

# morning tears newsletter

Volume 7, No 4, October 2012

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## Editorial

### Morning tears children and the Christmas dilemma

Losing a person we truly love is a very hard experience. The absence and eternal silence of the one we cared for interrupts our feelings and thoughts at expanding intervals: in the beginning every minute, later every hour and later several times a day. But the moments when the pain intensifies again are those where the person we had to say goodbye played a vital role in the past. For a child who lost one or both parents these will be the times that were traditionally driven by being cozy with the parents and enjoying family warmth. For Europe, the number one of such a day is Christmas.

Christmas was traditionally not celebrated in China. It is only in the last eight years that celebrating Christmas entered the households and shops. Today, many families choose to set up a Christmas tree and enjoy Christmas Evening a setting that is very similar to the one in Europe and the US. Also, walking in Chinese streets in the run for Christmas is only possible if one can accept hearing an eternal version of jingle bells. So far, we kept Christmas at a distance from the morning tears children in China. We did not want to open healing wounds. This year they really want to start celebrating Christmas. They hear about it in their schools, from their teachers, from their friends and they see it on TV. The magical family warmth is something that they long for. Can we meet their expectations? Or will any attempt result in tears when they go to bed?

We will try this year. Our budgets now do not allow for a gift for every child, but we will try to create a Christmas Eve with some magic in it. We will put some candles, some decoration and do our best to make nice food in every project. There will be music. For once, we will allow them to sit with their teddy bear at the table. Oh gosh, while writing this I am still not sure if we are doing the right thing..

Dear friends, the whole morning tears wishes you a very happy Christmas. Enjoy, and above all - be aware of the bliss of having the warmth of a family. We send you a message of gratefulness for helping the morning tears children.

Koen Sevenants  
Founder of morning tears  
[koen.sevenants@morningtears.org](mailto:koen.sevenants@morningtears.org)



# News

## Morning tears Cambodia

One year ago morning tears went on a mission in Cambodia to learn about the situation of Cambodian children who are in prison with their mothers.

After that visit we started to help in the emergency situation in Pailin Prison, the make-shift prison inside an old theatre.

Together with the support from other organisations the situation has improved a little - for the inmates as well as for the children. No longer smoke is pestering the air because ventilation has been installed in the roof. And now the children can play at our play area everyday, where they also get the chance to draw and learn to laugh again.

But we can do more – we need your support to improve the lives of these unfortunate children who have been incarcerated with their parents. We need to give them a future out of prison. In Pailin Prison we were lucky to bring together all 5 children of one of the incarcerated mothers. The mother is happy that she now knows the whereabouts of her children. But do these children deserve a life in prison? Getting them out is still a priority! To better train the prison staff and social workers working with the children inside prison is a necessary step to build up a base in Pailin. We are currently planning a training in Phnom Penh for this staff, improving their skills to deal with the special problems these traumatised children have.

The situation in border province Banteay Meanchey is also severe. About 30 children live in that prison with their mothers. These children, aged 1-6, live inside the prison close to the male prisoners; it cannot be guaranteed that they will not be abused in prison! The mothers want to know them to be safe, but the children also need a life outside a prison situation to learn how to live a normal life.

We are now planning a shelter for these children directly outside Banteay Meanchey Prison, offering daily care for children that will stay every night with their mothers inside prison. Offering healthy food, hygienic and medical support for these children. Offering preschool education and room to play. Offering psychological support to heal their many traumatic experiences. And offering tracking down siblings that vanished when the mothers have been incarcerated.

This day care center will develop into a home that will also offer a new home for those children that can leave the prison situation while still living next to the prisons.

For further information you can contact Uschi at [uschi.germer@morningtears.de](mailto:uschi.germer@morningtears.de).

## Board meeting morning tears Alliance

On October 17<sup>th</sup> was held the 4<sup>th</sup> board meeting of the morning tears alliance in Belgium.

