

Mantbang) and of Tinje (looked after by an association from the Swiss canton Tessin) – on foot and over several high passes. Then we continued to the health post of Do Tarap (supported by the French *Action Dolpo*) and lastly to Tsharka to a further privately financed health post. On the return journey we met Yungdrung Magli in Pokhara, who after her qualification as a nurse is now studying medicine at the *Gandaki Medical College*. The Tapriza NGO supports her in cooperation with other sponsors. We are convinced that she is studying with great motivation and so far successfully. In Kathmandu we met Dolpo Tulku and Daniela Hartmann from the *Dolpo Tulku Charity Foundation*, who endorse a closer collaboration among the different NGOs in Dolpo.

What is our conclusion of the visit? There have been improvements at the District Hospital Dunai, the stationary base for the district, but there are still significant shortcomings in the infrastructure. The government health system with health assistants in several villages does not work, because the staff does not perform their tasks sufficiently. In their stead several NGOs operate health posts where the nurses – due to their qualification and the lacking infrastructure – can merely treat bagatelle cases. Despite the commitment of *One Heart World-Wide* most women still give birth traditionally at home despite the high mother-child-mortality. The provision of vaccines is insufficient due to an interrupted cooling chain.

How can the Tapriza NGO contribute to improving the situation? In future the focus should be the education of professionals like the continued support of Yungdrung in her medical studies and of the school graduates in their qualifications as health assistants. Subsequently, both can take up their work in Dolpo. The health post of Chunuwar

is to be upgraded with a second expert staff so that the sub health posts in Ringmo and Pugmo can be looked after better. A close collaboration between the NGOs could standardise and improve the medicine supply and advanced trainings.

Events

General Assembly: The Tapriza General Assembly is on Friday, the **30th June 2017**, at 7 pm at the Quartiertreff Hirslanden, Forchstrasse 248, 8032 Zürich, Tram 11 upto Burgwies.

In the Tibetan fire-bird-year we wish you luck and prosperity!

M. Kind, J. Bentley, F. Dörig, H. Marty and the Tapriza Team



Photographs (F. Dörig, N.G. Bajjee, D.D. Lama, H. Marty, M. Kind)

- 1 Film- and interview situation with Lou Dörig. (FD)
- 2 The Phoksumdo football team of the Tapriza School. (NB)
- 3 At the Phoksumdo Lake on horse back, Franziska Dörig & Lili Furger. (MK)
- 4 Tour group: Urs & Lili Furger, Franziska & Lou Dörig, Semduk Lama. (MK)
- 5 Namgyal Lama from Pugmo. (MK)
- 6 Final exams at the Tapriza School. (MK)
- 7 The women and the lama from Pugmo bid farewell. (FD)
- 8 The Class 10 in Kathmandu. (DL)
- 9 S. Hartmann & H. Marty treat a patient at the health post, Pugmo. (HM)
- 10 Our nurse Pasang Dolma in Chunuwar. (HM)
- 11 Our new health assistant Kalsang measuring blood pressure, Pugmo. (MK)
- 12 Firebird by Tsultrim Lama.



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NEWSLETTER 2017



Visit at the Tapriza School and Conversation with Former Students

What are the former students of the Tapriza School doing today? With this and many other questions in their mind our vice-president Franziska Dörig and her niece Lou Dörig travelled to the Tapriza School in autumn 2016. Marietta, Urs and Lili Furger-Kind accompanied them. Lou recorded several interviews at the Tapriza School for her matriculation project at the senior secondary school in the Swiss canton St.Gallen. The focus of the visit and particularly of Lou's film camera was set on the experiences of the former Tapriza students. The question why so many students and their parents advocate for an education in Dolpo was of particular interest. Lou Dörig will present the answers in her exciting film at this year's general assembly. In the following Franziska Dörig conveys her impressions of the travel to Dolpo:

Most of the parents of Tapriza students never went to school themselves. Still today education in Dolpo cannot be taken for granted. In her village Renji – as Bimala Gurung tells us – there still are many youths her age that grow up without school education. She deeply hopes that her younger siblings will be able to graduate at the Tapriza School – as she once did too. We meet Bimala Gurung in Kathmandu at the Tapriza School winter hostel. She lives there since she passed her final exams, together with twelve other 15- to 18-years-old former students. Bimala is now attending college. Lou Dörig, the same age as Bimala, arrived with her camera for her own school graduation

project. The girls and boys tell her, which subjects they are studying at college. What they would like to become later on in life, Lou asks. Without awe of the camera the youths answer: veterinarian, journalist, social worker, health assistant, doctor. In future, all of them would like to return to Dolpo to work. In this way, so the teenagers, they could best support their families and also the region. How long will the young adults still keep this point of view and where will they find their place one day? We discuss these questions with the parents later as well.

At the time when we want to interview the boys individually in the hostel, they are gone. They left for their football training. On Sunday, in four days, it is Dolpo Cup. Football is omnipresent in Kathmandu. In all parts of the city we noticed small fenced-in football fields. The Tapriza School is participating for the first time and now reached the semi-finals. Congratulations!

