsala and TCV school in Mussorie. Monks and nuns from that Nangpa-La group joined monasteries and nunneries, while adults integrated into local economies of exiled Tibetan communities.



Fourth International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers Held in Dharamsala, India

The alliance of thirteen indigenous grandmothers was formed in the fall of 2004 and they represent indigenous people from all over the world: the Arctic Circle, North, South, and Central America, Africa, and Asia. Their first meeting was at a Tibetan retreat center in New York, and they decided to form an alliance for they were "deeply concerned with the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth and the destruction of indigenous ways of life. [They] believe the teachings of ancestors will light our way through an uncertain future". The grandmothers convene every six months and they achieve their vision through the realization of different projects that are directed at protecting "our diverse cultures: lands, medicines, language and ceremonial ways of prayer and through projects that educate and nurture our children". The Grandmothers Council meets at each grandmother's home place, and in October of 2006, the grandmothers met at Dharamsala, India.





The Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Courtesy of OHHDL

Tsering Dolma Gyaltong, serving on the Grandmothers' Council brought rest of the grandmothers to Dharamsala, as she could not bring them to Tibet, her real home place. Tsering Dolma Gyaltong was also a founding member of TWA and she served on TWA's executive member for 10 years. She has been an advisor since then to the organization. The Grandmothers' Council convened from October 13–26 in Dharamsala, and more than 150 people joined the conference. Kalon Tsering Phuntsok, Department of Religion and Culture, attended the first day of conference as their key note speaker.

All the grandmothers brought their own unique culture and heritage with them and they shared it with other grandmothers and the participants through performing sunrise, midday, and sunset prayers for unity and peace. The council also visited the Tibetan Children's Village, Dolmaling Nunnery, Gyutoe Monastery, Mentsekhang, and they were very lucky to receive a private audience with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The grandmothers approved four projects towards strengthening the Tibetan cause: Tibetan nuns' education, GuChuSum, Ex-Political Prisoners Movement, Tibetan Old People's welfare and provided a ten year scholarship program for five students in Upper TCV. Tibetan Women's Association shares the

same vision as the grandmothers of protecting mother earth and applauds their initiatives to resuscitate the indigenous way of life which is to live in harmony with nature.



Chalo Delhi: Tibetan People's Movement

On Nov 19, one day before Chinese President Hu Jin Tao's arrival to New Delhi, demonstrators rallied at the capital's sanctioned protest square, Jantar Mantar. The protest rally, under the campaign name "Chalo Delhi," lasted three days and was organized by six Tibetan NGOs, the Tibetan Women's Association included. Many late night discussions and preparations followed once the six NGO's decided to work together to organize this protest.

People from many different Tibetan settlements in exile joined the demonstration to protest against the Chinese President's summit meeting with Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. From Dharamsala, Manali, Dehradun, and Delhi, protestors numbered up to a 1,000; those who could not come gave an outpour of financial and moral support.

The first day of the "Chalo Delhi" campaign began with all the protestors walking the Jantar Mantar street towards the barricade at the far end. At the barricade, the chanting stopped and everyone observed a one-minute silence in memory of the brave Tibetans in Tibet who died fighting for freedom. The singing of the Tibetan and Indian National Anthem followed. The next two days opened in similar fashion.

Three representatives of the campaign's organizing committee spoke on the first day, each in a different language (Tibetan,

Hindi, and English) for the benefit of the diverse supporters. In the afternoon, spokespersons of Rashtrawadi Muslim Andolan, Minorities in India and Minorities Morcha addressed the crowds.

Shri Kiren Bijju ji, Member of Parliament, Arunachal Pradesh, spoke on the second day after the morning procession. He expressed his resentment over China's outrageous claim over the whole of Arunachal Pradesh on baseless grounds.

The protest donned a new look in the afternoon of the second day with poetry reading, especially patriotic poems of freedom struggle in Tibetan, Hindi, and English. Four TIPA (Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts) students performed inspirational songs for the crowds. Names and stories behind current political prisoners were also highlighted. Gen. Ngawang Woebar la called attention to the plight of all political prisoners in Chinese-occupied Tibet and asked all the ex-political prisoners present to stand up to be acknowledged and field questions about their experience.

On Nov 21, a half-day protest, Bashistha Narain Singh, Member of Parliament, spoke to the demonstrators. A street theatre teacher came and taught a play to



Tibetans Rallying against Hu Jin Tao's Visit
Courtesy of Phayul. Photo by Tenzin Dasel.



a group of volunteers among the protestors, and the group did a performance about how Tibetans and animals happily co-existed in Tibet before Chinese invasion and how they suffer at present. A concluding speech thanking all the participants for their support of the campaign closed the three-day rally.