The morning tears alliance is a non-profit organization that brings organizations together that have as a goal to improve the lives of children whose parents are in prison. The morning tears alliance is created to stimulate the growth of a worldwide movement to address the fast growing number of children that have a parent in prison.

The board of the alliance is composed by representatives of morning tears organizations around the world (Belgium, China, Denmark, France, Italy, Spain, The Netherlands and the United States) and advisors.

The topics discussed over the meeting were: the financial reports, morning tear's strategy, diversification of donors, community sponsorship program, countries current and future projects, etc.



## Morning tears Denmark

### Morning tears was presented at diversity celebration

On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of September Denmark was celebrating diversity at the event "Taste The World" in Nørrebro, Copenhagen. Morning tears was present to draw attention to the living conditions of children of imprisoned parents in China.

By Anne Lundbye

Traffic was suspended, tents were set up, and the street was occupied with 80 voluntary associations, 30 restaurants and cafes, phenomenal artists, dancers, singers and several thousand participants occupied the street. The smell spread of grilled meat from Argentina, falafel from Egypt and ginger tea from China.

### Morning tears in the middle of the crowd

In the middle of the crowd at stand 61, volunteer from morning tears are distributing flyers and chatting with people passing by. In the tent behind them, two girls are in the middle of a battle to get to get small cotton balls from one bowl to another with chopsticks. There are lashed Chinese teas over the counter and passers-by stop to get their names written in Chinese. All part of morning tears activities for the day.

### Help for children of imprisoned parents

The purpose of these activities is to make people aware of morning tears. Morning tears helps children of imprisoned parents in China. At least 600.000 children in China is living without parents or another type of dependency. They are vulnerable to stigmatising, so not even the closest family will assume the role of breadwinner.

### Creating awareness of morning tears among the Danes

Morning tears Denmark works to raise the number of volunteers', fundraising and to raise awareness of morning tears in Denmark.

According to the event coordinator at morning tears Denmark, Vibe Aarøe Drostgaard, is the awareness of morning tears exactly one of the main purposes of being present at the Diversity Festival in Nørrebro. Here a large crowd of people is gathered, and we can hope, that there are many who see our name.

### Better orphanages are expensive

Last year the street party was visited by approx. 40,000 to 60,000 people from Greater Copenhagen. It is not yet determined how many people attended the event this year, but according to event coordinator Vibe Aarøe Drostgaard there is no doubt that MT's presence could help to advance people's knowledge of morning tears.

We are still so new in Denmark that it is important to constantly make aware that we exist. In this way we can create focus on the problem setting and raise funds to carry out our vision to help children and improve the orphanages.





## Morning tears celebrates the 80's with Beer Mania!

October, 13<sup>th</sup>, Beijing China. A strange 80's atmosphere is growing in the Belgian Bar Beer Mania !

With Beer Mania, a long time partner of morning tears, we decided to organize a fun fundraising event:

A Beer and cheese dinner, followed by an 80's party. Nice food and drinks to support the children of convicts in China!

As October was also the twinning month between the great beer Chimay and the Beer Mania, Chimay was sponsoring the party. They even decided to write a check to support morning tears new Beijing Project!

Huge thanks to Beer Mania and Chimay for the event!

## Morning tears' founder receives the Christoffel Plantin award

The Christophe Plantin Prize is a Belgian civilian prize, intended to reward a Belgian citizen who resides abroad, who has made significant contributions to cultural, artistic or scientific activities.

Funded by voluntary contributions, the prize consists of a fund and a medal created by Antwerp artist May Néama. On one side the medal has a portrait of Christoffel Plantin, accompanied by his statement: *"I have more hope in posterity than in the current world population."* To the reverse is an old picture of Antwerp quays, with a compass and another statement of Plantin: *"Labore and Constantia."*



Congratulations to our founder!

