

BOULDER-LHASA SISTER CITY PROJECT

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Visiting Lhungtse 12-17 November 2015

Lhungtse is a teen-age Tibetan girl who lives in Kham on the Tibetan Plateau (Yajiang County in western Sichuan Province of China) with her mother and brother. Because her father passed away in 2004, her mother has been working for eleven years as a farmer to support her family of three. Around 2007, Lhungtse began losing her vision in both eyes and also started suffering from headaches and seizures. In 2010, Dr. Li Tiaoying, Sichuan Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (SCDC), Chengdu, Sichuan, diagnosed Lhungtse to have a serious case of a parasitic disease called neurocysticercosis, which has caused Lhungtse's total blindness.

2013 - Lhungtse's Brain Surgery Thanks to generous donations from many of you and others, Lhungtse received ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunt brain surgery on 5 September 2013 at Sichuan Provincial People's Hospital in Chengdu. BLSCP raised \$13,000 before her surgery and \$6,091.71 afterwards to pay for all of the hospital costs and related expenses.

November 9 & 10 - Chengdu BLSCP members Bill Warnock and Shari Mayer arrived in Chengdu on November 9 to meet with Lhungtse's doctors and then travel to Kangding to spend six days with Lhungtse and her mother. Bill and Shari used personal funds to pay for all travel costs. On November 9, Bill met for dinner with Dr. Li and Dr. Zeng Xian Rong, who is Lhungtse's neurologist. Dr. Zeng prescribed for Lhungtse to continue taking an anti-convulsant called oxcarbazepine, one 300-mg tablet, three times each day. She also asked us to arrange blood tests again for Lhungtse to check her tolerance for taking oxcarbazepine. On November 10, Bill purchased an additional 300 tablets of oxcarbazepine with BLSCP funds. Dr. Zeng requested for Lhungtse to come to Chengdu on the afternoon of either 22 or 29 February 2016 for check-ups by Dr. Liao, who is her neurosurgeon, and by Dr. Zeng.



Lhungtse's mother & Bill

November 12-17 - Kangding

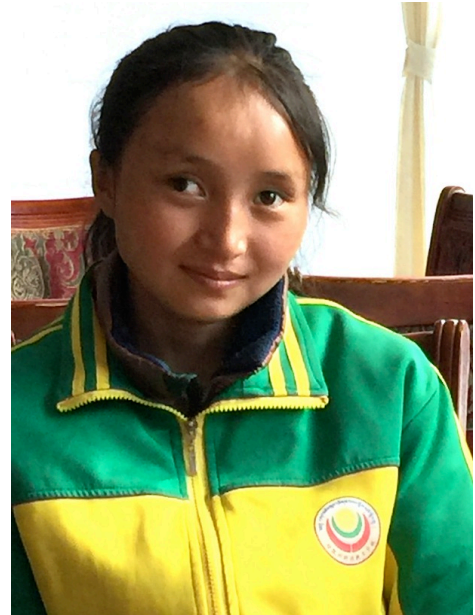
Our excellent Kham Tour was again provided by Conscious Journeys. Our excellent tour guide, driver, and interpreter/translator was again Tenpa Tenzin. Before seeing Lhungtse at Ganzi Prefecture Special School, we chatted with her mother about our hope to identify potential vocational opportunities for Lhungtse. Her mother replied, "That will be good, but more important is the fact that Lhungtse is alive. Without her brain surgery in 2013, by now she would probably be dead."



Shari & Lhungtse's mother

On November 12 & 13, we visited Lhungtse at her school. She is happier and more confident compared to our previous visit in April-May 2015. In her dormitory room she was very pleased to show us how she can make her bed and also demonstrate for us several repetitions of one of her physical exercises. She explained that her cue for taking her medicine is when she finishes washing her eating bowl after each of her three daily meals. When we were leaving the school for the weekend, she insisted on having no assistance for negotiating the two long flights of stairs from the school courtyard down to our vehicle.

As we were driving to a restaurant for lunch, Lhungtse told us, "I am so happy to be with you!" Then Tenpa asked her, with a smile, "What do you mean?" She replied, "Life right now is smooth."



Lhungtse at lunch



Enjoying a Tibetan dinner in Kangding with several local friends

On November 14 & 15, we spent time with several local friends.

On the morning of November 16, we took Lhungtse to Ganzi Prefecture Hospital to give some blood for testing. Then we returned Lhungtse to Ganzi Prefecture Special School and met with the Headmaster. He said that in 2016 the school is planning to open a massage shop in downtown Kangding, where students from the school's massage training class will be able to earn money for providing massages.

In the afternoon, Lhungtse's mother returned to her home in Yajiang, and Tenpa went to the hospital to obtain the results for Lhungtse's blood tests, which were all normal.

On November 17, I sent Lhungtse's blood tests results to Dr. Zeng in Chengdu, and we returned to Ganzi Prefecture Special School. We met with the head teacher, who gave us several updates about Lhungtse:

1. Since Lhungtse returned to school around October 6, she had actually had several seizures. However, most of them were minor and lasted only around one minute.
2. The school is doing the best that it can to monitor Lhungtse, but it is impossible to know for sure if she takes three tablets of her medicine every day.
3. Lhungtse does OK with daily life functions and playing with other students. However, she is still not accomplishing much in her classes and studying.
4. She does have a reasonably good usage of Chinese Mandarin and Sichuan dialects.
5. She appears not to like the massage training class much.

Lhungtse's Future Except for her total blindness caused by the parasitic disease, Lhungtse is reasonably healthy. She has made considerable progress following her brain surgery in 2013. So far the ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunt in Lhungtse's brain has been working well. We hope and pray that her shunt system will not have any complications, such as mechanical failure, obstructions, or infections.

We hope that Dr. Zeng will be able to test her cognitive ability during her examination in February 2016. In addition to the massage training now at Ganzi Prefecture Special School, we are developing several other potential vocations for Lhungtse.

Your donations, of any amount, to BLSCP for our most immediate needs will be very much appreciated.

Bill Warnock, President
5 December 2015