

Daughters of Buddha on display in the National Gallery on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's visit

The Kinsky Palace Stable hosts a charity exhibition of photographs *Olivier Adam: Daughters of Buddha* documenting the life of Buddhist nuns in the Himalayas. The exhibition is organised by the National Gallery in Prague in cooperation with the non-governmental organisation MOST ProTibet and is part of the associated programme of the Forum 2000 Conference – Festival of Democracy. The exhibition is held under the auspices of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Photographer Olivier Adam and his partner Dominique Butet, who is a journalist, have been documenting the path of Buddhist nuns in the Himalaya region for more than eight years. The photographic work *Daughters of Buddha* began in five nunneries in North India, near Dharamsala, where His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetans found refuge in 1959 after the suppressed Tibetan Uprising. In 1987, the *Tibetan Nuns Project* (TNP) was founded, seeking education and development aid for Tibetan nuns in India. The TNP project was instrumental in the opening of primary schools and later nunnery schools for higher education. The nuns' level of education has been growing thanks to the project; they could practise philosophical debates previously reserved for monks only. Moreover, the nuns could study Buddhist philosophy. In December 2016, for the first time in history, twenty nuns will receive the so-called Geshema degree, the equivalent to a Doctorate in Buddhist philosophy. Based on that, they will be qualified to teach in nunneries. Having been a great supporter of gender equality in Buddhism, His Holiness the Dalai Lama will take part in the graduation ceremony.

"The culture and tradition of Tibetan society must not perish, no matter how great are the efforts of its powerful neighbours. Same as all unique human cultures, Tibet deserves our major support," says Jiří Fajt, General Director of the National Gallery in Prague.

Project Support

The proceeds from the sale of special prints of photographs, which can be purchased at the exhibition *Daughters of Buddha* and through the website buddhovydcery.cz, will be used to support the education of women and girls and to improve living conditions in nunnery schools in North India. The project also strives to preserve Tibetan culture and traditions.

MOST ProTibet

Beginning in 2004, the non-governmental organisation MOST ProTibet has been fulfilling its mission to support the education and improvement of the living conditions of Tibetan children, seniors, and Buddhist monks and nuns. MOST ProTibet is engaged in development aid in the Himalayas in India and Tibet and supports local schools and craft traditions. The NGO organises cultural and education events, such as the annual Festival ProTibet, for the Czech public and schools. Since 2006, MOST ProTibet and Czech benefactors have been contributing to the foundation of a nunnery school in the Spiti Valley in Himachal Pradesh.

"We are deeply honoured that so many strong partners joined in this beneficial event. The education of Buddhist nuns and women in the Himalayas in India has not been presented to the public yet; therefore, this is a unique exhibition and opportunity," says Gabriela Gazdíková from the MOST ProTibet NGO.

Olivier Adam (1969) is a freelance photographer and a teacher at the Auguste Renoir School of Photography in Paris. Olivier belongs to the humanist tradition; in his work he

focuses on documenting the sacred and human aspects. His pictures are regularly published in English and French magazines, and he also regularly works for the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, taking pictures during the Dalai Lama's European travels. Olivier and his partner Dominique Butet co-operate with various non-governmental organisations on many charity projects to support Himalayan nuns.

The Art of Asia

The exhibition takes place in the National Gallery, Kinsky Palace, the venue of the permanent exhibition *The Art of Asia*. The central exhibition hall presents the art of Tibetan Buddhism which is currently the only permanent exhibition of its importance in the Czech Republic. Visitors have a chance to see traditional Tibetan sculpture art and paintings. *Thangkas* represent the most precious part of the National Gallery Tibetan collection; some of them originated as early as the 17th century and arrived in our lands in the 1920s and 1930s. From 11 October to 4 December 2016, the photographs by Josef Vaniš will be displayed there with the title *Journey to Tibet*. During his travel to Lhasa in 1954, Josef Vaniš and filmmaker Vladimír Šis met with the 14th Dalai Lama and took his first official portrait. This portrait is the key photograph among the six images from old Lhasa presented by the curator Lenka Gyaltsó.

Olivier Adam: Daughters of Buddha

Duration: 19 October 2016 – 28 February 2017

Venue: National Gallery in Prague – Kinsky Palace Stable, Staroměstské nám. 12, Prague 1

Admission: free

Curator: Irena Šorfová

www.buddhovydcery.cz

www.protibet.cz

www.forum2000.cz

www.ngprague.cz

www.olivieradam.net

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