## Don't forget!!

- **Morning tears Beijing is building up a volunteer's team!** Please join us in our volunteers meetings, every first Monday of each month, in the morning tears' Beijing office. For more information: [info@morningtears.org](mailto:info@morningtears.org)
- **Second International Day of Children of Convicts.** The 27<sup>th</sup> November will be the second edition of the International Day of Children of Convicts. Several events will be organized by morning tears national committees. More information on [www.morningtears.org](http://www.morningtears.org)



# Morning tears' strategy

## The kids visiting their parents in prison

We would like our children to visit their parents as much as possible. On the other hand, we also remember it is important for children to attend schools and have as few absences as possible. Unfortunately, visiting hours in prison are always scheduled during the normal school days rather than on weekends. Therefore, organizing a visit requires coordination and overlap with the children's holidays. Consequently, most visits are arranged during holidays and festivals, when kids have school off. According to Chinese calendar, it is possible during Qing Ming holiday in April, the Mayday holiday, Children's Day, the summer semester break, the National Day Golden Week, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Chinese New Year and Spring Festival. Working within such constraints, we make sure children visit their parents at least every two months. We never force them children to, of course. Visits are arranged only if the child wishes.

Most children really look forward to seeing their parents, and prepare gifts and drawings.

Visits require the following steps:

- Our social worker contacts a prison social worker to coordinate the dates and times. We must provide the necessary background information, including the ID of the person who will accompany the children.
- After receiving confirmation and approval from the prison, we inform the kids of the dates and the times. Before the visit, we always give some time for the kids to prepare emotionally and make sure they actually want to visit their parents.
- If the prison is located far from the place where the kids live, we depart at least one day before the visit date.
- After the visits, we always talk with and observe the children to make sure they're physiologically and emotionally balanced. If we discover any children experience discomfort, our social workers follow up and try to help the children resolve their issues.

Organizing a visit requires us to be very cooperative and coordinated. It requires a lot of work before and during. We visit at least 10 prisons and must apply to visit all of them. We must also coordinate the prisons' visiting schedules and children's time. It is important to be very prepared so we don't disappoint our children.

Children often like to give their parents presents. It could be a hand-painted picture, awards they won at school, a small item they value, a food that they really like or a letter. Sometimes, children ask their caregivers to help them to prepare some small gifts for their parents.

Unfortunately the visits are not always as happy as they are often expected to be by the children. Sometimes, children become upset during the visit because they cannot understand current situation and the reasons their parents are in the prison while they face difficult situations.

A visit to a prison is always challenging. Some children really looking forward to seeing their parents, and some feel relieved when they can excuse the visit. Whatever the situation, it's a lot of work for us because our goal is to help every child cope with problems caused by life and parents.

These photos were taken before and during visits:



## Morning tears' strategy (cont'd)



Writing a letter to Dad before the visit

Visiting Mother (This picture we received from the prison. Our social workers and children are not allowed to take cameras or cell phones during their visits.)



## Relevant Actualities

**In Bolivia, more than 1 600 children don't have other solutions to accompany their parents** confined in old and overcrowded adult prisons, where they rub thieves, murderers and drug traffickers.

Text in French : [forum-prison.forumactif.com/t13305-en-bolivie-les-enfants-accompagnent-les-parents-en-prison](http://forum-prison.forumactif.com/t13305-en-bolivie-les-enfants-accompagnent-les-parents-en-prison)

### New Pocket Book of Children's Rights

Working with children, teachers and parents UNICEF UK's Education Team have developed a new resource for primary school children to learn about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Source: [www.unicef.org.uk/Latest/News/Pocket-Book-of-Childrens-Rights/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Latest/News/Pocket-Book-of-Childrens-Rights/)

### Pulling children out of Nepal's prisons

Basnet is one of several in Nepal who have started groups to get children out of prison. Since 2005, she has assisted more than 100 children of incarcerated parents. She runs a day care program for children under 6 and a residential home where mostly older children receive education, food, medical care and a chance to live a more normal life.