It was a great challenge, Bimala remembers later, that the lessons at college in Kathmandu were completely held in English. Regarding English language, she had a lot of catching up to do. During our travel we quickly noticed: the English skills of the school children as well as of the former students and teachers vary vastly. For another interview we meet Nyima Tenzin Gurung. He graduated from the Tapriza School five years ago. Today, he teaches English in Shimen, a village in Upper Dolpo. His memories of his time at the school are filled with funny episodes. For him, as he reports, English was not



the problem when he started his job as a teacher. Rather, he could not understand the Tibetan dialect of his students and they could not understand his. That's how differently people speak in the various regions of Dolpo.

In the meantime we exchanged the small white taxis of the city against small white and strong horses in Dolpo. Sure-footed they cross rivers and manage rocky passages and high passes. There are no roads here. We are on the way to the northern end of the Phoksumdo Lake. On the steep path that was cut into the rock high above the lake we press ourselves against the mountainside and let a decorated mule-caravan pass by. Riding with an unbelievable view on the lake and the snow-capped mountains we comfortably cross the high pass of 4200 meter altitude. Former Taprizia students accompany us and take good care of us. They guide our horses over precarious spots or recommend us to get out of the saddle. To conduct trekkings in Dolpo has become an income opportunity, just as the hiring out of horses. In the evening we show each other pictures and videos on our cell-phones. The devices can only be used like this and as torches, but are useless as phones. There is no mobile network in Dolpo anymore, since the provider went bankrupt.

On our riding trip we hardly meet other travellers, instead we repeatedly come across yak herds returning to their villages before the onset of winter, such as the ones on the alp that we reached in a wild gallop – at least in our

own perception. Namgyal hosts us with fresh yoghurt, dry yak cheese, and salty butter tea. Here, the animal husbandry with yaks, goats, horses, and hens as well as the agriculture secure the livelihood. The villagers thresh, dig up potatoes and stack buckwheat to dry. Larke Lama hopes that his daughter's life will be easier thanks to her school education. His wife and he work hard on the fields to pay for her education. If his daughter will ever return from Kathmandu, is difficult to say, he does not know. The most important thing is, however, that she studies successfully and can lead an independent life thanks to her education.

One afternoon we meet a Dutch tour group. They are carrying our president's book *The Bon Landscape of Dolpo* – let it be understood one and a half kilos more weight in their luggage. On the traces of the pilgrimage described in the book they made a stopover at the Ringmo monastery and received religious teachings. They also saw the new prayer wheel that the Taprizia NGO co-financed, although still without paint. Likewise, we spend a whole afternoon in the most beautiful secluded monastery built steep in the bedrock over the lake. It is in need of renovation, a considerable part of the inclined terrace has slipped away because of the arid climate. At the end of our visit the younger monk states that in order to talk with the tourists better English would be helpful.

When we leave Ringmo, the women and the village lama accompany us. We sit together on the rocky path with

local beer and with Chinese red bull, only since recently available. The mothers are very happy that there is a local school so that their children can stay near the villages. Too many children used to be sent to distant monasteries at the tender age of school entry. They also speak about the pending food supplies for the school. At the end of the school season the food that the parents contribute for their children often falls short. About 120 kilograms of rice are prepared in the school kitchen over the fire day by day, truly not an easy task.

The school will soon close for winter. On the day of the semester final exams we bid farewell. For the Class 10 students the trip to Kathmandu lies ahead. The future of Dolpo on the not-so-easy path between tradition and progress seems hopeful. So Nyima Tenzin Gurung says: «to understand, what happens in our land and our own region, to know the system, is important. Many of us former Taprizia students now know how one can change oneself and also the society.»

News from the Health Projects

In autumn 2016 Hans Marty and Claudia Schmid, the team in charge of the Taprizia NGO health projects, travelled to Dolpo and visited the various health posts, especially also those we support. In the following we find a report from

Hans Marty with his assessment of the recent situation and possible future developments:

After a first trip to Dolpo in 2012 with a visit to the hospital in Dunai and the health posts in Chunuwar, Ringmo, Pugmo, and Do Tarap (see Newsletter 2014) Claudia Schmid and I returned there in autumn 2016. The aim was to get an impression of the developments in the health sector in Dolpo in the last four years. At first we visited the hospital in Dunai again. A nurse and later the doctors in-charge showed us around there. The infrastructure indeed looks better now, but running water is still missing. The four young doctors are motivated, but each of them always only stays for a short time-period so that a continuous build-up is made difficult. The head physician who also functions as the district health manager presented a patient statistics to us but the high numbers seemed unrealistic. Then we walked further up to Chunuwar, the home of the Taprizia School. There Pasang Dolma, the nurse employed by the Taprizia NGO, proudly showed us the clean and tidy health post and introduced us to the newly practicing young *amchi* (doctor for traditional Tibetan medicine). The next day, with her little Paljor on the back, she guided us to the newly equipped sub health post in Pugmo with a deposit of necessary medicine. The villagers thanked us for our help. In the following three weeks we visited the health posts of Karang and Saldang (maintained by the *Schulverein Lo-*