India Social Forum

India Social Forum is the third event organized by the world social forum India, after the Asian Social Forum in Hyderabad in 2003 and the World Social Forum in Mumbai in 2004. India social forum held at Delhi was five days long; November 9 – 13, 2006. Fifty thousand people gathered for the event. More than 350 panels, conferences, seminars and workshops on a range of social, political and cultural issues were featured at the forum.



Volunteers drawing hand-prints on the banner

Tibetan Women's Association attended the conference and initiated a signature campaign for Panchen Lama's immediate release. A 30 meter white cloth marked with hand prints of different colors with the caption, "Joining Hands to Release the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima" was laid out for people to sign in

each handprint. We experienced many enthusiastic questions and interactions with the participants of India Social Forum.

With the Regional TWA members' assistance, we managed to gather the signatures quickly and we mailed it immediately to the United Nations' Committee on Rights of Child. Our main emphasis on India Social Forum was to raise awareness about the Chinese government's brutal and oppressive rule in Tibet, and their blatant abduction of the 11th Panchen Lama. In the past eleven years since his disappearance in 1995, Tibetans and child rights activists around the world have been working hard to secure his freedom. TWA will stand against China's might and with your help, we will continue the campaign for truth and for Panchen Lama's freedom.



Hu Jin Tao's Visit: Local Dharamsala Movement

A candlelight-vigil march preceded by a daylong hunger strike passed from McLeod main bus stand to Tsuglagkhang temple in the evening of Nov 20. This and other protest activities throughout India the Tibetan Women's Association organized in collaboration with five other NGOs during Chinese President Hu Jin Tao's visit from Nov 20 to 23.

Dharamsala became an important stage for demonstrators to protest President Hu's intentions to discuss Sino-India relations, including the border issue, with Indian Prime Minister and to give voice to the crimes against humanity that continue in Tibet.

On Nov 21, a peaceful protest march from Tsuglagkhang temple to Kachari brought out large numbers of protestors and



Local Tibetans in Dharamsala protest during Hu's visit to India

temporarily paralyzed normal life on the hill station. Crowds gathered in the morning at Tsuglagkhang while speakers rallied everyone's fervor.

With "Free Tibet" paraphernalia, watchwords, and banners – Tibetan demonstrators and foreign friends of Tibet emptied into the streets, headed for the main square in Lower Dharamsala. Along with decrying President Hu's track record of human rights violations in Chinese-occupied Tibet, activists exhumed other campaign issues such as releasing the 11th Panchen Lama, the world's youngest political prisoner, and stopping the Golmund-Lhasa railway as a weapon of cultural destruction. One young Tibetan student summed up the Tibet crisis on his banner: "Nangpa Pass genocide – tip of an iceberg."

Loaded with feverish Tibetans, a goods carrier truck flying an Indian and Tibetan national flag escorted activist Tenzin Tsundue among the throngs of people. Tsundue, under house arrest by the Indian government, was instructed not to leave Dharamsala during President Hu's visit. Indian security forces accordingly policed the demonstration to make sure no incidents happened.



The protest march ended at Kachari where Tsundue delivered a moving speech, addressing Tibetans, foreign activists and Indians. He thanked foreigners and “big brother” India for their support of the Tibet issue and made a pact with all the Tibetans in exile to never give up the struggle for Tibet, even in the face of persecution and death. On a final note, Tsundue appealed to the Indian public present at the demonstration and warned them to wake up to communist China’s schemes before it is too late. Do not compromise your country’s independence, he admonished Indians, further commenting that an unoccupied Tibet is imperative to India’s national security.



New Year Resolutions for Tibet by Tibetan Women in Exile



Lobsang Choedon
32 years
Dolma Ling nunnery

I will study Buddhist philosophy. I was imprisoned for three years in Tibet for being involved in political activities, and I have always participated in all protests and rallies in exile for Tibetan freedom, irrespective of any organization that organizes it. I hope that we will all work in unity to pursue our goal of freedom in Tibet.



Chime Dolkar
14 years
U.T.C.V. Student

By studying as hard as I can, by reading more books about Tibet, and by concentrating more on Tibetan culture and religion - this is how I plan on helping resolve the Tibetan issue this New Year.



Tsitara Bhuti
80 years
Retired

I will pray harder for the long life of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and for Tibet’s freedom. I will also share how good the situation in Tibet was before Chinese invasion with the younger generations born in exile and how the Chinese brutally treated us during the invasion.



Tsewang Lhamo
27 year
Teacher

Being a teacher at Model School, we focus a lot on Tibetan language. This coming year, I want to focus harder on educating my students about the rich Tibetan culture and the importance of safeguarding it. I think it will help them in the future.