Source: [edition.cnn.com/2012/03/15/world/cnnheroes-basnet-nepal-prisons/index.html](http://edition.cnn.com/2012/03/15/world/cnnheroes-basnet-nepal-prisons/index.html)



# News from Coming Home Project - Henan

## Recent happenings

- A Dutch family came to visit the project during the summer. They organized the Olympic Games of ATY (Ai Tong Yuan, Coming Home Centre): Running, Football, Chess, Ping-Pong, etc. The kids loved it.
- The president of morning tears Belgium also came to visit, together with his family.
- A group of Spanish women, who are working for children's rights, visited ATY.
- The famous Belgian children's book author, Marc de Bel and his wife, with delegations from the Belgium Embassy, Zhengzhou Foreign Affairs office and Zhengzhou civil affairs Bureau, visited ATY and shared his works with our kids and students of local schools. Numerous local media reported about this visit.
- Members of the team of MT Shanghai fundraising office visited ATY with the German School, who supported the project.
- The construction of a new building with two family units was finished.
- The reparation of the old building of ATY was finished.
- 6 new kids arrived in ATY in August: 3 boys and 3 girls, between 6-10years old.
- 1 new social worker and 2 new caregivers joined the team of ATY in September.
- Parties were arranged to celebrate birthday and mid autumn festival for kids.
- Some of the kids went to Zhengzhou women prison to spend the mid autumn festival with their mother.
- The Ministry Of Civil Affairs organized an expert's conference for the Guide Book of Assistance and Protection of Children of Convicts, which morning tears has been working for.
- ATY represented the Zhengzhou Charity Foundation by attending the Charity Fairs in Ningxia, which were organized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.
- 3 students from Zhengzhou Foreign Language Middle School did volunteer work in ATY.

## In the near future

- Several constructions works for external roads, water and electricity, etc. will be finished in November.
- Furniture and equipments will be purchased and installed for the new 2 family units.
- E-learning shooting team from MT Netherlands will work together with the Zhengzhou Child Protection Centre between November 13 and 15th.
- Alice Cooman, Representative of Antwerp China Development Agency will visit ATY in November.
- Kids will visit Ostrich Park in November.
- Some kids will go to Yu Zhong Prison to visit their parents.
- A grouped birthday Party will be organized on New Year.
- Activities for raising funds and awareness in Zhengzhou will start soon.

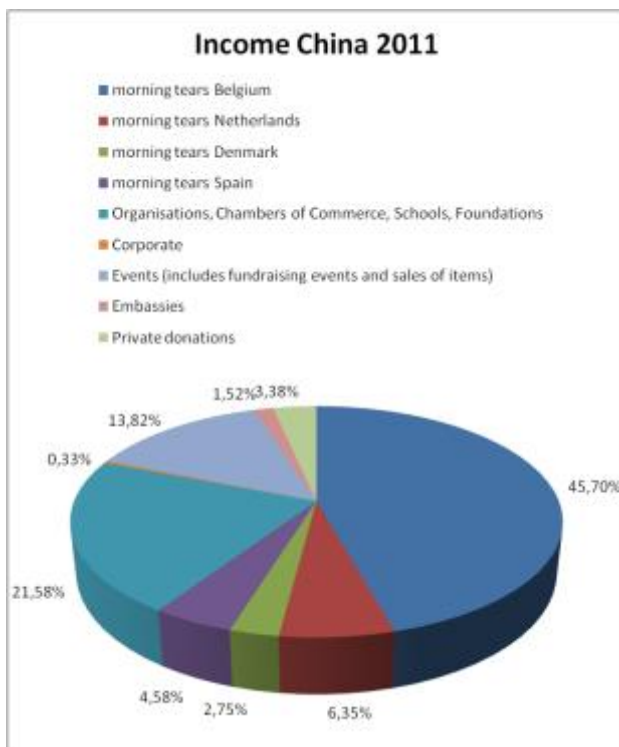


# Finances

Below is an overview of morning tears finances in China in 2011

## Morning tears China sources of incomes in 2011

The total income of morning tears China in 2011 was: 2 351 000 RMB



It's important to specify that **morning tears Shanghai is responsible for more than 27% of the fundraising in China**, though the events they organize or participate too, or their approach to many organizations. Congratulations to them and huge thanks for their efforts.

