



Rinchen Zangpo Society For Spiti Development

Newsletter No: 22

Winter 2015/16

Welcome, friends and supporters of the Rinchen Zangpo Society. Filled with Spiti news and views, this newsletter captures snapshots of an exciting 2015 for the Society. Read on!



“The school’s chief purpose is to provide better opportunities to girls, especially those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. ”

-Ven. Tashi Namgyal

Giving girls better opportunities: The new Rewa Buddhist Model School

Parents and well-wishers displayed their overwhelming support for the new Rewa Buddhist Model School in Rongtong, which was inaugurated on 4 August 2015 by His Eminence T.K Lochen Tulku Rinpoche, Spiritual Director of Key Gumpa. The occasion was also

graced by the presence of Shri Suneel Sharma, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Spiti, based at Kaza, and **Mr Raffael Sterkl**, representing **the Austrian charity Tibethilfe Niederosterreich**. The charity’s generosity and support led to the building of the school.



The inauguration plaque of the new school is displayed here, as Ven. Tashi Namgyal and his guests look on.

Celebrating lasting partnerships:

Visits by the University of British Columbia and the Australian dental team

In July 2015, the medical and engineering teams from **UBC** visited Munsel-ling School.

Individualized health checks on all the students were conducted, and a final report for each child outlining health recommendations was produced. The engineering

team concentrated on water sanitation issues as well as how to construct hygienic toilets for the children.

The **Australian dental team, under the guidance of Dr Bob Lavis**, conducted a three-day dental check-up of students,

from Class 4 to Class 10, in July. Over 650 toothpastes and toothbrushes were distributed to students, teachers and other staff members. Dental education was also provided by Matthew Vaughan to keep those Spitian teeth shiny and clean!



The UBC team with Ven. Tashi Namgyal



A day of cultural celebration: Munsel-ling School's annual function



The Chief Guest,
Sofia Olsson from
SOIR IM, gives
away prizes.

With great joy, Munsel-ling School celebrated its annual function on 25 and 26 July 2015. The children were delighted at the festivities – no classes for those two days! – and students participating in dances, songs and plays showcased Spitian Buddhist culture beautifully to proud parents and the rest of the audience.

Guests from within India and abroad attended the occasion. The Chief Guest was **Sofia Olsson**, **Regional Director of the Dehradun- based NGO SOIR IM**, whose generosity right from the inception of the school has been invaluable. The Guest of Honour was Mr Raffael Sterkl, representing the Austrian charity Tibethilfe Niederosterreich, which supported the new school in Rongtong.

The 'Swach Bharat Abhiyan':

The campaign against littering in India

In October 2015, enthusiastic students from Munsel-ling School cleaned and collected litter from the school campus and participated in creative writing events based on the theme of maintaining the pristine beauty of the Spiti Valley. (Upper right: the slogans created by the students supporting this movement.)



Trees and Playmates:

Getting creative

Munsel-ling is grateful to the **Treehouse Theatre Group from the UK**, and especially to **Ben and Louisa Lindsey-Clark**, for a Spitian student production of the play 'The Desert Willow'. (Middle right: The young performers with their director.)



Physical additions:

A new boundary wall and school furniture

Generous donations from the **Trans-Himalayan Aid Society (TRAS) of Canada** supported the building of a stone-and-mortar boundary wall for the safekeeping of the school's agricultural compound. TRAS also supported the creation of a water storage tank and hut for storing equipment and much-needed primary school furniture (see photo on the right).





Basking under a Spitian sun:

Solar Lights and Panels

Munsel-ling is very grateful to volunteers and donors **David and Katherine Kirkwood** for providing solar lights and panels in the teachers' residences at the school. **AID Projects, New York**, supported the provision of solar lights and panels in the students' hostel – creating another crucial energy source.

People power:

Volunteers at Munsel-ling School

Volunteers who come to Munsel-ling create enduring bonds with Spitian children and the Spiti Valley region. To **Zoe Maogany** for her continued support with the painting studio ([pictured on the right](#)), and to **David and Katherine Kirkwood** for their teaching of Maths and forging reciprocal links with Cathkin School in Scotland – thank you!



News of the Sidhbari hostel, Dharamshala

A new roof, Spiti Losar celebrations and excellent examination results



The support of **His Holiness the Dalai Lama Trust** has enabled the construction of the roofing in the boys' section of the hostel to be completed, for which the Society is very grateful. Hostel students celebrated Spitian Losar on 11 November 2015 with aplomb (see photos on the left). Venerable Togden Tulku Rinpoche attended the occasion, and Spitians in Dharamshala were also invited.



Attending Sidhbari's Adhunik Public School, students performed brilliantly in their annual examinations. **Tsering Palmo** secured 87% in the Medical stream and **Tenzin Norbu** 89% in the non-Medical stream – the highest for the year. Congratulations, Palmo and Norbu! Students from Classes 8 to 10, along with Munsel-ling teachers, have arrived safely at Sidhbari for the winter. All the very best to them!



Chapattis, anyone?

Hedi Meyer and Klaus Rouff of German Aid for Tibetans made generous donations to a range of projects: new kitchen equipment for rustling up chapattis (see photo on left), winter plastic sheets to retain heat in the classrooms, and essentials for the new Kaza school building.



The Rewa Model
Buddhist School,
surrounded by a
smattering of
snow

Friends and benefactors from around the world

Thank you!

The UK-based **Reifenberg Trust**, a long-standing partner of the Society, provided much-needed water tanks for the two girls' hostels at Munsel-ling School in 2015. The **Nantwich Buddhist Group**, also based in the UK, ensured that the girls get a good night's sleep by providing beds and mattresses for the Julie Clemence Memorial Junior Girls Hostel at Munsel-ling.

The senior girls' toilet and bathroom block was completed this year, to which the **Jamyang Buddhist Centre in London** made a generous contribution. **Vivienne Hodges's** continued support meant that the toilets for primary school children – built by funds raised by 2014 Spiti volunteers Shaun Holmes and Diya Gupta – were ready for use.

How you can help

Thank you for reading this newsletter, and for your interest in the Rinchen Zangpo Society. For ways to help, including sponsoring a child, visit <http://www.rinchenzangpo.org/>.