

Seva Tibet Sight Program

Eliminating Needless Blindness on the Roof of the World



Barriers to Eye Care: *More than 75% of the blindness in Tibet is either preventable or curable, but the vast majority of Tibetans do not have access to quality, affordable eye care.*

There are many challenges to providing eye care in Tibet, including the huge land area, dispersed nature of the population, inaccessibility of much of the terrain, lack of public transportation, and poverty of a majority of the population.



Need for Cataract Surgeries: It is estimated that in order to eliminate needless blindness due to cataract in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) alone, doctors must perform 13,375 cataract surgeries each year. There are thousands of Tibetans who remain blind for years from not having access to proper eye care services, and still more people become blind each year.

Seva's Impact: Seva has been working in Tibet since 1995 and has helped 43,648 blind eyes see again. To date, Seva has trained 900 Tibetan eye care personnel, from rural health workers to nurses to ophthalmologists.

Seva is the leading eye care provider in Tibet, responsible for 50% of cataract surgeries in central Tibet and 90% in traditional Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai and Yunnan provinces.

Seva is currently working in seven areas of Tibet and Western China (Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Yunnan provinces) to bring essential eye care services to the region's most vulnerable populations, including **rural communities, women, and children** by:

- Conducting outreach eye camps to areas where services are not available
- Supporting capacity building, planning, implementation and monitoring of eye care activities of the TAR Health Bureau
- Establishing the new Kham Eye Center (KEC) as a model for national eye care. Located in western Sichuan Province, KEC is the premiere training and surgical center for the traditional Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, and the TAR. This new community ophthalmology center will triple the number of cataract surgeries performed in the area to an estimated 2,500 per year



Kham Eye Center

Partnerships: *Tibet Autonomous Region Health Bureau, with hospitals and clinics in Lhasa, Ngari, Chamdo, Lhoka, and Nakchu, and prefectural level hospitals in Sichuan province (Kham Eye Center), Qinghai province (Yushu, Repkong and Golok) and Yunnan province (Dechen Shangrila).*



The Problem:

- 39,200 blind out of 2.8 million in Tibet Autonomous Region
- 75% of blindness in Tibet can be prevented or treated.
- 50.7% blind from cataract
- Women over age 50 are twice as likely to be blind as men.

The Solution:

Sight-restoring cataract surgery can be performed in 15 minutes and costs only \$50

Seva's Goal: To build the capacity of local Tibetan eye care personnel to prevent blindness and provide over 6,000 sight-restoring surgeries annually.

Seva Tibet provides:

- Comprehensive eye care services for children, women, the elderly, and rural communities
- Medical and management training
- Surgical equipment and supplies
- Community outreach
- Clinic operating costs

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Mr. Kunga Tashi
Manager
27 North Linkor Road
Lhasa 850000
Tibet, China
sevatibetoffice@china.com

US Contacts:

Dr. Chundak Tenzing
Sight Program Director
ctenzing@seva.org

Seva Foundation

1786 Fifth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510.845.7382
www.seva.org

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