Belgium aside, we can notice that our biggest income comes from events organized by organizations or companies, where morning tears is beneficiary.

We can also notice that the contributions from companies is only 0,33%. This means that we have to continue our efforts towards CSR departments!

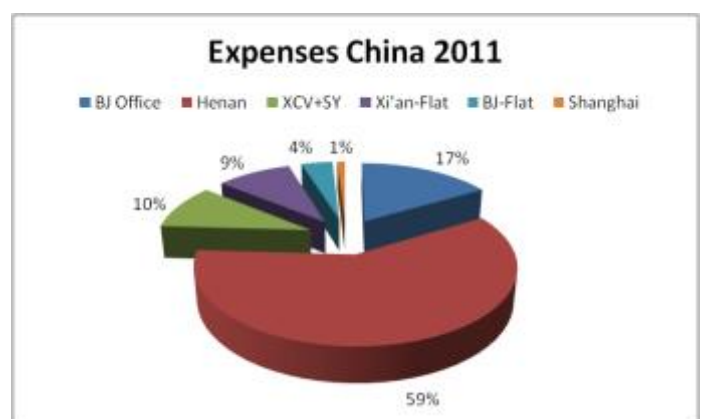
## Morning tears expenses in 2011

A total of 2 006 569 RMB was spent in China in 2011.

As you can see in the graphic above, in 2011, 82 % of our expenses were made for the direct care of children of convicts.

For your understanding:

- Henan is the Coming Home / Ai Tong Yuan project
- XCV + SY are the two children villages supported by morning tears : Xi'an and San Yuan Children Villages
- Xi'an and Beijing flat are our family reunification and assisted living programs
- The expenses in the Beijing office include the monitoring and coordination of our different projects, as well as the lobby and policy work, one of morning tears most important action.







### **morning tears Belgium**

BNP Paribas Fortis  
 Account No: 001-4495454-65  
 IBAN: BE 18001449545465  
 BIC/SWIFT: GEBABEBB

### **morning tears Netherlands**

ABN Amro  
 Account No: 45.75.13.764  
 Stichting Morning Tears Nederland  
 IBAN: NL81ABNA0457513764  
 BIC/SWIFT: ABNANL2A

### **morning tears Spain**

La Caixa d'Estalvis i Pensions  
 Account No: 2100.0233.99.0200332319  
 IBAN: ES28 21000233990200332319  
 BIC/SWIFT: CAIXAESBXXX

### **morning tears Denmark**

Danske Bank  
 Account No: 10490189 Reg. Nr. 1551  
 IBAN: DK14 3000 0010 4901 89  
 BIC/SWIFT: DABADKKK

### **morning tears in China**

Bank of China, Beijing Xi Cui Lu Sub-Branch  
 [中国银行北京西翠路支行]  
 Account No: 4160-3000-1880-2623-90  
 Beneficiary: Guo Zhi Hong (郭志弘)  
 BIC/SWIFT: BKCHCNBJ110

*morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have lost their own world.*

morning tears rebuilds the world for children who have suffered or are suffering heavy emotional pain.

We focus particularly on:

- children whose parents are in prison;
- children whose parents have been sentenced to death;
- children who have been abused or neglected;
- orphans;
- children who haven't been registered at birth, and thus have no rights;
- street children.

morning tears has been operating since 1999 on an informal basis without legal structure. However, in March 2005 morning tears became a formal non-profit organization registered under Belgian Law. Currently, morning tears has offices in Belgium, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, France, Italy, the USA and China.

morning tears is run mainly by volunteers. These volunteers are mostly professionals from the social sector or development aid workers, although we also have journalists and engineers in our group.

The running costs of morning tears are kept very low, so that donations can go almost entirely to the children in need.