Tibetan Women Leadership Program

Due to the successful Tibetan Women Leadership Program (TWLP) held in Bangalore last year, Tibetan Women’s Association decided to hold its second annual TWLP this year. Twenty participants; students from Bangalore, Baroda, Delhi and Dharamsala joined the leadership program. The five-day workshop from Dec 9 to 13 was held at Delhi Youth Hostel. The leadership program commenced on a Saturday, and Yeshe Phuntsok Acharya, Member of Parliament, opened the program as the chief guest.

Many prominent speakers followed Acharya and on the first day Kate

Saunders, Director of Communications, International Campaign for Tibet, did a media outreach workshop. Students were divided into three groups and they were given a situation that they had to decide if they were for it or against it. After brainstorming and discussing for some time, journalists interviewed the spokesperson of the groups. This exercise taught participants how to prepare for an interview beforehand.

The next two days saw direction from two American resource persons; Stephanie Goodell and Michelle Lepore. They challenged everyone’s conventional understanding of what leadership means through different activities and discussions. A modern way of thought that explained leadership as taking initiatives and teamwork superseded the old definition. No leader can be productive without a team of workers bolstering and working hard under them. In Stephanie’s own words, “Leadership is the process of a group of people working toward a common goal.” The speakers firmly believed that leaders can be made and that we can be the leaders that we have been waiting for. Another activity, *Wellness Wheel*, detected how each participant spends her time on a usual day, and the wheel then confronted everyone with how well they take care of their physical, mental and spiritual health. Almost all the girls had areas of improvement in their wellness wheel and a discussion followed on how to make these improvements.

Youdon Aukatsang la, Member of Parliament, gave a morning session on *The United Nations and Tibet*. Though all participants had some knowledge of what the UN stands for and its basic principles, none were very familiar with how the UN functions and what role it has played so far in Tibet’s freedom struggle. Many





TWLP participants with Chief guest Acharya Yeshi Phuntsok

participants admired Youdon la as a role model of a female leader in the Tibetan community. She also stressed the importance of leadership, not only referring to the person with the highest post in a given organization, but everybody working in that organization can be leaders through taking self initiatives. A panel discussion on the *Role of Tibetan Youth in the Movement* followed in the afternoon and a heated dialogue took place under panel facilitators B. Tsering la and Tsering Yangzom la.

Vijay Kranti, a photojournalist and an ardent Tibet supporter, shared with the participants the importance of communicating the Tibet issue with non-Tibetans, especially Indians. Through an exercise, he demonstrated how little Tibetans interact with Indians on a personal level despite living on their land. Kranti ji said the Tibet issue is not only Tibetan's problem, but a quagmire for Indians too. Many Indians are unaware of the border issue and it is our duty to raise their awareness, stressed Kranti ji. On the last day, Penpa Tsering la, Member of Parliament, enlightened everyone on the concepts of *The Middle Path Policy*. Penpa la cleared away many doubts about the middle path policy and urged the participants to use their democratic rights

as Tibetans in exile to either support the policy or not.

Gen. B. Tsering la introduced the participants to Tibetan Women's Association and explained its origins and mission. After her talk, all the participants voluntarily opted to be a member of TWA. The final activity as a group was to use the UN by lodging an individual complaint against the violation of human rights in Tibet. Everyone wrote to four different committees of the UN focusing on rights of children, women, racial discrimination and human rights in Tibet. Participants left feeling proud of their effort in resolving human rights issues in Tibet.



All India Tibet Support Groups Conference

October 13 – 15, 2006, Central Tibetan Women's Association attended the 2nd All India Tibet Support Group Conference held in Bodh Gaya. More than 250 people from all India Tibet support group from various regions gathered to attend this conference. The welcome speech was given by National Convener of Core Group, Dr. N. K. Trikha.

Representatives from Tibetan government in exile and Tibetan NGO's also attended this conference. The main aim of this conference is to bring more effective support from the India Tibet support group for the Tibetan people and the Tibet cause. TWA representatives urged for greater support from the Indian public to appeal to their government for the settlement of Tibetan cause on speedy negotiation.

Members attending the conference decided on the 2007 Action Plan, which marked the New Year as "The Year of Intensive Support to The Tibetan Cause".

The Tibet Support Groups will work towards the realization of establishing Women for Tibet Committees in various states in India. Effort will be put forth in setting Lawyers for Tibet Committees as well. The TSG's continue to make an effort to developing the grass roots support for the Tibetan cause in the Indian community. All the participants unanimously supported the 2007 Action plan on October 15th 2006.



Youth Liberation Front for Tibet

The Youth Liberation Front for Tibet (YLFT) organized a meeting at Rohtak, Haryana on December 27, 2006. They invited Tsering Chungdak, Miss Tibet 2006, as their chief guest. The Guests of Honor were Dr. B. Tsering Yeshi, President of Tibetan Women's Association, Captain Inder Singh, former Member of Parliament, Dr. Kuldeep Agnihotri and representative of Delhi Regional TWA. ITCO, ITSNA Asia co-ordinator too attended the meeting.

