



The Tapriza School in Nepal cordially thanks everyone who has supported the school in the last 10 years.



TAPRIZA VEREIN Bahnhofstr. 35 CH-8001 Zürich
 fax +41 44 221 26 69 mail@tapriza.org www.tapriza.org

NEWSLETTER 2009

10 Years Tapriza School – a Visit of the Board Members in Phoksumdo, Nepal

In Winter 2007 the Tapriza board members received an invitation to the 10-year jubilee celebration of the Tapriza School in Dolpo.

Mid April 2008, with a few lessons in Nepali in the hand luggage and a heavy backpack, we stand on the gravel runway in Juphal, the only airport in Dolpo. Our group of 11 people is received warmly and the school manager, Semduk Lama, who had accompanied us from Kathmandu, introduces us to the welcome-committee. Porters take our luggage and as a special surprise there is a Mustang horse waiting for each of us. We try and stay in the saddle and ride past green wheat fields down the valley, while vegetation gets sparser and sparser as we head in direction of Dunai. In the district headquarter Dunai we spend the first night in a tent and are cared for at best. During the next two days travel to the school we do not have to worry about anything, our changing hosts treat us with local specialities, a lot of butter tea and even with coffee. The path gets increasingly steep, so we can ride less and less, and our attempts only cause amusement among the local guides. After a last climb through a thick wood we meet the two lamas of the Tapriza School. They welcome us by smearing a piece of butter on each of our heads and a mug of home-made Rakshi (alcohol) is passed around. Within seconds we are in the middle of a huge commotion, then behind the next bend the first children are waiting, they drive our horses and run next to us. They are shouting hello, and we answer with namaste. In front of the school a red cloth has been hung up: hearty welcome in Tibetan and English. The students are standing in line on the steps and the way to the school, the girls on the left and the boys on the right side. They hand us flowers and pine shoots as we pass, so many that we cannot hold them anymore. In the schoolyard finally, the teachers greet us – we are overwhelmed.



pronunciation of the various letters in a joyful singsong with a rhythm that also seems to delight the youngest in our group, the two-year-old Lili Furger-Kind. Within seconds a beaming Lili joins in with her new Nepali friends.

The fourth grade students are reading animal stories and the fifth grade is learning English vocabulary. The students sit huddled together on the school benches then the rooms have become too small for most of the classes over the years. The teachers tell us that if the weather allows it they sometimes teach the classes outside in the schoolyard due to the lack of space. Semduk Lama explains that recently more children are coming from distant areas, as their families want to send them to the Tapriza School. He finds it hard to reject them admission, but slowly the school is running out of capacity. This is why he is planning to extend the northwest wing of the school as soon as the national park sanctions the wood allotment. A look at the rooms makes the space problem evident. Some of the younger boys are sharing one bed and have little storage place for their clothes and school materials. The private space of the teachers is also limited. Two of them each share a room, which they use for sleeping and working.



Pictures

- 1 Welcoming of the Tapriza board at the school
- 2 Ritual inauguration of the multipurpose building
- 3 In the morning before school starts
- 4 The teachers in the staff room
- 5 Dance performances at the 10-year jubilee celebration
- 6 Parents and siblings in the audience
- 7 Awards
- 8 Lessons in the classroom
- 9 Volleyball
- 10 Tapriza Team with Katas



After lunch Semduk Lama shows us the new multipurpose building. It stands slightly raised, surmounting the other buildings, and encloses the yard on the northeastern side. It is a spacious building with two rooms and lots of sunlight entering through the windows. A library is planned in the top floor, but at present the older students take their lessons there. The mathematical formula on the black board even gives our physicist a hard time. The rooms on the ground floor of the building are already decorated festively, oil lamps are being placed and the electrician – a Class 10 student – is wiring the solar lamps. Then the lama of Ringmo arrives who is to perform a ritual to inaugurate and bless the new building. In the schoolyard students and teachers are constructing a roofed stage and in the class rooms the children practice for the big celebration the next evening. The first parents are trickling into the school compound. They are coming from the nearby villages and have brought tents to sleep in. Now they seize the opportunity to meet and chat with friends and teachers. The two cooks of the school are non-stop preparing nutritious Dalbhat (rice with lentils) and tea for the many helpers and us. Finally the loudspeakers can be heard from the stage, the microphone is passed around – sound check in Tibetan, Nepali and English.

