

Dear all,

The program is coming to a successful conclusion, and the last two weeks have flown by and have included a large number of activities. Our three-day hiking trip up the mountain went very smoothly and we were able to experience the beautiful landscape and atmosphere up in the mountains in the Kareri Forest, which truly felt like a little paradise. There we were accompanied by the monks and nuns on the ETSI program, as well as Dr. Tsultrim Kalsang, a Tibetan medical doctor from Men-Tsee-Khang and one of their chief experts on botany. Dr. Kalsang explained to us the process of collecting herbs for use in making Tibetan medical compounds and the various properties of the plants in the surrounding area. We also participated with the monks and nuns in the traditional sang-sol smoke offering early on the second day of the hike, and had several evening conversations between the monastics and students on science and Buddhism.

Another paradisaical setting was the Norbulingka Institute, set up for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist arts and culture. We received a tour of the beautiful compound by its manager, Mr. Dolmakyab, and its master thangka painter, Tenzin Norbu, both of whom visited Emory in the spring, and got to observe the Norbulingka artists as they painted, crafted delicate statues, and engaged in woodcarving and other arts. The Norbulingka Institute also hosted us for a fabulous lunch and tea in their garden area.

We were also fortunate to visit Gyuto Monastery, set against a spectacular backdrop of the mountains, and receive an audience with His Holiness the 17th Karmapa, who has stayed there since his escape from Tibet. H.H. the Karmapa is regarded as one of the most important religious leaders in Tibetan Buddhism and the oldest line of reincarnate lamas, dating back to the 13th century.

On the evening of June 15 we paid a visit to Jamyang Choeling Nunnery to observe the nuns in debate, and were hosted for dinner, whereafter we moved on to Shugseb Nunnery to observe their practice of the ritual of Chod, or "severing the ego," which involves the singing of a hauntingly melodic song as part of the practice. Then on June 17 we were able to experience one of the great highlights of our program, when we went to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's private residence for an audience. Everyone was already in a joyful mood when we entered His Holiness's compound and waited outside briefly in the beautiful,

sunny, yet not-too-hot weather before entering the audience hall. When His Holiness arrived, Geshe Lhakdor and Geshe Lobsang gave some brief remarks introducing His Holiness to the students on the Emory summer study abroad program as well as the monastic students and the faculty of ETSI, explaining how these two programs are intended to help fulfill His Holiness's vision of a genuine dialogue and convergence of science and spirituality for the benefit of the world. His Holiness then remarked on the importance of this program, and how he felt such work had the potential to make a significant contribution, and even if not, he joked, "It won't do any harm." Two students -- JoJo Aresty and Anish Shah -- were then able to ask questions to His Holiness, followed by a question from one of the monks and one of the nuns.

During the last week of the program we received lectures and demonstrations on Tibetan medicine for three days by Dr. Pema Dorjee, one of the most highly regarded Tibetan physicians at Men-Tsee-Khang, and we were also visited by Mr. Tenzin Sherab, one of the astrologers from Men-Tsee-Khang, who explained the role of astrology in Tibetan culture. We also had an unexpected visit by Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, the Kalon Tripa or Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile, who visited us at Sarah, where he gave an address in the main prayer hall to our students and the monastic students on the importance of science education for Tibetan monastics and the various issues involved in bringing modern science and the Buddhist science of mind together in dialogue for their mutual benefit. After Rinpoche's address to the general assembly, our students had the opportunity to ask Rinpoche questions privately over tea in the adjoining dining room.

On the final two days -- Monday and Tuesday -- we went up to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives to see the 1st Tibetan Monastic Science Exhibition, which involved six groups of monks presenting their work on various scientific topics. Each of these groups had been assisted by our Emory students, it was particularly gratifying to see how well the presentations went, and how remarkable the posters were. In the evening, the students on our program also gave their presentations on the projects they had been working on over the past month while here in Dharamsala, ranging from ideas of health and illness in the US as compared to the Tibetan community in exile, and the various purposes and types of meditation.

On the last night -- yesterday -- Sarah College graciously prepared a dinner outdoors on their great lawn, at the conclusion

of which Geshe Jampal Drakpa, the Principle of Sarah, gave a talk on how he hoped that the seeds planted during this program would yield great results in the future for the students, and how he wished them every success and happiness in their life and future endeavors. He then presented each person on the program with a wrapped gift and a kata (ceremonial scarf). The dinner was followed by a performance of traditional Tibetan music, song and dance by a nearby Tibetan arts and dance school, which Sarah had arranged for us, and the evening ended with all of us joining in a traditional Tibetan circle dance. We did the dance three times, late into the evening, and even then the students didn't want to stop! It exemplified the warm spirit of two cultures coming together in friendship, and was a perfect conclusion to our program.

This morning, after breakfast, the students left the Sarah campus at 8:00am for the long car ride back to Delhi (fortunately in very comfortable, modern, air-conditioned and spacious vehicles!). From there, some will return directly to the US, and others will journey on to Agra, Ladakh and Nepal to continue their travels and their experience of South Asia.

Thank you all for your support and for participating with us in spirit during this remarkable journey.

With best wishes,

Geshe Lobsang Tenzin
Arri Eisen
Brooke Dodson-Lavelle
Brendan Ozawa-de Silva