Narender Chaudhary, President of YLFT, welcomed everybody and shared with us the purpose of holding this meeting. The purpose as Mr. Chaudhary put it was to discuss "Why the Villagers and Farmers of India should Support the Cause of Tibet?"

B. Tsering Yeshi specifically mentioned the thousands of years old teacher-disciple relationship that India and Tibet shares. Now that disciple is in trouble, teacher is there to support and assist its disciple. She expressed her gratitude for all the Indian youth who attended the meeting and to the members of YLFT who organized it. Tsering Chungdak also emphasized on the importance of teacher-disciple relationship of the two countries. Being born and





Narender Chaudhary addressing the audience during the conference

raised in India, Chungdak expressed her deep concern for those who are born in Tibet and who never get the educational opportunities that she got in India. She said that with the help of Indian supporters, we could ensure human rights in Tibet and education opportunities for the youth of Tibet.



Community Health Information

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is one of the major diseases of mankind and is a serious global public health problem. It is preventable with safe and effective vaccines that have been available since 1982.

What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver, and the most common cause is infection with one of 5 viruses, called hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E. All of these viruses can cause an acute disease with symptoms lasting several weeks including yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice); dark urine; extreme fatigue; nausea; vomiting and abdominal pain.

How do people get infected ?

Hepatitis B virus is transmitted by contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person in the same way as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. However, HBV is 50 to 100 times more infectious than HIV.

The main ways of getting infected with HBV are:

- Perinatal (from mother to baby at the birth)
- Child-to-child transmission
- Unsafe injections and transfusions
- Sexual contact

Hepatitis B virus is not spread by contaminated food or water, and cannot be spread casually in the workplace.

How safe and effective is the vaccine?

Hepatitis B vaccine has an outstanding record of safety and effectiveness. Since 1982, over one billion doses of hepatitis B vaccine have been used worldwide. The vaccine is given as a series of three intramuscular doses. Studies have shown that the vaccine is 95% effective in preventing children and adults from developing chronic infection if they have not yet been infected.

Above information from www.who.org

To schedule an appointment to test for Hepatitis B or to have your child vaccinated, please contact Delek Hospital at 1892-222053/223381. For any further queries, please email Delek Hospital at delek@sancharnet.in



Intern Spotlight

Deanne Goforth is a recent intern for TWA and will be here until mid-March of 2007. She is a second-year graduate student from the University of Oregon and is currently conducting thesis research with the Tibetan community. Her major is international studies with a focus on indigenous women's empowerment. Deanne is seeking English speaking Tibetans from the community who would like to voluntarily share their views on the spiritual connection between land and Tibetan culture. Her thesis will argue that Tibetan freedom is not merely a nation state issue, but also the spiritual connection indigenous peoples have with their homeland. Her aim is to promote Tibet's freedom by interning with TWA and producing research focusing on the issue of Tibet as a means to internationally promote Tibet's freedom. If you would like to meet with Deanne to discuss these issues for research purposes, please contact her at TWA.



Quotable Quotes

A country's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women.

Mahatma Gandhi

A hand that rocks the cradle can rock the world.

Anonymous

If you educate a male, you educate an individual. If you educate a female, you educate a family.

Anonymous

If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more affective appeal to the heart than woman?

Mahatma Gandhi





RTWA Delhi participating in Chalo Delhi Campaign



RTWA Gangtok organised NED workshop



RTWA Shimla protesting Hu's visit



RTWA Delhi distributing free condoms



RTWA Deckyiling holding a candle light vigil



RTWA Mundgod condemns Hu's visit

Many Regional Tibetan Women's Association members joined the Chalo Delhi: Tibetan People's Movement for the three days in Delhi during Hu Jin Tao's visit to India. Those regional chapters that could not join supported us financially and morally, and many organized rallies, candle light vigils and petition drives in their hometowns. The following RTWAs organized local protests against Hu's visit and against Nangpa-La pass shootings of innocent Tibetans.

RTWA Mundgod ♦ Dhondupling ♦ Shimla ♦ Bylakuppe ♦ Rajpur ♦ Dharamsala Darjeeling ♦ Deckyiling ♦ Orissa.



RTWA Dhonday: Members of RTWA Dhonday celebrated World's Women Day and submitted a petition to the Human Rights Council regarding human rights violations in Tibet.

RTWA Delhi: They observed World Aids Day on December 1st and organized health awareness programs in Delhi.

RTWA Rawangla and RTWA Mainpat: They organized health workshops. The members of the two RTWA's emphasized on AIDS and Hepatitis B awareness program.



If you have any comments, critiques, or suggestions about the content or formatting of this newsletter, please write to the editor at the following address.

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For free subscription, please visit TWA office or call 1892-221198/221527. Wishing all the readers a very Happy New Year!!!