Before going to bed, we visit the lama and his monks who are singing and praying in the multipurpose building. The ritual for the inauguration of the building lasts the whole night and the following morning. At lunchtime the students, teachers and parents present gather, circle first the multipurpose building and then the entire school, the monks are beating the drums, the lama throws rice grains with best wishes and blessings into the air. In the afternoon more and more parents arrive, the official guests are introduced to us, the schoolyard fills up with people, anticipation can be felt and the weather is clear and promising to stay like that. At dusk the stage is lit up by the



solar lights and Ram Chandra, deputy school manager, opens the cultural part of the festivities. The curtain is drawn and Class 4 shows an enthused audience a local dance. In the following hours we experience a rich and varied program with traditional Tibetan or Nepali dances, modern show elements in Bollywood style, skilful singing performed in a chorus or solo. We listen to a rap and unfortunately do not understand anything of a theatrical persiflage of everyday life in school. Ram Chandra leads the audience through the program, in-between the individual performances the incoming donations of parents and sponsors are read out. The students perform in wonderfully colourful costumes, the Amas, the school mothers, specifically sewed some of them for this celebration. The night is very cold, the parents sit huddled together with the younger children, wrapped into thick wool blankets, on the ground of the schoolyard. A lot of money is donated. After an impressive performance of a boy who is imitating a female singer, we are asked to come on to the stage. Dancing together with the students and teachers the day ends joyful and at late hours.



The next day we find ourselves on the same stage again. We sit together with other chief guests next to the speaker's desk. Marietta Kind translates the most important aspects of the numerous speeches, the school is praised from various different people, and the development of the school is recounted in various small anecdotes. Our president thanks the Tapriza team and Semduk Lama for the achieved work in all the years and the officials for the support they extend to the school. Then Marietta Kind receives a certificate of thanks from the Village Development Committee and the Dolpo Education Office and is acknowledged with a rapturous applause by the people present. Then the students are rewarded for their achievements, there are prizes for best work, discipline, hygiene and good behaviour in gold, silver and bronze. Additionally some teachers, villagers and Sister Groups receive so-called appreciation letters. Towards the end of the official function the entire board of the Tapriza NGO Switzerland is thanked warmly, so many Katas are presented to us that we can hardly move anymore. The celebration of the 10-year jubilee of the Tapriza School ends with a delicious meal of meat – a seldom treat in this region.

The visit to the school in Dolpo gave us an impressive insight into the Tapriza project. In numerous encounters we realise how important the project has become for the region, how many people support it with commitment and enthusiasm, and how the school is deeply rooted in the local community. The future job interests of the Class 10 students show that the youth is aware of their education and will seize the opportunities it gives them.

René Brunner, Franziska Dörig



Current events

Board meeting of the Tapriza NGO Switzerland
Friday, the 12th of June 2009, 7 pm
Centrum 66, Hirschengraben 66, 8001 Zürich
www.tapriza.org

Presentation
by the anthropologist and Tapriza staff Jenny Bentley
A life between modernity and tradition – the Lepcha of Dzongu
Benefit events for the school Mayel Lyang Academy
Friday, the 20th of February 2009, 7.30 pm
Tibet Songtsen House, Albisriederstrasse 397, 8047 Zürich
www.songtsenhouse.ch

Course with Tenzing Wangyal Rinpoche
in Zürich on the topic
“Strengthening your Life Force through Soul Retrieval”
29th to 31st of March, Pentecost 2009
www.garudaswitzerland.org

With best wishes for the New Year
Marietta Kind and the Tapriza team

